

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 29, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I have the pleasure to table the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission Second Quarterly Report.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the St. George School forty-two Grade 9 students under the direction of Clint Harvey. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corp. Foreclosure Statistics

* (1335)

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, for weeks the Opposition has been requesting this Government to take action to counteract the various negative trends that have been occurring in the various economic indicators. Each time we have brought these questions up we have been accused of negativism and spreading doom and gloom. It is difficult to find anything very cheerful when you are watching a tragedy, and this Government seems to be quite prepared to whistle past the graveyard. I think it is time that there was some real action taken.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). Today, we are told that the number of farmers facing foreclosure has increased by 46 percent over the same time last year. Can the Minister tell us how much of this can be attributed to changes in the policy of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation? Is MACC taking a tough stand as far as loans that are in arrears are concerned?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): It is extremely unfortunate that the Member used the words "doom and gloom" because that is exactly what he is putting on the record. If he takes a newspaper report as his research document which says, and I quote, the figure he used, "46 percent," he has missed the story entirely. The increase in the applications to the Manitoba Mediation Board is in fact an increase from 169 to 183, which the arithmetic says is an increase of 14 applications, which is 8.2 percent.

I would like the Member to acknowledge that those are the actual facts. If he had bothered to contact the Mediation Board, he would have found those figures out.

With regard to MACC, a year ago the young farmers who met their commitments on November 7 was 70 percent of the young farmers. This year, 80 percent of them met their commitments. In the overall loan portfolio, MACC, a year ago 11.6 percent were in arrears; this year, 10.6 percent. The overall farm situation is not the doom and gloom situation that the Member brings forward.

Cases in Arrears

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the Minister tries to paint a very pretty picture of what is happening in parts of Manitoba, but he knows full well that in the southwestern part of this province there is a very serious situation. I would ask the Minister, of the 4,900 outstanding loans, how many of those are actually in arrears, and can the Minister tell us exactly how many farm cases are currently before, either the Manitoba Mediation Board or the federal Farm Debt Review Board?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have already given the answer to the Member in terms of the percentage of MACC loans in arrears; it is 10.6 percent. In talking about southwest Manitoba, I was out there last night in Melita, a meeting of some 200 farmers, and they never brought that question up. Not one person brought that question up. It brought up a whole series of other questions.

I have been to a series of a number of farm meetings in southwest Manitoba in recent weeks, and the question does not come up. There is not the doom and gloom that the Member wants to bring forward. In fact, I am very encouraged with the fact that the debt load in rural Manitoba is going down. If he worries about the number of cases in arrears in front of MACC, I will tell him that the previous Government allowed people to get into arrears in excess of four years, and that is not even fair to them. They should be resolving their cases by mediation to find a method of meeting the circumstances.

Drought Assistance Federal Application

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I can only assume from the Minister's answers that farmers in southern Manitoba have quit talking to this Government, because the calls that come into us certainly indicate that there is a severity out there. Mr. Speaker, the Province of Saskatchewan has already requested the federal Government to participate in a drought compensation program in the range of a half a billion dollars.

Wednesday, November 29, 1989

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Has the Minister clearly assessed the severity of the 1989 drought in Manitoba, and has a formal request been made to the federal Government to participate in a drought assistance program to date?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we are proceeding to make that assessment. I have had two major discussions with crop insurance with regard to how we can put the facts and figures together to be able to go to Ottawa and explain to them the need for a drought payment. On top of a payment this year of roughly \$130 million in crop insurance, a \$130 million payment to crop insurance last year. If any application is made for drought assistance to the federal Government, it will not undermine the integrity of crop insurance or the integrity of the people who made the right decision to have crop insurance in advance of the drought of 1989.

I have met with the federal Minister of Grains and Oilseeds, and he will be receptive to an application from us that is supported by facts and figures, and I have said that at every farm meeting I have been at over the last two weeks.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's response.

* (1340)

Farming Industry Supply Management Protection

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): I have a new question, Mr. Speaker. Recently, the federal Government has released a Green Paper, which I am sure most people are familiar with, entitled "Growing Together." This document is fairly cleverly constructed, and it is one that is open to a great deal of interpretation. Mr. Mazankowski, speaking recently at a marketing seminar on dealing with supply management, referred to this document, and I want to quote what he said. He said, "We should avoid a growing gap in prices paid by Canadian consumers and those which consumers in other countries pay." He was referring to the difference between the prices paid for dairy and poultry products south of the border as compared with Canada. I am sure the Minister will acknowledge that there is a major difference between those two prices.

Can the Minister indicate how we can maintain or even narrow that gap and still prevent the demise of the supply-managed sector of the agriculture economy?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the thrust at the GATT negotiations is going to be to remove the subsidies that other countries have in place, more trade liberalization will be our objective. At the same time, we want to have a strengthened Article 11 that allows us to have supply management in this country that meets only the domestic market. If we are going to be exporting under supply management, then we are going to be challenged by other people and want access to our market.

We have to remain in front of the consuming public, we have to appear to be doing the best job we can

of keeping food prices down; otherwise, the consumers of this country will put pressure on the supply managed sector. As I said to the Member some number of days ago, the supply management sector has done an excellent job in terms of returning from the marketplace a reasonable return to the farm community, and the farm community is guaranteed a supply of high quality product to the consumer. This is particular of the perishable products.

The supply management sector has done their job, but they must remember that they must stay within the country in terms of just meeting the domestic demand and not export that product, as it is a heavily subsidized product.

Foreign Competition

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the Minister essentially is acknowledging that the supply management sector is under tremendous pressure, not only from the Free Trade Agreement and GATT, but also in the sense of the processor. Can the Minister indicate how Canadian processors of dairy and poultry products can be certain of being able to get their primary product at a price which will permit them to compete with American imports, or better still, to be able to compete on the American market, and still not have this reflected in a price increase to Canadian consumers or a reduction to the producers?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Certainly the Member is aware of the de Grandpre Report which indicated there might have to be a two-price structure in order to have product for the domestic market and also to the processors so they can compete in selling that processed product elsewhere in the world.

Very clearly, one of the objectives that we have as a Government of Manitoba, and the federal Government as well, is that we must increase the amount of processing value-added industry, the job creation that they have in terms of food products in this country, and we will find a way.

Free Trade Agreement Subsidy Definition

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Again, I have a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I am sure the Minister is fully aware of the fact that discussions are already taking place aimed at identifying exactly what the definition of a subsidy is under the Free Trade Agreement.

My question is to the Minister. Can he assure us that the cost of production formulae, which are currently used in the supply managed industry, are not going to be identified as containing a subsidization element?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Certainly, yes, supply management was defended in the Free Trade Agreement, and it will be defended under the GATT negotiations that are presently under way.

The federal Minister of Trade and Agriculture repeatedly said that supply management will be

protected and will be strengthened in terms of the definition under Article 11 of GATT, and we will work with the supply management sector to assure that happens.

* (1345)

Foreign Workers Ogilvie Oats Dismantling

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Yesterday, the Leader of the NDP Opposition brought to the Government's attention a decision by Employment and Immigration Canada permitting uncertified U.S. workers to be employed in Canada under provisions of the free trade deal.

I want to ask the Minister of Industry if he has information. At the present time in Manitoba, a similar situation exists as workers from Mexico are being employed to dismantle the mill at Ogilvie Oats. This equipment, I understand, is being prepared to be sold off to a firm in that country. Does the Minister have information on this?

I understand that four workers have been employed at Ogilvie recently, packing up equipment for sale to Mexico. I am not sure how much longer the job will take, but so far I understand two boxcars and six trucks have been loaded.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): No, I am not aware of that specific circumstance. I would be pleased to look into it and report back to the House.

Government Policy

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Considering that 90 workers have lost their jobs at Ogilvie Oats as it closes, joining more than 4,000 who have been laid off from businesses closed in Manitoba over the past year, my question to the Minister of Industry is: does this Government, does his department, have a policy with regard to foreign workers coming into Manitoba taking jobs that could be done by Manitobans who are unemployed here?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, what we have here are two issues, and the first one is, the last time I looked this is still a free country.

The Leader of the third Party (Mr. Doer) yesterday raised the spectre of great concerns about hordes of U.S. construction workers crossing the border to take away the jobs that might well be utilized should the hydro project proceed. That spectre he raised was wrong. It was fearmongering, and should not have been raised in the same context as a potential hydro dam in northern Manitoba.

Construction workers are not permitted under the Free Trade Agreement to cross the border, only service personnel related to U.S.-based companies where they have a specialty dealing with a particular product that

has been sold. In addition to that—and I am sure the Leader of the NDP knew full well that Government procurement and Crown corporations are excluded from any of the agreements under the Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy seemed totally unconcerned yesterday that provisions of the deal may mean jobs lost for qualified unemployed Manitobans, but there are, nevertheless, Canadian jobs involved. There are some jobs involved.

Will the Minister of Industry take the time, at least, to ask Employment and Immigration Canada for a full report on the interpretation of this clause, because there are some jobs that could be threatened in spite of what the Minister has just said? Will he voice this province's strongest objections to the importations of foreign workers into Canada as long as we have the unemployment situation that we do have in this province?

Mr. Ernst: I hope that when the Government of Manitoba goes out to seek industrial development for the Province of Manitoba, when we go to the Japanese and we say, would you please come to Manitoba, invest millions of dollars building a plant, that we would say, but that is fine, we want your money, we want your investment, we want your plant, but you cannot come, that is not the way the Manitoba Government would work.

Ogilvie Oats Dismantling

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): It is obvious the kind of work that is being performed here by the Mexicans is work that could easily have been done by unemployed Manitobans at this time, particularly in the winter when jobs are harder to find.

I want to ask the Minister of Industry: will he contact Ogilvie and make sure that at any time in the future if further work is done to dismantle the plant, or indeed similar work, that this practice will be stopped? This Minister may be interested in protecting the interest of the owners, of the investors, but we have to be concerned about the interests of unemployed Manitobans as well.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): In response to the Member's first question, I indicated I would investigate the circumstances and report back to the House. I will do that.

* (1350)

Ken Podolsky Document Release

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, we, and I am sure all Members of the House, are pleased to see you are feeling better today.

My question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (Mr. Cummings). I was pleased to learn that the Minister now recognizes

the need for a second look into the case of MPIC client Ken Podolsky. I am glad this Minister has finally seen the light. My question is: will the Minister now urge Autopac to supply an affidavit of documents to assist Mr. Podolsky, documents he is already entitled to by law?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): I am amazed at the manner of detail that the Member would insist that a Minister of the Crown get involved with a Crown corporation, particularly when the question is in front of the courts revolving around a legal issue.

I note that the Ombudsman has said he would be prepared to look at this situation in relationship to how the corporation has handled this, and I suggest that would rather be a proper vehicle as well.

Mr. Rose: I have a question to the same Minister. Will this Minister now investigate how this confidential and sanitized report got into the hands of lawyer Colon Settle, who is acting for the Ross family?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I remind you and I remind the public of Manitoba that this matter is in appeal before the courts. I have been assured by the corporation that they feel what they have is a responsibility to make sure that all available information they can find, in relationship to investigations they are responsible for, they have an obligation to pursue. I certainly hope that the Member opposite would respect the fact that this may ultimately be settled by appeal in the court, and I would urge him to proceed that way.

MPIC Investigation

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): To the same Minister, will this Minister now also question Autopac, its officials, as to why they used this statistical report, this illegal report, in determining cause, but they on the other hand made no effort whatsoever to do any questioning of potential witnesses in the accident?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): I feel as though we are going over old ground again with this Member. The fact is, the gentleman in question has employed some six or seven different lawyers, all of whom have had access under Examination for Discovery, to deal with this issue. I would urge him to respect the fact that the appeal in front of the courts can adequately deal with this.

Seven Oaks Hospital Emergency Services

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. The emergency care in Winnipeg has become a major problem. There are backlogs at Concordia Hospital. Today I have been informed that a similar situation exists at Seven Oaks Hospital, elderly patients were waiting in the hallways of Seven Oaks Hospital this morning.

Can the Minister of Health assure the residents of Kildonan, Inkster, St. Paul, Maples, Garden City, Garden Grove and Seven Oaks that he is planning to ease the shortage of emergency beds at Seven Oaks Hospital as well as at Concordia?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am not certain as to the nature of the request. Is my honourable friend asking that we commit to construction at Seven Oaks, as the construction commitment is under investigation at Concordia, or is he simply asking -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friends in the Opposition of the Liberal Party seem to have all the answers in health care now that the Estimate process is over.

Mr. Speaker, I simply say that the majority of the ones that were speaking from their seats never voiced a single question during the whole Health Estimate process, and it continues; or is my honourable friend asking whether there will be some relief expected with the commissioning of beds at Deer Lodge? If that is the question, the answer is yes.

* (1355)

Home Care System Expansion

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, one of the ways of relieving pressure on the emergency rooms is through a home I.V. Medication Program.

Can the Minister of Health today assure this House that he will expand this program throughout Winnipeg hospitals to take some of the burdens off these emergency rooms and also save tax dollars for Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, within the program availability of the Home Care Program, we have contractual arrangements for instance with the Victorian Order of Nurses, which undertakes more complex treatment regimes outside of the institution and in the individual's home, more complex treatments that professional nurses are required to deliver that service. Mr. Speaker, that has been an ongoing and in fact a growing trend as we move towards more community-based provision of care.

Health Care Emergency Services Review

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, for the last 18 months we have asked this question about the emergency care a number of times.

Can the Minister of Health commit today to establish at least a committee to look into the problem facing the emergency care in all the hospitals in Manitoba, especially in Winnipeg, and come up with a plan for a long-term solution?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the process that has been in

place for a number of months. When my honourable friend raised this issue last week, post announcement of the capital budget which I think most Manitobans welcomed, I indicated to my honourable friend that from time to time difficulties experienced at various emergency departments within the Winnipeg hospital community have been under co-operative resolution by the management of those respective hospitals, wherein they are in daily telephone contact to identify and to indicate to each other what their respective capacities are to handle emergency patients. Mr. Speaker, that kind of co-operation and planning is in fact in place, and has been in place for a number of months.

Repap Manitoba Inc. Financial Status

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for the giveaway of the Parkland timber to Repap, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Recently Repap announced that they would not proceed with the upgrading of all of the phases of construction at the former Manfor mill at The Pas until they had received environmental clearance for all three phases. This includes as well the chipping facility at Swan River that the Minister said would create so many jobs there. The Minister at the time naively assumed that this was for environmental reasons that the company had delayed the upgrading and the construction to create those jobs.

I ask the Minister today whether he can indicate whether Repap is in any financial trouble that might impact on their ability to carry out the major expenditures in the work that they had committed to under this agreement to create the jobs as promised by this Minister.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am rather embarrassed for the Member that he would ask a question of that nature. He is asking me whether I have access to Repap's financials so as to be able to disclose the state of their economy within their company at this point in time.

Let me indicate that I understand third-quarter earnings within the company led the industry, and I am also led to believe that the company is doing extremely well. Now, the fact that their share value is dropping somewhat is a reflection of the industry, and that industry of course is finding itself in troubled times because the cycle is coming down, firstly; and secondly, of course there are major environmental concerns that are beginning to develop within the whole forest product industry.

Project Guarantee

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): The Minister likes to refer to all kinds of studies and documents as to why he chose to give forest from all parts of Manitoba to Repap for that operation in with the deal, but he neglects to look at the financial statements in the broader terms. He has not, for example, acknowledged that the long-term debt of Repap has skyrocketed to some \$900 million, from \$150 million in 1984, a massive increase.

In view of the fact that shares have dropped from 1950 on the stock market to 850, can this Minister indicate whether he can provide guarantees to this House and to the people of Manitoba that that project is going to proceed?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what is this Member trying to say? We inherited the negotiating process that was initiated by the former Government. Repap was one of the proposers to buy the facility. We entered into the best agreement possible, indicated and acknowledged so by the industry as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, let me also say that if Repap decides for whatever reason that it does not want to proceed, that Manitoba still has the forest, it also has Manfor returned to it ultimately with all its pollution allowed by this former Government. So let the Member stay where he wants. Is he happy that there was a sale with Repap, or is he displeased? They cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that Burns Fry Limited has just put out a forest products quarterly review entitled *Bad News Still to Come* and projects that bulk prices in North America will drop by some 18 percent to \$150 per ton, from \$830 to \$680, I ask the Minister whether in fact, in light of that report and that information, whether he has undertaken any effort to gain guarantees for the Province of Manitoba that should have been in this agreement, commitments from them that this project will proceed as it was planned? Will he be able to give those guarantees to the people of Manitoba and the areas of the province that require those jobs that he promised when he announced this sale?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, what the Member is advocating is the setting up of another Manfor guaranteeing \$200 million or \$300 million loss to the taxpayers of this province. That is what he is asking us to do. In the real world, nobody can guarantee it unless there is a market that is going to develop a profit, and I know the Members opposite were totally against profit motivation.

When we tried to sell Manfor, a Crown corporation that lost hundreds of millions of dollars to the taxpayers over the years, we tried to not only generate the best sell, but guarantee employment and the utilization of the forest reserve that was in place.

Let me also say, it was a guarantee toward reforestation that was never provided for under Manfor, our existing Crown corporation, also a guarantee to sustainable development environmentally sound that was not mandated by this former Government on Manfor before.

Mr. Speaker, how dare the Members get up and berate us for that sale -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

Manitoba Telephone System Basic Rate Freeze

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System. It was a pleasure indeed to see that the Manitoba Telephone System had net earnings of over \$27 million during the first nine months of 1989.- (interjection)- Is the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) finished with his debate?

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

Mr. Roch: As I was saying, it is a pleasure to see that the Telephone System has had net earnings of over \$27 million during the first nine months of this year. It is also interesting to note that the substantial part of that revenue was derived from long distance calling. I am also aware that senior officials at MTS are anticipating even greater profits in the future.

Can the Minister responsible advise this House whether MTS will now freeze basic rates to its subscribers, given the fact that the mandate of MTS is to provide to its ratepayers the best possible service at the lowest possible cost?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Telephone System is delivering a high level of service to rural Manitobans through Service for the Future. That is one of the areas that will be able to be speeded up with a better bottom line than they are now experiencing.

The long distance rate reductions that have been announced of some 13 percent of January 1, 1989, some 17 percent of January 1, 1990, and a proposed application to PUB for a further reduction of 20 percent on long-distance rates for October of 1990, are the result of the better ability to get a positive line that the corporation now has. Whether we can freeze rate increases in the future remains to be seen or whether the rate reductions that are presently being considered will be lowered, will be the subject of applications to PUB in the future.

Our first priority is to be able to reduce overall debt in the corporation which the NDP saddled us with, their debt and equity ratio of some 91 percent. It is now down in the vicinity of 85 percent to 86 percent, and we will do a much better job of delivering Service for the Future at a shorter time frame than initially proposed.

Rural Rate Reduction

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): The Minister refers to rural Manitobans, so given the fact that rural Manitobans over the years have contributed more than their fair share to MTS revenues, especially in the area of long-distance revenues or receiving service, that has not always been as good as that received by urban ratepayers, will this Government, because of the massive increase in revenues from long-distance calling,

now offer Community Calling Plus as well as Urban Limited, at reduced rates or even at no charge to rural residents in order to rectify historical injustices?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Mr. Speaker, I guess that Member does not pay attention to the announcements that have been made. There is a major service improvement package called Service for the Future giving every resident of rural Manitoba a private line, some 47,000 people presently on party lines. Digital switches will be the standard of service in the future instead of mechanical switches.

There will be larger calling areas as we have announced them, and those calling areas may well be improved in future years as our capacity technically and financially allows us to do it. The debt to equity ratio we have is a very heavy burden, and we must address that first and foremost, as well as give the service improvement package as presently on the books.

Rate Reductions

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): In light of the Minister's answers, I have to ask a question that given the fact that there are substantial revenue increases due to long-distance calling, substantial, and that the original mandate of MTS is to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible cost, and the Minister indicated that they are reducing the debt and the officials have been saying the same, is the Minister saying that for the foreseeable future rural residents of Manitoba, indeed all Manitobans, will receive no breaks at all on internal Manitoba rates?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Mr. Speaker, the service improvement package is \$800 million which will allow on the basic rural bill a significant change in the various elements of charge. The basic rate charge will stay about the same or slightly increase. The long-distance charges within Manitoba will be decreased because the calls to all their adjacent exchanges will be zero. The long-distance charges on adjacent exchanges will be zero and the long-distance charges outside the province will be decreased.

I guarantee to the Member that the majority of rural bills will, in fact, go down in the next two or three years as the service improvement package is fully implemented, and particularly because of the adjacent exchange toll-free calling aspect.

Forest Fires Public Inquiry

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). We are pleased to see that some progress has been made in compensating trappers for some of the losses that they have suffered as a result of the forest fires earlier this year.

We hope to be able to applaud the Government when further compensation will be made available, as other

losses and additional losses are identified and quantified, but in order to provide for that sort of information further information must be gathered and reviewed.

My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and follows upon his comments earlier at the time of the fires that the Government is committed to a full public inquiry of the forest fire situation and the Government response to that crisis. Given that this inquiry was to be held, according to the promise of the Minister in the fall of this year, can the Minister now provide us with an update as to the status of that inquiry that is already much overdue?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to indicate to the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) that we have every intention of carrying on with that commitment.

We had hoped to have it under way at this time. We had engaged the services of two particular people to conduct the public portion of the inquiry, particularly in those communities directly affected by some of the fires as was promised, that the inquiry would not solely take place in Winnipeg, but as well would be within the affected regions in the North. Unfortunately, the party that we had hoped to engage has declined, and we are currently searching for that group but hope to make an announcement relatively shortly.

* (1410)

Mr. Cowan: My supplementary question is to the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) then. Given that Members of this Legislature, all Members of this Legislature have an interest in this matter, and given that we already have a structure in place that could undertake a full public review of the forest fire crises and the response of the Government to it, and provide recommendations for how to respond to such crises in the future, and given that that body can travel and has travelled in the past throughout the province and could visit those communities that were affected, will the Government House Leader agree to calling meetings of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources within the next few weeks to commence that detailed review as had been promised by his Government, and has now been stalled by actions that goes beyond the control of his Government, and could be rectified by actions of himself to call that committee at this time?

Mr. Enns: I simply want to assure the Honourable Member that the kind of inquiries that we feel are necessary are taking place, internal inquiries within the department itself. Certainly, as I have already indicated in my previous answer, the particular communities affected by the fires will be given the opportunity to make their concerns known.

The kind of question that the Honourable Member is now asking for surely is an appropriate thing to discuss during the investigation and the discussion of my Estimates. The department will have the appropriate departmental figures available to committee Members of Supply who consider the Estimates of the Department

of Natural Resources. I anticipate the very exhaustive questioning during my Estimates on the serious nature of the problem and the expenditures incurred.

In addition to that, I might say that my department, of course, is not the only department involved. The Department of Government Services, through the office of Emergency Measures Organization, played an extremely important role in this matter—(interjection)—and they—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Forest Fires Public Inquiry

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): It is the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) who promised such an inquiry. That promise has not been kept. The inquiry was promised for this fall. They have broken that original inquiry. It is not appropriate for the Estimates to travel outside of this building to the communities where people have an involvement in the forest fires and some expertise and some lessons to share with us.

I would therefore ask the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), once again, because it is his responsibility to call standing committees, if he would not be prepared to call the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, so that committee can travel outside of the city to the communities affected, listen to the residents of this province who are involved in those forest fires and bring back recommendations, as is our job and our responsibility, to ensure that Government responds to these crises in the future in the appropriate manner.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it is the job and the responsibility of the Government and the public servants who serve the Government to ensure that they are constantly reviewing all of their efforts, all of their processes, all of their undertakings to make sure that they are providing the best possible service to the people of Manitoba. It is the job of the Government to ensure that those people working for the Civil Service are doing the best possible job. The kind of process that we are talking about is management of Government affairs. It is not a question of the policy making, it is a question of the management of public affairs.

I might say, because I have travelled throughout this province and throughout northern communities in this province, that we have been getting plaudits, that we have been getting compliments in every area of the North for the work that was being done.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) is attempting to make some political hay and politicize a process that is inappropriate, because people worked very hard—

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

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I assure you and I assure the Premier (Mr.

Filmon) and Members of this House, that this is not a matter that is being put forward for any political purpose by any one individual.

I resent the imputation of motives on the part of the Premier and would ask him out of the finest traditions of this House to withdraw any ulterior motives or any motives of an unhonourable kind that he has indicated other Members may have in this issue. That is not the case, we are asking that question so that there can be a review by Honourable Members of this House of an important policy area which is the job of the standing committees of this Legislature.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I would never question the motives, the honourable motives of the Member for Churchill. I suggest that when matters are done through the aegis of a committee of this Legislature, they become politicized, because that is the nature of the beast, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, that matter is being looked into, and the Minister has indicated that the review is being carried out.

Provincial Vehicles Illegal Usage

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the -(interjections)-

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Edwards: My question is for the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). It has come to our attention this morning that it is alleged that a provincial civil servant has been charged with illegally bringing liquor into Manitoba from the United States. It is also alleged that this individual was using a provincial vehicle to achieve this.

Mr. Speaker, has the Minister been in touch with police officials to get details on these very serious allegations directly involving the province and provincial vehicles, and can he give the House any further information at this time?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that at approximately 11 a.m. on Tuesday, yesterday, one of the employees of my department was arrested by the RCMP. No charges have been laid at this time. RCMP are investigating and so is my department.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, given that the allegation is that this individual was bringing liquor into Manitoba to sell it illegally, can this Minister inform the House if there is any evidence to his knowledge at this time that the customers of this gentleman or this individual were in fact provincial co-workers?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I think the questions are premature. As I indicated before, the RCMP are continuing their investigation. No charges have been laid. My staff is on top of it. We are doing the investigation as well to see whether there have been any infractions or improper conduct by employees within

my department. As soon as we have that information, I will be bringing it forward.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1420)

SPEAKER'S RULINGS

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I have two rulings for the House.

On Friday, November 17, during Private Members' Hour, the Acting Speaker, the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), took under advisement a point of order raised by the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) respecting offensive words alleged to have been spoken from his seat by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake).

Hansard has been reviewed, the recording tapes have been listened to. No remarks made by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia nor any offensive words were picked up by the system.

I must therefore rule that the Honourable Minister did not have a point of order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I have another ruling for the House.

On Thursday, November 16 during Oral Questions, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) respecting a word "idiot" allegedly spoken by the Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) from his seat.

I have reviewed Hansard and have had the recording tapes checked. There is no record of the word being spoken. I must therefore rule that the Honourable Member for Churchill had no point of order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. This is somewhat unusual, but I believe that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has some advice to give to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), and I think we should allow him leave and the floor to be able to provide that advice, similar advice that he gave to the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake).

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely no advice as to whether the Member for Churchill is an idiot.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister of Health, kindly withdraw those words.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I will naturally comply with any request you make and withdraw, but I simply had no advice on the issue.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Unequivocally. The Chair thanks the Honourable Minister of Health.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the order of the Bills that we wish to have called today is lengthy, but I will give the numbers to you. Perhaps you can write them down as I go along with you. Kindly call the Bills in the following order: 65, 74, 34, 86, 53, 67, 79, 56—I will slow down, perhaps start over again.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will repeat them after, just carry on.

Mr. McCrae: 65, 74, 34, 86, 53, 67, 79, 56, 62, 6, 7—I will slow down for the Liberal Members, Mr. Speaker—12, 38, 71, 63, 80, 69, 71, the remainder as they are listed on the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker, I called Bill 71 twice. Just the first time would be sufficient.

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

SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 65—THE FATALITY INQUIRIES ACT

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General) presented Bill No. 65, The Fatality Inquiries Act; Loi sur les enquêtes médico-légales, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the new Fatality Inquiries Act that is being proposed by the Government is the result of a review of the existing Act and of legislation passed in other provinces by the Chief Medical Examiner and counsel in the Department of Justice.

Honourable Members are very aware, I am sure, of the importance of this matter. I know the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) is and is interested in this matter. It deserves, and I am quite sure that it will get detailed scrutiny from all Parties in the House as we attempt to strike a proper balance in a situation that is invariably difficult.

The right to privacy of families of deceased persons should be respected as far as possible in the

investigation of deaths, but the public has the right to know that the relevant facts surrounding the death have been properly reviewed. As you know, that is not always an easy task.

The present Fatality Inquiries Act was passed in 1975. Time has revealed certain weaknesses in the Act. Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Peter Markesteyn developed a comprehensive series of proposals for overhauling the Act that were presented to the Government in 1987. These proposals were in the process of being reviewed by the previous Government when it fell, and we have completed that process of review.

* (1430)

The complexity of the matter is indicated by the fact that, had this Bill been presented as amendments to the existing Act, only eight of the present 31 sections would have been retained, while 23 would have been amended substantially, and eight whole new sections would have been added. Obviously, such a major overhaul is better presented as an entirely new Act.

Detailed examination of the Bill, of course, takes place after Second Reading. I have provided the Opposition Critics with a spread sheet showing the provisions of the new Act with the provision, if any, in the existing Act and an explanation of changes. I hope the spread sheet will be helpful to Honourable Members.

I would tell Honourable Members that this is also a complicated spread sheet. It has 75 pages. The Government is certainly prepared to provide all the expert technical explanations which might be required to the Opposition in advance of committee stage to facilitate scrutiny of the Bill.

During second reading debate the main principles of the Bill must be considered. In that regard, there are significant changes in the principles underlying this Act and those which are the basis of the existing Act. First, the Government proposes that reporting a death in any of the categories referred to in the new Act should be mandatory, not just for policemen as is the present situation but for any person who is a witness to or has knowledge of such a death. We submit that all citizens have an obligation to bring suspicious deaths to the attention of the authorities charged with investigating such deaths.

The categories of death requiring a review under the Act are also being expanded. We believe it is appropriate to have an investigation where the person died while in the custody of a peace officer, the death is work related, where a child dies, or where the death occurs in a personal care home. The Bill provides that where the investigation reveals cause for concern, then there should be a formal inquiry.

I think Honourable Members will welcome the provision of the new Act that will make it mandatory for the death of a child, in care of a Child and Family Service agency or who has been in such care during the two years preceding the death, to be investigated by the Chief Medical Examiner with a report to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) regarding the care provided by the agency.

The Government has no obligation more important than the obligation to ensure that children who are under its care are properly cared for. An important safeguard of those children is this mandatory review of the circumstances of the death of any child.

The Bill will also provide for an extended role for nurses, rather than police officers, as investigators. Another underlying principle of this Bill is that the proceedings should be stripped of their adversarial quasi-criminal aspects and be transformed into a medical investigation to determine cause of death. We submit, therefore, that it is appropriate that medical personnel such as nurses do the investigations rather than police officers.

Furthermore, the Act will prohibit an expression of opinion as to who was culpable in a death, because the purpose of an investigation or an inquiry is to determine the facts and not to assign blame. Blame and liability are matters for courts of law and not for this type of investigation.

Mr. Speaker, in my opening remarks I mentioned the need to have careful scrutiny of matters of this kind, because of the need to strike a balance between privacy for the family and the public good. Therefore, I wish to draw the attention of Honourable Members specifically to the fact that this Bill will permit an inquest or portions of an inquest to be held in camera. The circumstances that justify this exceptional power are carefully spelled out in the Bill, and the presiding provincial judge will have to be satisfied that the invasion of privacy is unreasonable or the potential damage to a person's professional reputation would be unjustifiable.

There are many other new features in this Bill such as defining a conflict of interest situation for medical practitioners and for medical examiners, and the reduction of occasions when non-pathologists perform autopsies. These matters are fully explained in the material that has been given to the Opposition Critics for their consideration. All these matters are certainly important, but they are on the gray line between matters of principle and detailed discussion that is reserved for committee. I do not think a useful purpose would be served by discussing them at this stage.

I emphasize again to Honourable Members that this Bill seeks to improve the operation of the Chief Medical Examiner's office and is based upon his recommendations and legislation that has worked successfully in other provinces. We look forward to reviewing in committee the provisions of this Bill to ensure that the goal I know we all share, that of the effective operation of the Chief Medical Examiner's office and proper investigation of fatalities, is achieved.

We on this side are pleased to propose these improvements, and I recommend Bill No. 65 to the attention and support of all Honourable Members in this House.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I respect the Member's right to adjourn debate; however, I would like to put some comments on the record at this point from the New Democratic Party, with leave of the House to allow the Bill to remain standing.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko)? (Agreed)

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the Attorney-General is perhaps somewhat surprised by our eagerness to speak to this piece of legislation—he says that he is not surprised. That is encouraging. We have every intention to make sure that legislation, which has the approval of this Legislature and is consistent with the objective certainly and the policies which we ascribe to, are moved expeditiously through the House. As the Attorney-General or the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) acknowledged in his opening remarks, this particular Act was under review at the time of the election in April of 1988. This is one of many, many pieces of legislation, Bill 65, that the Attorney-General of the province, the previous Attorney-General, had in the works, so to speak, in his endeavour and our endeavour to make all of our laws more effective and more up to date.

* (1440)

The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) indicated that this Act was first passed in 1975. Certainly there have been many changes, both in terms of the judicial process, but perhaps more interestingly and more importantly, major changes in our perception of our social responsibility for each other.

When the Attorney General introduced the Bill he said that this Bill attempted to balance two very fundamental and important rights. The first right is the right to privacy. Any death, regardless of the circumstance, is a tragedy, is traumatic, particularly for the surviving members of that person's immediate and extended family, but also for communities.

We know that the circumstances of an individual's death are not always pleasant to say the least. So while we have to respect the right of families to grieve in private, to grieve in their own fashion, we also, as the Minister of Justice indicated, have an obligation to the public and to satisfy ourselves as a society that the cause of death is not in question. We have an obligation to make sure the cause of death was either of natural causes, or we have to know whether it was of unnatural causes. We have to know whether some individual, or some group, should, or can be, held responsible for the death of that individual.

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

The balancing act is very, very difficult. In fact, I believe we have failed, in many respects, in the past to thoroughly investigate the causes of death.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know of stories and anecdotal reports of deaths which have been reported as suicides; deaths which have been reported as

accidental; deaths which have been reported as of natural causes, which turned out to be of anything but those relatively innocuous kinds of reasons.

The unfortunate fact of the matter is, that in too many instances we have allowed covertly for the death of an individual member of our society under, to say the least, suspicious circumstances. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that is unfortunate.

We know that in the past the death of an individual in a mental institution, the death of an individual in our other institutions, whether it was one for the handicapped, or whether it was an institution for the care of the infirm, or whether it was an institution to care for orphaned or indigent or whatever, the fact of the matter is, we have treated very lightly the lives and the personal security of individual members of our society.

I think that this Bill, and its introduction in 1975, was perhaps the first recognition of the fact that society has an obligation to protect its least secure members, that we all recognize we do not have as serious a problem with respect to the homeless, perhaps, as they do in other jurisdictions, but the fact of the matter is we do have homeless people in Manitoba.

We simply cannot afford to, nor should we want to, look the other way when someone with no apparent place of residence, with no apparent family ties, dies. We cannot afford to assume that it was natural causes. We have an obligation to investigate, to inquire and satisfy ourselves that this death was not preventable; to satisfy ourselves that this death was not as a result of foul play; to satisfy ourselves that this death was not as a result of some form of abuse.

Not only have we become a more just society, not only have we become more cognizant of our collective responsibility to protect our fellow man, we also have come to understand that abuse and neglect is all around us.

One of the elements of this Bill refers to the reporting of suspicious deaths of children in care. A particular obligation now of the medical examiner is to investigate the deaths of children in care. I think that is a very important first step.

The obligation goes further, of course, and that is that we all recognize now it is not only children in care by others that are in jeopardy, we recognize that child abuse is a serious fact of life within our social structure.

Abuse has many faces, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that abuse can occur as a form of neglect, that, in fact infants in our society, yes, even in Manitoba, are dying of neglect, are dying of malnutrition, and their deaths deserve to be investigated and deserve to be reported on as much as the death of any other individual.

The problem of child abuse is not the only problem we face. We have the very serious problem of spousal abuse, of wife abuse. We are all shocked when we hear figures like those put forward by the Status of Women Report on Wife Abuse, which suggested that one in 10 women in our society is abused.

Clearly, if one in 10 women is abused by her spouse or partner, in one form or another, it follows very logically

that deaths are occurring as a result of that abuse, deaths that are being reported as a fall down a flight of stairs, deaths that are being reported as a fall on an icy sidewalk, deaths that are being reported as accidental, self-inflicted, suicidal or whatever.

If we know that one in 10 women is subject to abuse we know that deaths are occurring as a result of this. Here too we have an obligation not simply to accept the family's, the spouse's, explanation for the death, we have an obligation to extend ourselves and to investigate the circumstances, or in this case to elect some other independent person to do that investigation on behalf of society in general.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a multitude of problems which confront us, a multitude of situations which result in the deaths of individual Manitobans that need to be addressed. Child abuse we all recognize. We know from news reports and perhaps from our own communities that in fact the neglect and the physical abuse of children is leading to death, and we want their circumstances investigated, and we want the parental obligations, the obligations of guardians, the obligations of those in care to be challenged in those kinds of circumstances. We cannot allow people who care for children, whether they be parents or surrogates, to abuse and to neglect children to the point of death.

* (1450)

It does not just end with spousal abuse or child abuse. The fact of the matter is, there is growing evidence that our society is also victim to elder abuse. There are unsuspected cases, or unreported cases of elder abuse and perhaps elder death in our society as well. That abuse tends to come at the hands of family, and in many cases comes at the hands of children. It is almost inconceivable that could happen, but we are faced with the reality that it does happen.

If we know that elder abuse is a fact, if we know that the abuse can be financial, but it also can be physical, it can be neglect, if we know those are facts in our society then we can only suppose, and I think legitimately suppose, that deaths are occurring as a result of that kind of abuse as well.

So we have to expand our horizons. What started off as a reasonably good Fatality Chief Medical Examiner certain powers to investigate, I think needs to be expanded at this point to encompass the fact that we recognize that there are many other kinds of abuse in our society and I have named just three. There may be other kinds of abuse, and certainly we all know that people die as a result of violence, acts of violence, acts of brutality, criminal acts and those of course have always been investigated by the Chief Medical Examiner.

What we are doing now is saying that it is not just good enough to investigate the obvious, it also may be necessary to investigate those situations that are very uncomfortable, and believe me these are uncomfortable. The obligations that we put on the Chief Medical Examiner and those whom he chooses to appoint as his officials are extremely onerous. The obligations that we put on these individuals include those of interfering in the rights of privacy. We give

them the obligation of interfering in the natural grieving process to ascertain more facts and determine, with some degree of certainty, how a death has occurred.

It is certainly not an easy task. I do not think that it is one that any of us would like to undertake. It calls for the skills of a diplomat and the eyes of a scientist because we all know that the explanations for fatalities can be very plausible, but they can also be very illusory. We have to make sure, and the medical examiner has to be sure that the facts are known.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) outlined very briefly the reporting procedures and I think the Bill makes it very clear how an inquiry is to be conducted, and how the report is to be filed, and what it is to include. One of the questions that I will be asking the Minister of Justice when we move to committee is whether those criteria need to be expanded, whether in fact we are not unduly limiting by legislation the kinds of inquiries and the approach that the medical examiner can take to these investigations.

The Inquiry as to Deaths, Section 7(5) says, may make a prompt inquiry with respect to: (a) the cause of death; (b) the manner of death; the identity and age of the deceased; the date, and time and place of death; circumstances under which the death occurred; and subject to Subsection 9, whether the death warrants an investigation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless we are to assume that, for example, the date, time and place of death is to be expanded, or the manner of death, does that allow, for example, the medical examiner to call witnesses? I am not certain in here whether the medical examiner is, for example, allowed to subpoena family members to testify. Does the medical examiner have—perhaps the Minister can indicate in some subsequent remarks or one of my colleagues who might want to speak to this Bill can indicate whether his powers are expansive enough so that he can make inquiries of those who are most likely to know of the circumstances of a death. It is not clear.

We certainly believe, I believe anyway, that the broadest possible powers have to be given to the medical examiner to conduct his investigation. It can no longer simply be a pro forma examination of the body. It also has to involve, when we are talking about the manner of death, the right of the medical examiner to go beyond the evidence and to talk to additional individuals, whoever they might be, who have some knowledge. That obligation has to extend to the person being examined. It is not good enough just to give the medical examiner the power, we also have to give him sufficient authority to enforce that power so that he can in fact make people come forward with information to testify, if you will, in front of the medical examiner.

I know the Minister of Justice has said that we want to move this process from the quasi-judicial into a more informal process and that will include involving, for example, he mentioned nurses. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a danger in that course of action. The danger is this. Once you remove the process from a quasi-judicial process, once you remove the requirement for

an oath, the requirement for rules of evidence, et cetera, the informal process can very quickly become less effective. It can become less effective in terms of finding the truth and so we also need to know—while it should be informal, it should be relaxed—that when people come forward under an inquiry type of situation, very often somebody has something to hide, that is a simple fact of the matter.

If you are investigating a suspicious death—regardless of what suspicions you might have, or how the death occurred, or what manner of the death—someone may have something to hide. Certainly the medical examiner has to have the power to extract the truth. The process cannot be so informal, the rules so flexible, that people are not obligated to tell what they know, and that there is not some penalty should they not be prepared to fulfill that obligation or should they knowingly try to subvert that process. There should be some penalty.

There is no doubt that the powers that we are vesting in this medical examiner are really the combined powers of the entire Judicial System because this medical examiner is not only the prosecuting attorney, he is also the judge and jury, and makes the sentence because his report is the basis upon which further action is going to be taken, whether it is a formal investigation, a coroner's inquest, or whether criminal charges in fact may be laid.

So the Attorney General may want to clear up—and perhaps some of my other colleagues who are more familiar with the legal requirements of this new informal process, may want to provide me with some information or edify me with respect to the role and the obligations and the powers of the Chief Medical Examiner because it is not clear here what powers he is actually going to have beyond the power to initiate an inquiry and, following the terms of reference in the Bill, look into certain matters surrounding a death.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to move away from the specifics of the Bill and talk about the cause for concern and that is the basis for the medical examiner launching his investigation and preparing his report. As I said, the evidence that was previously used to launch an inquiry was generally evidence (a) of a criminal act, and (b) there had to be, or was normally, substantial physical evidence which supported a prima facie case being made for the death not being of natural causes. That is what we are at right now because the cause for concern, the very broad and general parameters under which this investigation is going to take place, I guess are—well, they are welcome. We certainly believe that there needs to be those broader reasons for investigating.

* (1500)

They are also subject to their own form of abuse, that the medical examiner's decision to investigate is going to be viewed from time to time in a given case as a form of harassment, as a form of infringement on the rights of privacy, a form of infringement on the integrity of either the individual who is deceased or the family. The fact of the matter is that we are leaving

open the whole question of how the investigator decides what are legitimate causes for concern, what is going to trigger this inquiry. It is a very difficult area, we have to understand how we are phrasing this particular legislation. We have to be very careful on the wording in this legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I digress only because it is a point that needs to be made. When we were asked to review the drinking and driving legislation, the amendments to The Highway Traffic Act and we were presented with a Bill by the Government, we saw a fairly small piece of legislation. In the first review, there were more than a dozen amendments to the legislation. Subsequent to that, the Government discovered that its legislation may not stand a constitutional challenge and decided to introduce other amendments. The Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) has raised this on a number of occasions that the legislation again had to be amended. A substantial number of amendments were introduced in the process. We do not want this to happen to this legislation. We have to be very careful.

When the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) starts talking about expanding the cause for concern clause which trigger an inquiry, we have to be concerned about two things. We have to be supportive of the Bill because it does allow for investigation of circumstances that on the surface may not appear unusual. The Chief Medical Examiner who is a professional, I presume would be some form of pathologist of some kind, is in a good position hopefully to make the correct decision about whether investigation is necessary.

The reasons for undertaking that investigation are not spelled out here and perhaps the only way that this can operate legitimately is to have the examiner make the decision. If he has to go with his instinct, Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe we have to accept that as well. Let us face it, as I said earlier there are all kinds of deaths where there is no obvious cause of death. Deaths can occur because of things that are ingested, create no external symptoms, no visible physical evidence that there has been some form of criminal act. So the investigator is going to have to use his judgment and we all believe that is necessary.

Cases of neglect whether it is elder neglect or child neglect are not simple cases to present firm and solid evidence. The fact of the matter is that in neglect, in cases where children have died from malnutrition or exposure, hypothermia, again proving that there was some malicious intent, some neglect is very difficult. The medical examiner has all of those things to contend with under these new provisions, the expanded provisions that he has given.

On the other side of it, you have the cases where the medical examiner may suspect that there is cause for concern. He may in fact end up making his judgment that investigation is required and the investigation may subsequently turn out to have no merit, that in fact there was not cause for concern. Clearly in those cases, individual family members of the deceased person may have legitimate cause for concern, and we also have to balance their rights, as the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) suggested. We have to make sure that

somehow the work and the activities of the Chief Medical Examiner do not become a means of harassing, a means of interfering unduly with the grieving process and with the family's traumatic period.

We also have to worry about the integrity of the person who is under suspicion, who is believed to have caused or contributed to in one way or another the death of another individual. A serious, in effect, accusation. One which obviously has to have a system for addressing wrongful suspicion. I do not know if there is such a legal term, but I think you understand my meaning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There has to be a way of making sure that there is an out for people who are abused by this system. Abused is perhaps too strong a word, perhaps the word is misused. I am not suggesting for a minute that any medical examiner is going to intentionally commence a process to impugn the reputation, to attack an individual or a family member, but it may happen because of the new broader guidelines that the Chief Medical Examiner and his office are working under.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the more important, from my perspective, provisions of this new piece of legislation is the mandatory reporting and investigation of the death of a child in care. Only too recently, Manitoba has been witness to the death of children who were supposedly in the care of child caring agencies in the Province of Manitoba.

The death of any child, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is unfortunate and heart wrenching but the death of a child who is supposedly in the care of a child caring agency is really a violation of our sense of what is right and fair and just. We certainly are very supportive of the notion that these kinds of deaths have to be investigated thoroughly. Again, my concern is that as I said earlier, as this case is developed, clearly where there is in fact some reason, some genuine cause for concern, there are going to be witnesses, people called before the Chief Examiner who have every reason to attempt to mislead, to attempt to subvert this process.

Even in cases, and perhaps even more likely, where someone is in care, because we are going to be dealing with professionals, and in the cases of child death that were reported in Manitoba when children were in care, we know that social workers and nurses, for example, had access to information which should have rung alarm bells.

We know that in one case in particular—and I am not going to mention the individual or the community—nurses, community workers, and officials in the community were aware of the neglect that was going on in a particular case. When the medical examiner comes to investigate these kinds of circumstances, he is going to be faced with the obtuseness, if you will, of professionals who know that they had some responsibility or should have taken some action or set some course of action to prevent this tragedy and did not.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are getting into a very difficult area where the medical examiner will be attaching blame to individuals and, in many cases, professionals who clearly should have some additional

responsibility placed upon them. It is going to create some friction within the system. Certainly it is going to create some consternation among child caring agencies where, because of their case loads perhaps, we are all aware of the fact that social workers in this province in many cases carry case loads that are far beyond the national norm and perhaps far beyond what we can reasonably expect case workers to handle, but they are handling them. They have an obligation and we are now going to allow the medical examiner to investigate, or we are not going to allow, we are going to require the medical examiner to investigate these kinds of cases and it is important that we do it. We should recognize that it is going to agitate, it is going to cause these people some degree of concern because of their heavy responsibilities, but it needs to be done.

* (1510)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the one area that I would like to hear more on from the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) is in the area of reporting of deaths, cause for concern of deaths that occur in hospitals. This is one area where we as a society have not moved forcefully enough in my opinion. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gets into an area where the medical examiner begins to question the motivation, the actions, the course of actions, set out by professionals.

In one case now—in this case we are requiring an investigation where a death occurs in the care of an agency, so if one of our Regional Family Services Agencies has a child in care an investigation of the death is automatic. If we have a child in the Manitoba Development Centre who dies, a report and investigation by the Chief Medical Examiner is automatic.

What about the obligation of the Chief Medical Examiner of deaths in our hospitals? We and you are all too familiar with the stories of negligence, the stories of malpractice, that are commonplace quite frankly in our society. Medical practitioners, doctors, and physicians make mistakes.

(Mrs. Gwen Charles, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I am wondering whether the Chief Medical Examiner is going to get into this area, because rightly or wrongly the Manitoba Medical Association, and the medical profession in general, is one of those professions, because of the nature of their job, it is very difficult to establish negligence, very difficult to establish whether a professional mistake has been made.

Clearly if we are going to have concern for suspicious deaths in the province, if we are going to as a society say it is important to know the real reasons why this person died, whether it is an infant, or an adolescent, or an elderly person, if we are going to know, then we have an obligation to question the activities, to question the practices, of our professionals.

Now this Bill says, yes, we can do it for child care workers. It says, yes, we are going to open up the process and we are going to encourage nurses, others involved in health care, in child care, to get involved in the process.

My question is: are we going to challenge through this legislation the predominance of the Manitoba Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and hospitals in general, in their treatment of suspicious deaths?

Quite frankly we are at a state right now where the jargon, the medical jargon, where the treatment techniques, the drugs that are being used are so complicated, where we know really so little about what they do to us, as lay people, that I think it is important that this additional responsibility be placed somewhere, and perhaps the Chief Medical Examiner is also in this area.

So I want to know what the process is, and perhaps it is the fact that I have not read the Bill thoroughly, Madam Acting Speaker, I have read many sections of it, but I would like to know what the process is for the reporting, or the investigation, of deaths that occur in our hospitals?

I recognize that the current practice is a physician signs a death certificate, and most people in society are not privileged to have the necessary information to make informed decisions about the merits of the cause of death and the perspective I guess or the advice or the report of a particular physician. I think it is important that we assure people, the broader public, that, yes, someone actually has this responsibility and that we willingly gave that responsibility to the Chief Medical Examiner. It is something that we as legislators, as citizens, will support in the course of his duty.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, perhaps the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) can advise us what the Chief Medical Examiner's role is in questioning, as I say, the death certificates provided to the province I guess from medical practitioners. Is there a process for reviewing and reporting on deaths that are suspicious, and who has the obligation for raising the cause for concern?

For example in the most recent examples that we have in the Province of Manitoba the cause for concern was raised by the band, by community members. If for example we have a death in a hospital where the family believes negligence was involved of one sort or another by medical practitioners do they have the right, will an investigation follow? Does the medical examiner have the appropriate authority to challenge? Are we prepared to challenge the supremacy of the Medical Association, the medical profession, when it comes to these determinations?

Mr. Acting Speaker, I said when I started that this legislation was first introduced, The Fatalities Inquiries Act, or its predecessor was introduced in 1975, and at that time we were investigating deaths that really were not suspicious. It was obvious there was some criminal activity, or there was physical evidence of abuse, or whatever. We are now getting into the area of protecting the rights of individuals even though they are the post-mortem rights I guess of individuals, or posthumous rights of individuals. I think we have an obligation as well to challenge some of the icons of our society. We have a right to challenge and be more thorough in our investigation of these matters.

Wednesday, November 29, 1989

Perhaps the Justice Minister (Mr. McCrae) would be so kind in another venue or at committee to address the question of the medical examiner's authority, the authority we are giving him in this Act, with respect to the responsibilities of physicians and surgeons in the province. Are we going to ensure that we are not simply looking at suspicious deaths, which are the result of family disputes, or family neglect? Are we also going to be looking at suspicious deaths that are at the hands of our professionals, particularly our medical professionals?

We seem to have been very careful to include those who care for our children, and that is certainly justifiable. I think we would argue that we should make this Bill and the obligations and responsibilities of the Chief Medical Examiner as broad as possible. Give him the broadest possible mandate and yet within that mandate make sure that he is not authorized, does not have the leeway, to abuse individual rights or if those rights are abused to ensure that there is an appeal process, some form of remedy, for individuals who feel that they have been misused by the process, or who have been under question and in the final analysis no formal complaint is registered.

(Mrs. Gwen Charles, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Charles): Order. By leave, the Bill remains standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko). I believe leave was granted earlier.

BILL NO. 74—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (7)

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation) presented Bill No. 74, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (7); (Loi No. 7 modifiant le Code de la route), for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

* (1520)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Madam Speaker, Madam Acting Speaker, I am not used to that anymore, it used to be a common thing at one time.

Madam Acting Speaker, under Bill No. 74, which is forwarded for legislative approval, this is an annual Bill to respond to any legislative problems that have arisen and been identified through the past year. None of the proposed amendments may be described as new legislative initiatives, rather they are necessary to legislatively respond to the current administrative realities carried out by the department and Manitoba's law enforcement agencies on a daily basis.

As general examples of the provisions within the Bill, the Criminal Code section numbers referred to in the Act are amended to reflect the renumbering of the Criminal Code of Canada. Legislation is added to authorize the department to award driver licence merit marks to out-of-province drivers and to more equitably

grant new residents of Manitoba licences based on their out-of-province licence.

The Bill also ensures that commercial vehicles are properly insured; provisions affecting bicycles are amended to ensure bicycle safety in the Province of Manitoba. Sections of the Act have also been amended to ensure all traffic offences may be enforced on parking lots as they are now enforced upon highways.

In summary, Bill No. 74 is an annual housekeeping amendments package to ensure the Act is updated so it may continue to serve as the mandate for highway traffic safety in the Province of Manitoba.

Madam Acting Speaker, I want to indicate that we had prepared packages of explanatory notes which I have forwarded to both critics.—(interjection)—Licence plates, we are not dealing with in this one; that will have to come at a different time. We have forwarded that information which basically will indicate the existing legislation. It also indicates the proposed legislation and has explanatory notes attached to it. So as I indicated before, these are basically housekeeping Bills and, as Members speak to this, I look forward to their comments on it as well as when we get into committee to see that we can get into detail in terms of exactly what the impacts are. Thank you.

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans), that debate be adjourned on this Bill.

MOTION presented and carried.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 34—THE LOAN ACT, 1989

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Charles): On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 34, The Loan Act, 1989 (Loi d'emprunt de 1989), standing in the name of the Member for St. Johns, the Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Madam Acting Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to add my comments to the record on the Bill before us, Bill No. 34, The Loan Act, 1989. I appreciate the opportunity to make some general comments about the economic situation in this province and the fiscal approach by this Government to those problems and to the general critical situation facing Manitobans on the economic front.

As I mentioned in my very brief remarks on Bill No. 27, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, I stated that I felt the Government of the Day, the Progressive Conservatives of this province, as well as to some extent Members of the Liberal Opposition—at least based on their comments in the speeches pertaining to Bills like 27 and 34—showed a preoccupation with the accounting aspect of Government, with lines on the ledger, with cash flow, with revenue fluctuations, with size of the deficit. I wanted to leave the message then and want to do it again today that there is more in Government

and more to our responsibility than totally being preoccupied with cash flow, with the lines on the ledger, with the state of our fiscal situation in sheer monetary fiscal terms. In so doing, I wanted to point out the necessity of always looking at the human aspect to the problems that we are facing in this province and the need for the Government of the Day to provide a balanced approach to its response to those very serious problems.

It was particularly interesting to read the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Manness) speech in response to Bills 27 and 34 where again we see that kind of focus and preoccupation. Words are used over and over again, like we need this as a fiscal shock absorber, we need to address the volatility in our economy. The plea I want to make today in the House, as I tried to do so on Bill No. 27, is to ask all Members in the House to consider the volatility in our communities and in our families of this province, to consider the need for a shock absorber when it comes to people and families and communities.

In that context, I had mentioned and made what I thought was a positive suggestion vis-a-vis Bill No. 27 and put forward the suggestion to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that the Fiscal Stabilization Fund actually be transformed into the family stabilization fund. I think if there is anything that is glaring and staring at us in very stark real terms it is the volatility in our families and our communities. It is the need for a shock absorber when it comes to the crisis, the very definite crisis, the looming problems facing families and communities everywhere in Manitoba.

When one does take a more balanced approach in looking at the economy of Manitoba, the serious fiscal and economic problems, then I think it becomes apparent that the priorities of this Government are all lopsided, are all in one direction, are all concerned with balancing books and good accounting practices, and not in terms at all of looking at the lives of families and people and communities in this province.

We are seeing the effects of that kind of nonchalance when it comes to real problems facing people, and when it comes to a preoccupation with deficit levels and with fiscal accountability, when it comes to the usual economic indicators that have been coming our way day after day over the last number of weeks. We see it in terms of the rising unemployment rates, the record number of people leaving this province, the terrible situation facing our housing, the bankruptcy rate, and the list goes on and on. But I think that is one clear set of indicators that sends a message to this Government, that of course is it must start addressing those problems in a real way and balance its approach to our economy.

* (1530)

There is another set of indicators that also drives home that point, and in my mind and in the mind of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party requires the Government of the Day to actually reassess its priorities and put new emphasis on issues and programs and policies that will actually address the volatility in our families and in our communities.

Those indicators are not always so readily available, not always so tangible, not always so clear from an accounting practice point of view or a cost benefit analysis, but they are very real indeed. Those indicators include the stress on the family today, the incredible pressure facing families attempting to be good parents and also contributing members of the labour force. Those indicators include a growing signal in terms of devastating effect on the lives of individuals, whether it be in terms of the growing suicide rate, the growing rate in terms of family break-ups, the growing rate in terms of addictions of whatever sort, the growing incidence, at least publicly revealed, in terms of family violence, domestic violence, child abuse, wife battery, the growing incidence in terms of sheer desperation or emotional upheaval on the lives and part of families and communities everywhere.

Those are the kinds of indicators I think we need to look at in a much more serious way and put forward the case to the Conservative Government that it is not good enough to stash away a lump sum of money, like the \$200 million in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, on the proviso that be used in terms of addressing revenue shortfalls or rising deficits, or a balancing-the-book approach. It is absolutely essential for the Government of the Day to look at the availability of those kinds of funds and address the real pressing emergency critical issues of the day we are seeing hit us in a very hard, very serious way everyday that we are here in the Legislature.

It should be enough for this Government to act on the basis of the statistics. So I will try once more to put some of them forward even though it is somewhat of a repeat in terms of statements made previously in this Chamber, but it is important to recognize we are looking at a very high poverty level in this province. It is estimated that one out of every five to six families in Manitoba is poor. Some 50,000 families it is estimated, here in Manitoba officially, live in poverty and that is certainly a dramatic increase from the statistics of nearly a decade ago.

It is estimated that one in every four Manitoba families with children under 16 earned less than \$20,000 per year, in the year for which statistics are available, 1986. It is estimated that one child in every four in this province lives in poverty. In all of Canada, Madam Acting Speaker, one child in every six is growing up poor. To relay some statistics that should be all too familiar with Members in this House, let us keep in mind as well the high number of poor families in Manitoba that live, that are single parent headed families, headed up by women and many of those families are living in absolute dire poverty.

Let us also keep in mind that children, it is estimated, make up about 40 percent of people receiving social assistance, and the most current statistics show there has been an incredible jump in numbers of children who are being forced to live on social assistance. These statistics do not include the numbers of children and families who are living on reserves in this province. Putting it all together, there is a very critical, serious, economic situation facing the lives of families and children everywhere in this province.

Wednesday, November 29, 1989

A lot of this has been documented very clearly throughout the past number of years. As we all know this is the U.N. decade for children and there has been a clear documentation and emphasis on the poverty, on the difficult life experiences facing children on all parts of this globe, and certainly here in Manitoba and in Canada we are no exception. The statistics are glaring. The situation is serious and it is worthy of being addressed by the Government of the Day, whoever the Government of the Day, if we are serious about guaranteeing a future for our children and assuring some sort of happy prospect in the future.

Those statistics—the documentation has been clearly outlined by a number of credible organizations that I am sure the Members of the Conservative Government will have to take quite seriously. They cannot ignore those statistics. They cannot ignore the work of organizations, such as the Canadian Child Welfare Association, Canadian Council on Children and Youth, Canadian Council on Social Development, the Canadian Institute of Child Health, the Child Poverty Action Group, the Family Service Canada and the Vanier Institute of The Family. All of those organizations have done an incredible amount of research and work on issues pertaining to children and families and have made some very clear recommendations when it comes to Government priorities to deal with the crisis we are all facing.

As those organizations together say in a leaflet entitled *Investing in Families With Children*, which is in essence what we are talking about when it comes to dealing with Bills like Bill No. 34 and Bill No. 27, and assessing the priorities of the Government of the Day, and questioning whether or not the Government of the Day is missing out on a whole critical aspect in our society, because of that preoccupation with accounting and with balancing books and with loan practices and with revenue fluctuations and with slush funds and putting money aside in the event of fiscal volatility, and the need for fiscal shock absorber and so on, this Bill is no exception to that pattern we have seen.

This Bill again shows where the priorities are with this Government. It is a Bill preoccupied with that side of the equation, only the cost benefit analysis side of the equation, not with the human aspect of the serious problems facing us, and its approach that is not unlike what we have seen over the past 18 months, whether we are talking about this Bill, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, the budgetary measures of this Government, budgetary practices and some of the cutbacks, and stand-still policies of this Government on key areas facing families and communities.

All in all it tells me we have a Government that is imbalanced in its approach and ability to address the economic fiscal situation facing this province. A Government needs, through debates like this, to rethink that direction and to put more emphasis and more understanding into the issues facing people, facing working families, facing children.

As you can see from Bill 27, the focus is clearly on borrowing when it comes to a number of Crown corporations, a number of business enterprises or initiatives, but it is quite glaring when one looks at Bills

27 and 34. There is absolutely no mention, no reference, no indication that this Government is dealing with the human issues of the day, with the people priorities of the day, with the volatility in families and communities.

* (1540)

That is precisely what I believe this Government should be doing when it presents its thrust through Bills like 34 and 27. As I said, the number of organizations that have taken on this decade, the decade for convention on the rights of the child, have discovered a number of important findings and made a number of significant recommendations that must be dealt with by the Government of the Day here in Manitoba and must be taken into account when it is looking at its fiscal policies and putting forward Bills like 34 and 27.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

Those organizations I have previously mentioned have put forward, as I indicated, a brochure on *Investing in Families With Children* and we are talking today about investment. We are talking about the revenue ability of the Government. We are talking about the deficit situation and I think it is time we talk about investment in terms of people, in terms of children and families. Those organizations have stated that as families we believe the care and nurturing of children must be a shared responsibility. Over the years we have demonstrated that belief through numerous support measures. Have those measures kept up with changing times and structures?

Groups go on to point out that more than 1 million Canadian children live in poverty. That is up 120,000 since 1980, and over 60 percent of children in mother-led families are poor. Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are shocking statistics. That is a shocking commentary on a wealthy country like Canada, a shocking commentary when you translate those statistics to the provincial level and apply them to Manitoba.

The fact that proportion of our children live in poverty here in our midst, here in the Province of Manitoba, the fact that 60 to 70 percent of children in single-parent families headed by women are living in poverty, are issue enough, reason enough, for this Government to reassess its whole approach on the fiscal front, to look at its borrowing policies in terms of priority, to look at the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and think about reassigning, redirecting, repriorizing priorities. Think seriously about a constructive suggestion that has been made on the part of the New Democratic Party. That is a resource, a fund, to deal with family volatility, to deal with the need for a shock absorber in many of our communities, to look at a family stabilization fund, to look at borrowing practices that reflect that the Government of this Day takes those issues very seriously and is prepared to put the fiscal policy tools at its fingertips to better use to better meet the needs of Manitoba families and communities.

I think it is important in that context to again focus on why here in this province so many children are poor, why so many families are suffering economically and emotionally. As we all know, or should know, children

are poor because their parents are poor and the reasons are therefore many.

As some of the documents put out by the organizations involved in documentation around the Convention on the Rights of the Child have indicated, parents are poor because of unemployment, parents are poor because of low wages, parents are poor because of women earning low wages, parents are poor because of inconsistent and inadequate Government income supports.

It is clear that when family income declines, children suffer. Let us keep in mind that in 1975 a minimum wage worker could earn 81 percent of the poverty level income for a family of three. By 1986 the same worker could earn only 46 percent. Let us also keep in mind that the real purchasing power of Canadian families is falling. The average Canadian earnings bought \$500 less in 1986 than in 1975 and of course, let us not forget, as we should know now that the gap between the rich and the poor in this province, in this country, is growing.

The poorest 40 percent of Canadians received less of Canada's total income in 1986 than in 1980. At the same time, as we on this side of the House have tried to stress upon the Government of the Day, the wealthiest 40 percent increased their share of total income. The costs of all of that are too numerous to mention, but let me take a stab at a few of them.

Let us not ignore the very direct and immediate effects of such an economic situation and such poverty when it comes to the children of this country and this province. The effects are clear and devastating.

Infant mortality is twice as common among poor children. Twice as many poor children fall behind in school. Canadian families struggle to find affordable housing. Rents rise rapidly as we all know and the poverty strikes. The poverty of those families clearly impacts their ability to provide the most basic of services, the most essential amenities, of course that of housing, health and food.

My question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Government of the Day: why not rethink its fiscal policies and its accounting practices and its ledger-line approach to Manitoba's economy and its fixation on cost benefit analysis and its determination to put in place fiscal shock absorbers and measures to deal with fiscal volatility? Why not take some of that energy, those resources and those tools and invest in children and invest in families in this province? Put in place a shock absorber for families. Put in place a family stabilization fund. Put in place programs and services and policies that will ensure that we are trying to at least begin to respond to the volatility facing the family, be it on the stress on the family that is resulting in incredible problems today, and will result in even greater problems down the road, problems that will cost us many, many more times the dollars that it would take now to address some of those critical issues.

Why are we dealing with a Loan Act that focuses on borrowing for Crown corporations and no mention of families and children? Why are we dealing with a Fiscal

Stabilization Fund when there are so many critical needs facing working families and children in this province? Why above all in the context of these kinds of Bills and these measures, are we faced with on a day-to-day basis, either cutbacks or absolutely no action and no movement when it comes to very critical issues and policies facing children and families?

Why are we dealing with a crisis in our day care system when the Government is prepared to move on so many other fronts and to look at a \$200 million Fiscal Stabilization Fund to be a shock absorber on the fiscal front when it is not prepared to be a shock absorber on the family front? Why is it prepared to set aside that kind of money and save it for a serious volatility in our economy and our fiscal situation and not deal with the absolute incredible volatility in our families?

Why is this Government not prepared to deal with the fact that this province has the highest run away rate anywhere in the country? Why is this Government not putting in place measures to help families deal with that serious problem, help children feel that there are other solutions than running away from their homes and their communities? Why are we faced with a child and family service agency system in crisis? Why are those agencies sitting there with uncertain direction from the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), not knowing at all how they are supposed to deal with their deficits and how they are supposed to keep up with the growing number of cases before them?

Why is this Government not prepared, if it is prepared to come up with a Fiscal Stabilization Fund and set aside money for fiscal volatility, why is it not prepared to set aside some funds and look at the crisis at the child and family level and ensure some stability in that system so that those workers and those agencies can get on with the work that we all agree is important, that of prevention as well as protection and education?

* (1550)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on every front affecting children and families we have either seen no action or regressive action from this Government. Whether we are talking about children and families where the parents have made a decision to look after those children full time in the home or whether we are looking at children in families where the parents are out in the labour force full time, this Government has failed to act and has in fact set back the clock in many ways when it comes to those critical issues.

When we look at children in home settings where the parents are determined to look after their children full time, this Government is not prepared to value the importance of parent-child centres and provide resources in the community to ensure that those parents have resources to turn to, help to turn to, advice to seek when abuse is a potential in that home and when they are dealing with the emotional and psychological problems that result from isolation and lack of resources.

Surely if this Government is serious about stability in this province then it must look first at families and

Wednesday, November 29, 1989

at children and if it is serious about that then it will look at resources for all families including those who are devoted to looking after their children full time.

Equally important is the absolute necessity for this Government to once and for all recognize the reality of working families in this province and to make a commitment to ensure quality care for the children of those families. If we are talking about volatility, let us look at the volatility in our child care system because of the refusal by this Government to put anything other than insignificant funds in that direction, there is a crisis and I will just—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Order. I hesitate to interrupt the Honourable Member, however, the rule states that debate must be directly relevant to the question under consideration and I am waiting for that to happen. I have not heard it yet, so I would ask the Honourable Member to stick to Bill 34 which is under consideration at this time.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I indicated at the outset, I was certainly speaking to Bill 34 and raising the general economic situation facing this province and calling upon this Government to assess its setting of priorities through Bills like 34, 27, and general budgetary announcements. I have indicated throughout my speech that Bill 34 gives us a set of priorities, an indication about this Government's priorities about where it is planning to go or how it is addressing the critical issues of the day. Those priorities are why we are looking at Bill 34 and Bill 27 or any other fiscal statement or regulation or legislation. It tells me that this Government is not serious about putting its resources and its fiscal tools it has at its fingertips toward creating stability in our families and communities.

All this Government appears to be doing is preparing to find ways to create stability solely on an accounting basis, on a fiscal basis, on a cash flow basis. Even Michael Walker, I might point out, from the Fraser Forum is prepared to admit that now and again.

I am sure the Members of the Government will be familiar with this publication. It is probably bedside reading for many of them. It is certainly not a publication I spend too much time reading. However, one article did strike me as I looked through the most recent publication of November 1989, an article by Michael Walker entitled "The Limits to Economic Analysis." Even Michael Walker is prepared to say cost-benefit analysis is not always the best indicator of a healthy economy. He writes, one of the main tools of economics is cost-benefit analysis. This is a means of decision-making in which economists calculate the total costs involved in a particular course of action, then accumulate the total benefits associated from the course of action, and if the benefits exceed the costs advise that this would be a wise course of action to undertake.

There are limitations on this kind of analysis which sometimes are lost sight of by zealous practitioners of economic science. We have heard a lot of zealots of economic science in this House on both Bills 34 and 27. Michael Walker goes on to apply this new-found

knowledge towards a particular example of providing a better way to provide Meals on Wheels to elderly, and he looked particularly at the City of Vancouver and came up originally with the suggestion, if only we provided everyone with a microwave then we would be all set in terms of a more efficient way to provide this program.

As he concludes, the problem is the analysis does not take into account the benefit which is created for the individuals who actually deliver the Meals on Wheels. Most of the volunteers who deliver the meals are themselves retired persons who undoubtedly get enormous satisfaction from their participation in the program in the sense they feel they are doing something worthwhile and contributing to the community. There is no way an economic analysis can conclude such a calculation and hence no way that an economic analysis could finally determine whether or not the Meals on Wheels program as currently structured makes any sense.

All we can say is that if microwaves were provided, the cost of delivering the meals in this program would be reduced. I raise that as a way to try to make this Government see the light of day when it comes to overall priorities. No one is disagreeing with the need for good fiscal planning and management. Of course we recognize the importance of the necessity of this Government to present before us a Loan Act which does require a borrowing of funds for a good number of significant projects. I am not about to go into the list of those items because I think what is important in the debate on Bills like this is the overall. What this amounts to in an overall sense is what context it is placed in and what message we are sending the people of Manitoba.

I want to argue again that this Bill in conjunction with Bill 27, in conjunction with budget addresses, in conjunction with Estimates, in conjunction with some of the program cutbacks that have been forthcoming from this Government in conjunction with some of the regressive actions taken, there is one message forthcoming from this Government to the people of Manitoba and that is it is concerned more about fiscal volatility than with real volatility affecting individuals, families, and communities.

It is certainly the view of Members of the New Democratic Party that we begin to redirect resources and planning tools into those problem areas and realize they are the significant issues of the day. They are the critical issues of the day requiring concerted Government action, requiring remaking of borrowing practices and legislation like The Loan Act to reflect those priorities. It requires the stashing away of funds as we see through the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to be redirected toward family stabilization. It requires a whole new set of undertakings when it comes to children and the family.

I have mentioned the absolute critical need for addressing the instability, the volatility in our day care system and the fact that inaction on the part of this Government, refusal to recognize the professional nature of day care workers has resulted in day care workers leaving the field, has resulted in parents being

very concerned about quality care and has in effect threatened that which is most precious to working families in this province. That is a stable, quality, accessible, affordable child care system.

* (1600)

As well, at a number of other fronts this Government has shown its inability to recognize the need to direct resources and energy and fiscal abilities to meeting the needs of people when it comes to the physically handicapped and mentally handicapped, two areas where this Government has either shown very little understanding or in fact has embarked upon some very regressive actions. I think the onus on the Government of the Day, the imperative before this Government, is to recognize the volatility, the vulnerability among members of our community who are facing jeopardy because of many different factors, to recognize that the Government of the Day, whatever the Government of the Day, there must be action directed and resources directed to meeting the vulnerability and volatility of those members in our society.

I conclude by pleading once more with the Government of the Day to balance out its approach in terms of Bill 27 and 34. On one hand, with all of its focus on fiscal stabilization, on measures to address fiscal volatility with the human element, with the fact communities are having difficulty surviving, there are families in upheaval, individuals facing personal, emotional and psychological and economic difficulty because this Government has not seen fit to address that end of the spectrum. I would urge it, today, to put some time and energy and thinking and resources into that end of the spectrum. Let us have a balanced approach to fiscal planning and to the economy of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to welcome the opportunity of placing a few comments on the record with respect to this Bill. I would emphasize a few comments I would like to bring to this Chamber's attention and perhaps to the public of Manitoba through our press gallery.

When earlier this year this Government introduced their throne speech, we on this side of the House carefully reviewed what was being presented and at the time their comments stand. My comments with respect to matters relating to responsibilities of the Minister responsible for Industry and Trade (Mr. Ernst), under creating opportunity, where I think in a succinct fashion highlighted some of the concerns that we had, and people around Manitoba, as many small businesses looked forward to some of these things that they were proposing.

On page 3 they say that new trade initiatives will include such efforts as free trade planning workshops, and marketing plans. Very good things to do, but again for a Government that prided itself, or a Party that prided itself, as being managers fell a little short. We thought all right, fine, at least they are getting their act into gear. We are five months into the Free Trade Agreement and these types of things should have been happening the year before. It seemed to be the kind

of work that managers, efficient managers, would do looking forward, anticipating events, instead of running to catch up.

I called the department responsible for this area of Government programming and I checked to confirm that these workshops would be held and, yes, they would be. The Vision Capital Fund, which is included in this Loan Act was again one of the things mentioned in the throne speech and many other initiatives. When I called on that Department of Industry and Trade when they would be having these seminars and workshops they said, well, they were not really scheduled yet, we are working on them. Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I received notice in late September that this is when the workshops were being held.

How much time does it take from the announcement of the program in the throne speech in the middle of May and the time when the program actually begins? This is indeed seemingly a history of this Government's performances. Well, we will announce a whole bunch of things and then you guys can wait, and hang around maybe, and see when they are actually going to come into force.

The same thing with the announcement about the Manitoba Business Start Program, which is part of this Act that we have before us. Well, the Minister of Industry and Trade and his First Minister (Mr. Filmon) took great pride in being able to announce this program dealing with a need that they felt had to be addressed, and rightfully so. (interjection)- The Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Ernst) seems to suggest I am not speaking on the Bill and he should perhaps familiarize himself because this is one of the programs that his department is not providing to Manitobans, and it is in this Bill. So maybe he should refresh his memory.

We thought, and many small entrepreneurs across this province, people who were looking to this Government to be the managers of the economy they seem to be, were looking forward to these various programs being in place, and what do we have from this Government? Nothing.

The Business Start Program was announced with great fanfare earlier this year, and rightfully so. I think it is a good program, it is a good initiative. The Bill was introduced on October 13, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If this Government thought that this matter was a priority for them and for Manitobans, why was it introduced on October 13? Why was it introduced several months later after the announcement? If this Minister and this Government felt that this was an important enough program they should have introduced legislation to put this in place immediately after the budget was passed. Why the delay?

The Minister had plenty of opportunity to speak to his colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), to introduce this legislation in June. He had plenty of opportunity to introduce it on September 18, September 19, September 20. How many days before October 13 they had an opportunity to introduce this legislation? If it was such a priority why did we have to wait until October 13?

Let us then look at what has happened since October 13 with this legislation. What kind of priority has this

Government placed on this program, and the other initiatives, and the other spending provided for in this Loan Act? Well, let us check, and perhaps the Government House Leader would want to check his own records, the Hansard reports of the various Wednesdays and Fridays when Government Bills are addressed, between October 18 and November 22. Let us take a look at what order, what priority, this Government had for this legislation and this Business Start Program.

On two occasions in the last five months—pardon me, in the last seven weeks the priority of this Government that this Bill be on was No. 2, it was only twice. The priority that this Government placed on this Bill, on two occasions, was in the second position of matters they wanted debated. On two other occasions, the Government placed this on their agenda, agenda they control and solely they control, in the fourth position for debate and discussion in this House. On a couple of opportunities it was not on discussion as a priority for them at all, and another opportunity it was the eighth piece of legislation as one of their priorities, another one it was eighth again, and seventh another opportunity.

When this Government is telling people, Manitobans, who are calling and inquiring about this program that it is the Opposition's fault for holding this up they know themselves that is incorrect. They know themselves that on their legislative priority, this Bill, this Business Start Program, has no priority. They have the audacity to tell Manitobans who call the Minister's office asking about this program it is because of the Opposition. That is incredible, incredible. Crass politics with an issue, a program that many Manitobans were anticipating last May, were then anticipating in June, the next opportunity the Government had to place it before us was in September, and yet they have the audacity of telling Manitobans it is our fault.

Well, they should not look too far. There is an old expression in Ukrainian that loosely translates: do not look too far beyond one's own nose. I think this is an excellent example where the Government needs to look at itself in the mirror and see what priority it has placed on this Business Start Program when it was announced some six months ago.

* (1610)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have had a number of phone calls over the last several weeks asking me what is the story on this program; that the Government has told me, when I have called them, that it is your fault. I said, well, what do you mean? They said, well, it is because you guys are not debating it, or it is caught up in Estimates, or this, or that.

I have said to them: let us look at the facts. Let us look at when this Bill, to introduce this program, was introduced, October 13. For something that was a priority in this Government's throne speech, when rural Manitoba is being ravaged by the actions of the federal Government, this program is being set aside, even on the daily Wednesday and Friday legislative program it is being set aside. The focus of this Bill as set out will be on women and rural Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is a recognition by this Government, and a positive recognition of the important place of assisting women and rural Manitobans to get that jump start on their business, setting it up, producing the jobs. I do not need to go on and spend any more of this legislative Chamber's time dealing with the importance of small business, because I think we all recognize the importance of small business in the creation of jobs.

I think when this Government said that we will specifically focus this program on women entrepreneurs and rural Manitobans, I certainly agree wholeheartedly with them. Women are increasingly and successfully entering the ranks of business owners, and these are the people that we rely on for producing the jobs.

It is also evident from various reports being prepared by organizations like Canadian Federation of Independent Business that there has been a very marked increase in the proportion of women also reporting taxable income. Not only are women who are setting up jobs providing the jobs for Manitobans, but also paying taxes in this province. Yet, a program that was supposed to provide a focus for Manitobans has been neglected by this Government and delayed until it was put on the agenda on October 13.

By 1985, women made up as much as a quarter of all business proprietors reporting taxable returns. When we look through various statistics available, we see that this is becoming an incredibly important aspect to developing the positive economic climate in this province. Yet, we see delays, and then they have the audacity of throwing it back and saying it is the Opposition's fault for delaying it. I have people calling me saying, listen, Minenko, get off your butt and get on with this thing. I am saying our hands are tied, because it is the Government that sets the agenda.

I would certainly call on the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Ernst), call on the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), call on the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond) to speak to their House Leader, get this program and this Bill before the House so we can deal with it quickly and get on with the business of providing these people with the opportunity of building their businesses.

In conclusion, I do not want to delay debate on this Bill and perhaps even in a little short time we will be able to get this Bill into committee. As a result, I would ask the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) and the three Ministers that I have cited before to speak to their House Leader to ensure that this matter gets on to debate in this Legislature in a timely fashion, so that we can get it in place as soon as possible, because we have all seen that we need to provide assistance to people who are looking to create jobs, because we keep seeing jobs disappearing in this province. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, too, would like to speak on this Bill for a minute. What we have before us is a Bill that really grants to the Government the authority to borrow some money to finance its programs into the future. It is asking to

borrow money for the Manitoba Hydro Electric Board, Housing and Renewal, the Telephone System, the Agricultural Credit Corporation, the University of Manitoba and other worthwhile worthy endeavours. It is also asking for money to underwrite some very important economic programs that it has pretended to want to put in place, but it has continually resisted putting in place.

I am frankly surprised to note the Minister for Industry and Trade's (Mr. Ernst) use of the big lie for his willingness to put on the record, to deal with the public and make misrepresentations continuously, to offer barefaced falsehoods, to engage time after time in dealing with the public, to misrepresent what is happening in this Chamber to defend his own incompetence.

I am surprised that this Minister is doing it, because I did not expect it from him. I have seen it from others in this Chamber. He is not one that I thought would deal in that manner. I think he is attempting, or he says he is attempting with these programs to bring forward some initiatives to assist business and to assist people in getting it started in business. He professes an interest in supporting the development of industry in this province, and I think he should address himself to that and spend a little less time copying the tactics of some of his lesser comrades.

We are at a time right now, we are approaching the end of a decade and the beginning of the final decade of this century. It is a time to stop and think a little bit about what we have accomplished in the last 10 years and the challenges that lie ahead of us in the next 10. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are some very serious things that are going to confront us in the next 10 years. There are some very serious challenges for this province and for this country.

I look back on the '80s with some very mixed feelings, because I think this decade has been a celebration of selfishness. I think it has been a celebration of many of the things that are wrong with us as people. It has focused on the acquisition of wealth and enhanced the disparities between those that have resources and those that do not.

I think it is very sad. It is not the kind of wish that I had as I have grown up in this country. It is not the kind of belief that I have fought for and lived for in this country. It is not the kind of country that I hoped that we as Canadians would create. Increasingly it is a country where people are impoverished and forced to live in poverty. It is a country where we do not reach out to them, where we deny needed programs. It is a country where we are beginning to celebrate the other side of that, those that acquire wealth and ignore those that do not have. The principles of redistribution of income in this country seem to have been lost somewhere along the way. That loss has been led by our federal Government and supported by the Members opposite.

I hope that Members will stop and reflect on the recent report that has been put out by the Economic Council of Canada. They have appropriately entitled it "Legacies," because they are talking about what sort

of legacy are we going to leave the next century. I would like to go through some of the things that they are reporting on.

The first thing is a warning to us in the West, because they track the progress in commodity prices since 1965, commodity prices that we are very dependent upon, prices in minerals and forestry, for agricultural products. What they show us is a steady decline in basic real commodity prices over that period of time. In other words, the amount of value that is being received for a unit is declining, is getting smaller.

The only way people have been able to survive in these markets is by becoming more productive and more efficient. The problem with that increase in efficiency has been that it inevitably has been accompanied by a great deal of labour shedding, that people simply have not been able to employ the same numbers of people as they once were in this part of the country. It is a movement that is taking place internationally, but the international environment is such that Canada is increasingly having to compete with countries that never before offered competition for us. We are having to be more strategic in development of markets that will be of some benefit to us in this country and will at the same time allow us to compete with other countries around the world.

The dilemma that creates for us here in Manitoba is that if we wish to move into an area that begins to create jobs in this province, the most significant impact remains in the resource areas, the very areas that we have been attempting to step out of. To have significant investment in the non-resource production, the non-resource extraction, to become truly a producer of value-added goods, there is going to have to be investment by Government into some of the manufacturing sectors.

* (1620)

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) is attempting to bring into pay such a program. In fact I have a phone message which I received at 2:50 this afternoon from a constituent who is waiting anxiously for that program to come in. She has been phoning the department for some time, wanting to make application under that program, like a great many other people, and has not been allowed to because of the delays that this Government has produced in trying to bring their agenda to The Forks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to go a little further with this because there is something that is most troubling. The reality is that for the first time in the last 40 years we are beginning to see net declines in real family income that in fact the income expectations of younger families, those are age 24 or less, have declined by over 15 percent. They are making 15 percent less as a family than they were in the decade that preceded this.

What that is accompanying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a change in the nature of wealth in this province. We have a growing number of people in the bottom quarter of the income range in this province. We have a growing number of people in the upper quarter, and those people

in the mid-income range are growing progressively smaller. It is no wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government, through tax programs, through large expenditures, through inefficient and wasteful management, for a great many reasons is taxing the middle class. It is taxing that middle income group to the point where it is driving people out of it.

It is simply making it impossible for people to acquire the sort of goods and services they were able to acquire even five years ago. Average income for young and middle-aged families for between 1973 and 1986 went up by 13.3 percent. The average income for husbands during that same period of time declined by 4.7 percent in those same families. The only thing that has enabled families to maintain any kind of positive income growth is by moving to two-earner relationships or having children go to work at a much earlier point in their lives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not the kind of vision we had of this country 10 years ago. That is not the kind of vision we had of this country 20 years ago. Certainly as I grew up it was believed that I would have the opportunity to go to school. I would have the opportunity to acquire an education, to learn a trade, but increasingly that option is being shut off from people. People do not have the ability to exercise that option to get educated, because they have to earn income to meet basic necessities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another thing that is happening in this country economically is a change in the nature of the way in which we acquire wealth. We are no longer simply acquiring wealth from the production of basic goods and services. In fact when you look at the dispersion of business school graduates now, you find that more often than not they are going into financial markets. They are going into investment banking. They are going into tax consulting. They are going into areas that indeed restructure the way in which organizations do business, but do not produce production. They are not going into basic product development and marketing. They are going into financial manipulation. They are going into tax and structure manipulation. That is where the money is right now.

The problem is that our productive basis is declining, and what we have in North America, as we move to a third stage of our economy is an economy that is based increasingly on services. The problem that produces for us is outlined, I think quite dramatically, in this legacies report. It is a form of economic endeavour that produces very few jobs, very few spinoffs. If we want to see job creation here in this province, if we want to see people moving back into this province, if we want to find opportunities for people to earn adequate income, if we want to keep people here rather than having them move out, if we want to give opportunities for our children so they can live here, we have to find some way of increasing the manufacture and productivity base in this province.

That is not going to just happen. That is not going to simply happen because the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) does now have a different vision. It is not going to happen because the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology stands and makes snide comments

about the critic on this side. It is going to happen because of some very hard work in an attempt to build some strategic partnerships between education, business and labour in this province. We have to begin stepping back from this confrontative stance that we have taken traditionally in this province. We have to begin to work together to solve this problem, because we are going to be in a very serious state in not too many years.

There is a thing that the Economic Council has tracked for many years. It is called the dependency ratio. What that tracks really is how many people in the work force are dependent upon other people for their existence. What we are finding is that the ratio between older Manitobans, older Canadians, and those below the age of 65 is shifting dramatically. The fastest growing portion of our population right now is above the age of 85 and within that those above 65 are predicted by the third decade to account for more than 60 percent of the total work force. In other words, if we maintain our relationships to retirement and employment patterns as they currently stand in this province, 40 percent of the work force will be supporting or providing the tax base for the other 60 percent.

We can, Mr. Deputy Speaker, maintain that. Interestingly enough, we are wealthy enough as a country, if we can get our spending under control, to maintain that, but that is all we can do. The reason we cannot do more than that is because productivity in this province is not changing. It is not advancing. If anything, productivity is declining, and unless we address that across a range of initiatives, we simply are not going to have the base in place to support any of the programs that we now value so highly.

The Prime Minister has already served notice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the federal Government is going to begin to look at transfer programs, is going to begin to look at those programs that provide support to the elderly in this country, those programs that provide support to our health care system, those programs that provide support to child care, to day care, to those things that support other vulnerable people in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, surely that is not acceptable to any of us. The transfers in the federal Government make up over a third of the income of this province. This April we are going to begin to hear from the Prime Minister of this country that they are being cut back further that we are losing more than we have lost already. They have already been cut back from close to 40 percent some 45 years. The result of that is that we have some very hard decisions to make.

We either begin to cut back on services. We either begin to reduce the amount of health care that we offer people, reduce the kind of job protection that we provide in the community, reduce the support we provide to those people who are less fortunate, less able to provide completely for themselves, or we borrow more. We go more into debt.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, we simply cannot go more into debt. Already the federal Government has achieved a negative

net worth. The amount of capital resources that they have for the first time does not exceed the total national debt. Fortunately in Manitoba we are still on the positive side of that, but we will not be there long if some changes are not made. One of the first ones would be to urge upon the federal Government some action on the interest rate.

Certainly we cannot move to the point where we are uncompetitive with the rest of the world, but right now the ratio between the national interest rate and the U.S. interest rate, which the relationship has been maintained historically, is at a record high. We have traditionally maintained a gap between the two interest rates because of the need to prevent capital outflow to the U.S., but we are now at a point where that gap has become so large that while the U.S. is beginning to ratchet down their interest rates because they see them south of the border as being in serious trouble, we are yet to follow that.

* (1630)

Mr. Speaker, as we move into 1990, we are facing some very significant challenges. I believe we are running the risk of destroying this country. I believe we are running the risk of seeing Canada come apart. The free trade deal is radically changing the nature of communication in North America. We are forging tougher links north and south than we are east to west. The dismantling of national programs, the Unemployment Insurance Program, the dismantling of VIA Rail, the effects of the Meech Lake agreement, although it looks as if we may have seen the end of that, the changes in communication in this country are all representations I think of the way in which the relationships in this country are coming apart. There are regions in Ontario and Quebec relating far more efficiently and far more directly north-south into the major markets on the East Coast than they are into the West. There are soon to be far less barriers to trade north-south than there are to trade east-west.

The question that continuously confronts us is what is this Government doing to put forward Manitoba's position as we look at the changes that confront us over the next decade? What are they going to do to see that there is some kind of economic stimulation in this province, that there is some work done to bring together the various sectors of this economy to work together to solve this problem, because it affects every one of us? What kind of partnerships are they forging with the major sectors of this economy are going to allow us to meet some of these challenges?

As importantly, Mr. Speaker, what are they doing to reverse the trend that is upon us now? What are they doing to reverse the loss of income families are feeling in this country? What are they doing to ensure those people who are less fortunate than others can care for themselves? What are they doing to ensure people will have access to an education in 10 years—all people, not just a few who can afford it?

If I have any fear, any one fear, about what is happening in this country, it is that we have stopped caring. We have stopped caring about other Canadians.

We are only focused on caring about ourselves and those immediately around us. I believe our Prime Minister represents a political philosophy, a political ideology, that is completely unacceptable to the average Canadian. I believe he has put all of his efforts into satisfying his narrow base—that heavy manufacturing, big business, big money base that he relates so strongly to in Quebec and Ontario.

He has lost sight of those fundamental relationships that have built this country, and fundamental relationships that have shaped the way in which we treat each other. We have always said that when somebody was in need, we would help them, we would help take care of them. We always said there are regions in this country less able to build an infrastructure without help from the national Government. We have always said that to hold this country together we had to have national programs that wrapped us all in the same policy structure, the same kind of basic programs and services.

It is already happening in this country that we cannot move freely across this country. Sure, we can do it legally, but we cannot do it economically. It is not possible for any Member of this House to move to Toronto and maintain the standard of living they have here in Manitoba, that is happening now. This federal Government is fostering that, they are supporting it, they are embracing it. They reach out and they embrace every policy that comes from south of that border.

You do not have to walk very far from this building to find a number of homeless people on the streets in this province. How long has it been since we saw that? I worked in social service in this province for many, many years, I do not remember food banks when I first got involved. I do not remember the proliferation of soup kitchens. I do not remember—

An Honourable Member: They looked after themselves at that time.

Mr. Alcock: No, we helped them, too. You know, the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) makes the comment that people looked after themselves and the churches helped, that is true. The churches have been a major force for good in social reform and in social programming in this country throughout history frankly, but we also did too. Back -(interjection)- No, we did, 20 years ago we did, 10 years ago we did, today we do not.

Twenty years ago the Government was a partner with the churches. Twenty years ago the Government was a partner with a whole variety of not-for-profit community groups that worked very hard to provide services to children, to provide services to the elderly, to provide services to the mentally ill, and we have stepped back from that.

I am not saying this Government opposite has done that yet although I think they do not know what they are doing, frankly. I do not think they know how to grapple with some of those problems, but some of them that were created were not created in the last 18 months. This is part of a trend that has gone on

Wednesday, November 29, 1989

for the last 10 years. It is part of a trend represented by Ronald Reagan and the people in the South who stand up in their 32-foot limousines and drive around and say, are we not successful, as they drive past hundreds of homeless people lying in the streets.

Go down to the States for a little while and walk around in some of those cities, and you see people living in doorways, and you see people living under cardboard boxes, and you see people living near heating vents. You do not just see people who are drug addicts, you do not just see people who are mentally ill—although you do see an awful lot of mentally ill people and I think that is just a grotesque sign of what is happening—but you also see children, and you also see women who are attempting to raise children who simply cannot find a place to live.

We have not gone that far, but we are headed there because we are rushing to embrace them. We are rushing to be like them and we see the signs everyday. When I come to work I see the signs just south of the river here. I see people who are living in the bus shelter. It is a little too cold right now so they are living under the stairwells in some of the apartment blocks. I think that is shameful. I think that is unacceptable in a caring, compassionate society.

I hear the debate that goes on in this House about day care and about pay equity, and it really startles me because what people are saying somehow is that we should not be reaching out to support people who need our help. We treat pay equity around here like it is some kind of socialist plot, that simply because these guys brought it in and advocate for it that those guys—

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

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, we would like to be referred to as those honourable guys.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Not on this point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Not on this point of order?

Mr. Alcock: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will speak on the point of order. I accept the admonition from the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) and I, in future, will refer to him as those honourable guys.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable—excuse me, we refer to them as Honourable Members.

Mr. Alcock: Oh. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock).

Mr. Alcock: The point I was making, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Opposition House Leader, that will refer to the Members as Honourable Members. I would like to thank the Honourable Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate your admonition and your advice on this important matter. I do not want to lose what I am saying because of the levity of that moment.

The NDP brought in pay equity and as a result the Members opposite seem to feel it is an unacceptable approach to correcting what has been a fundamental inequity in this country, but there is more than just a justice aspect to it. The reality is there are more women in poverty than any other group in this country. Women and children constitute a majority of those living in poverty in this country. We simply cannot allow it, and that is not because they are living on welfare, it is because they are living on substandard jobs that pay below a liveable wage. We simply have to correct that. We simply as a society have to reject a community that allows other people to live like that. We have to stop and reflect a little bit on what we have, and do more to redistribute that wealth than to leave it in the hands of others—ignore those that have not, and laugh about it.

* (1640)

Mr. Speaker, as we move to the 1990s, we have 10 years before we move to a very important event. Each time we cross a century, I think it gives us a chance to look at what we have accomplished. The rate of change that we have experienced in these last 90 years has been absolutely astounding. It is within my lifetime that we have seen rural electrification. Some very basic services that we take for granted right now are things that did not exist just in my lifetime, much less in the lifetime of some of the Members of the House or in this last century. That rate of change is increasing by itself at a rate that is absolutely astounding.

I was down at a workshop just two weeks ago where we talked about the product cycle in technology. There is really an interesting lesson to be learned from it. It takes roughly 28 months right now to bring a new computer product from conception to obsolescence. It is about 28 months from the time you build the product, put it on the market, gain whatever profit you can, do the research to build the new product and put that one on and phase the old one out, because it is no longer effective—28 months, just a little over two years.

It takes Government about three and a half years to purchase computer equipment in the United States. The experience right now is that by the time they purchase a new piece of technology it is about two generations out of date. The same thing is happening here, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Community Services is right now buying computers that represent a technology that is about three generations out of date right now, because Government has not adjusted to the rate of change. Government has not learned

some of the lessons of the private sector, not that Government can ever function like the private sector, because it cannot.

The public good that is proffered by a Government is quite different from the goods that are proffered by the private sector, and Government can never and should never try to function like the private sector, because it cannot give the same consideration of the goods it delivers. Government is beginning to computerize. It is beginning to embrace technology and there are some important lessons that can be learned from that. There are some important lessons that the private sector has learned as they have begun to move to new management systems and they have begun to look at the way in which they communicate and the way in which they transmit knowledge and the way in which they make decisions as managers.

I think if we are going to achieve some of the efficiencies that we are going to have to achieve in order to reduce the demand on the public purse, the Government is going to have to learn some of these lessons. It is going to have to learn to thin down its management. It is going to have to learn to let machines do some of the work, but in doing that it is going to have to find new ventures, new uses, new skills, new ways in which people can express themselves and be productive in this community.

I could not leave discussion of this Bill without talking about one thing that is represented in this Bill. There are a couple of suggestions and clauses here that we will talk about in committee. I would like to move the debate to committee so we could begin to get into it, because I am not certain about what the Minister is attempting to do. He is making a couple of changes to the way in which they have structured the accessing of these monies that I want to discuss.

I notice also in Appendix B of this Bill that we are talking about the Manitoba Hospital Capital Finance Authority. That brings me back to a problem that confronts a great many people of this city. The Municipal Hospitals just south of here are in absolutely disgraceful shape. They have been in disgraceful shape for a great many years.

The previous Government, to give them some credit, did a great deal of work, slow. I mean they were in power long enough to have built the Municipal Hospital and they did not. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is quite correct when he points that out, but they did the foundation work. They did the design work, they built the power house, they built the day hospital which is the front end of this new building. They have everything sitting there in order to proceed with the replacement of two very old, very inadequate physical plants, and yet we are not doing it.

Month after month in this House we hear nothing but delays, nothing but glib responses from the Minister of Health. We have a very serious situation confronting us there. We have a building that simply is neither safe nor humane. We have a bunch of staff that are working very hard to maintain the services in those buildings and a bunch of staff who are doing an absolutely wonderful job of providing a basic level of services to people who are very much in need.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has to act and it has to act very quickly and it has to approve that capital project. We are going to see that this Bill gets passed. We are going to see that the Government has the money to do it. We have some questions about it. We will answer those in committee, but I want, and the Opposition wants some action on that hospital before that situation gets any more desperate.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will end debate on this Bill for our side.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), that debate be adjourned and I will be prepared to speak on this tomorrow if it is called.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 86—THE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT (TAXATION) ACT, 1989

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 86, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1989, Loi de 1989 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). Stand?

Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans)? Agreed.

BILL NO. 53—THE ENERGY RATE STABILIZATION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 53, The Energy Rate Stabilization Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la stabilisation des emprunts d'Hydro-Manitoba à l'étranger, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). Stand?

Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon? Leave? Agreed.

BILL NO. 67—THE SOCIAL ALLOWANCES AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), Bill No. 67, The Social Allowances Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), the Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, again I know that my colleague the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) has already spoken to this Bill, and the comments that he made I think are going to be similar to the comments that I am going to make on this Bill.- (interjection)- Probably, yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The question was whether I was going to be going until 5 o'clock. That of course depends very much on whether I keep getting interrupted by the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger).- (interjection)- My colleague for Churchill says it was a rhetorical question, and it was a very good rhetorical question.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Brandon, when he discussed this Bill, talked about the amendments, prefaced his remarks I should say about the amendments and the flow of amendments over the last several years to bring our social allowance system into line both with the Charter of Rights and the Canada Social Assistance Act, an Act whereby the federal Government and the Government of Manitoba share the costs.

* (1650)

I think people have recognized over the years that the current three-tiered system of providing social assistance has some inequities and created some inequities. We witnessed in Manitoba not that long ago a tremendous battle between a municipality and a couple who lived in Rivers, Manitoba, where the municipality believed in exercising its right as a municipality that this particular couple were not entitled to the kinds of benefits the couple believed they were entitled to.

At that time, Mr. Speaker, the province decided to undertake a review of the whole tiering system of providing social assistance. We believe we had proposed a system of providing social assistance which would be more equitable, easier to administer, more understandable, and probably in the final analysis not much more expensive than the current system of allowing municipalities to establish one rate and deliver services, the province another rate and having the federal Government involved as a third level in the provision of these kinds of assistances.

Mr. Speaker, this particular amendment is really just an addition, a small addition to the current provisions of The Social Allowance Act and it is designed really to comply with what have been, I guess, judicial requirements in the provision of these benefits. We all know, as I said earlier, that in some instances, and particularly in municipalities, there are differences of opinion about whether individuals should be entitled to benefits.

We have heard some horror stories about individuals who have been denied benefits. I can reference a case in my own constituency where a municipality, rather than approve assistance, determined the best course of action was to provide a bus ticket for an individual. The Minister responsible for The Social Allowances Act nods her head because the fact is these kinds of incidences are all too frequent in rural Manitoba in particular.

There is a continuing view that social assistance is available too readily. There is a view that somehow the Government, the municipality, should be tying strings to the support that is offered to people who find themselves in an unfortunate circumstance, who find themselves destitute.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to remind ourselves when we are talking about the principle of this Bill, which I think brings some additional equity into the delivery of social assistance, the vast majority of people who are receiving social allowances are not malingerers. They are not unemployable young people. The vast majority of people on social assistance are individuals who are handicapped in one way or another, who are elderly and infirm, or who are single parents and believe their duty and their responsibility lies with their family. We need to get that on the record in the first instance.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) perhaps surprised some Manitobans earlier this year. After a review of some 400 cases of people who were receiving social assistance, the investigator came to the conclusion there were no more than three or four cases where the suggestion of abuse was even appropriate—abuse of the system, I mean, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is the vast majority of people who receive assistance, need assistance, deserve assistance, and should not in any way be harassed by officials of a municipality or officials of the Government because of their need.

The development of social allowance programs across the country was developed on the basis of the belief that individuals have a right to shelter, clothing, and food in a dignified and reasonable fashion. This entitlement should not be conditional. The fact of the matter is that those few who are abusing the system, taking advantage of the system, there are pressures on them. I think we can continue to apply pressure to ensure that where the system is being abused we can rationalize the system and provide inducements if you will to encourage people to become employed, to seek other opportunities rather than relying on The Social Allowance Act.

You may recall in 1985 or '86 when the federal Government, in conjunction with the province, and my colleague the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) undertook a demonstration project in which some \$12 million which was scheduled under the Canada Assistance Plan—the federal contributions to social assistance, and were allowed to put that money into a fund to employ people.

The fact of the matter is it was, in part at least, as a result of the provinces insistence that some of the money made available to those on social allowances should be made available to create employment opportunities for those few who receive social assistance who are eligible, who are willing, and who have the necessary skills to become employed.

I believe the vast majority of Manitobans—I know that we in the New Democratic Party supported that kind of initiative. I believe a far greater portion of the money set aside for social allowances should be made available for people who want to upgrade their skills, people who want to take educational programs, people who want to become employed or undertake training through employment. I think it would be a vastly superior way of using the tax dollars directed to social assistance programs.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the differences of opinion, the failure of the jurisdictions to come together and agree

Wednesday, November 29, 1989

that social assistance dollars, dollars that come to us from the Canada Assistance Plan, should be available for employment targets and training targets, have been a long time coming.

Unfortunately the debate has largely centered, if memory serves correctly, over the question of who will get credit. It seems to me I recall discussion when this \$12 million pilot project was being developed around the question of who would take credit for the employment creation. With the federal Government being concerned that money destined for social allowances should end up as employment dollars—credit to the province, seemed to be an objectionable concept. The fact of the matter is in this instance as in many others, the whole question of who should take credit should be a moot point.

The fact of the matter is the public was going to spend those dollars either through social allowance or some other activity and we should be asking ourselves as a province, are we getting value for dollar? Are we achieving something by the spending of these monies? Clearly in some instances simply providing funding so a family can maintain itself is one objective. If we can provide the same amount of funding and train someone or employ someone in a more productive way, have we not achieved something greater. I think most people would argue that is a sensible approach and it is unfortunate that even today we do not have that kind of system put in place.

I have been asking that question, and I am sure many others in this Chamber have been asking themselves that question since they got involved. It applies not only to the social allowance program, it applies to the unemployment insurance program, it applies to many of the federal support programs that seem prepared to provide money for short-term employment and yet will not allow people to take training, upgrading, position themselves if you will for future employment. We are spending dollars needlessly, we are spending dollars unwisely. The integration of these programs is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I digress, the point of this Bill of course is to expand the accessibility of the social allowance network to other individuals. This small amendment is really going to, I think, enhance the availability of assistance to those who need it and is going to take some of the—I do not want to use the word malicious—it is going to take some of the arbitrariness out of decisions that are being made at the municipal level in particular, and I think we will stand these people in good stead.

There are only a few sections to this Bill. I am not sure whether these amendments are the only amendments that we are going to see to The Social Allowances Act this Session, or whether there are more comprehensive amendments in the works. I think we are still committed to the idea of a single-tiered system. We are committed to ensuring that the support that is available in one region of the province is fair and equitable and provides a reasonable level of sustenance and support. I think that we in this legislature should be debating a more comprehensive piece of legislation than the amendment that we see before us today.

Obviously, when we get into committee and put this amendment in context, there may be some other amendment that we may want to introduce. I do not know how widely the Minister has distributed these amendments. I do not know, for example, what the view is of the Social Planning Council or the Anti-Poverty Association, I am assuming there still is one. I have lost track of their problems, but there are many other people who I believe have been very insistent that these kinds of amendments come forward and said that we need to broaden it, we need to strengthen it. I would be anxious for the Minister to tell the House what other measures these same groups are also asking for. The Social Allowances Act is an extremely complicated piece of legislation and an important one. I am a little puzzled by the fact that we are seeing only one amendment when I believe there may be others that are necessary, not only for technical and administrative reasons, but also if I understood the debate of a few years ago on this question, also some amendment that may be due to the Charter of Rights, particularly Section 15 of the Charter, the equality section dealing with the treatment of other groups and the equitable treatment across the province of people who are in need.

I am sure that there will be groups coming forward to make presentations at the committee stage, and I want the assurance of the Minister that if the committee should decide if individual Members should decide to support amendments that are proposed, there will not be any obstruction on the part of the Government to prevent additional amendments which the committee views as being necessary. We have seen some attempt on the part of the Government to stall amendments as they come in from representative groups or who oppose amendments made by additional Opposition Members of the committee. This may be an opportunity given the circumstances of this Legislature and the minority situation to do some serious thinking about additional amendments that may be useful.

I am again at a bit of a loss because I do not have with me the full Social Allowances Act. I would like to pull out from that the whole question of the enforcement of these provisions and other provisions of The Social Allowance Act. We have heard examples in this Chamber of whether there are administrative questions, questions of interpretation of the guidelines and the Act. We are still concerned about the ability to enforce these regulations. There seems to me that there have been occasions when municipalities have intentionally subverted the intent of the Act, if not the specifics of the Act, subverted the intent of the Act by the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 23 minutes remaining.

* (1700)

The Hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**ORDERS FOR RETURN,
ADDRESSES FOR PAPERS
REFERRED FOR DEBATE**

Mr. Speaker: On the motion of the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). (Stand)

On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) who has 14 minutes remaining. (Stand)

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. NO. 24—SMOKING PREVENTION

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), Resolution No. 24, Smoking Prevention.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member from Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans), that

WHEREAS tobacco smoking demonstrably damages personal health, and may damage the health of others through "second-hand" smoke; and

WHEREAS if a person has not started smoking by his/her twenties, it is very unlikely one ever will; and

WHEREAS at the age when smoking is most likely to begin, most novice smokers are not completely aware of all associated health risks; and

WHEREAS tobacco products are freely available and sold indiscriminately to anyone who can afford them, despite legislation to the contrary; and

WHEREAS present laws do not offer an adequate disincentive to the illegal selling of tobacco products to minors; and

WHEREAS responsible governments attend to the health and welfare of their citizens.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba encourage the Government to reaffirm its commitment to smoking prevention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly encourage the Government to consider the constitutionality of introducing provincial legislation to provide increased penalties for retailers selling tobacco products to minors, and in any event, encourage the federal Government to tighten its existing tobacco control laws to significantly increase the penalties for retailers selling tobacco products to minors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly encourage the Government to consider providing

a specific mandate to the Interagency Council on Smoking to strengthen the smoking prevention curriculum of its "Tuning into Health" program, in co-operation with the department of Education and Training; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly encourage the Government to consider requiring compulsory enrollment of all students in the presently voluntary "Tuning into Health" smoking prevention component in Manitoba's schools.

MOTION presented.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Speaker, our health is our most precious resource. To maintain our health as individuals and to improve the overall quality of health for Manitobans is certainly imperative. It is incumbent upon individuals to maintain their health and it is also incumbent upon Governments, provincial and at the federal level, to ensure that there are programs, educational programs, and services available to educate individuals as to what is considered a healthy lifestyle.

This resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, deals with the very negative health practice, that of tobacco smoking. We are urging that the Government consider this resolution and that in fact all sides of the House consider this resolution so that we can move forward in a united manner to reaffirm a commitment to smoking prevention in this province.

When one thinks back many years ago right after the second World War where tobacco smoking was very, very popular and the advertising regime from tobacco companies certainly became very popular, at that time people began to smoke and it was the thing to do. It was very faddish at that time. It has really only been in the last 10 years or so where there have been studies and research that have been available that conclusively proves that in fact tobacco smoking is hazardous to one's health. There have also been studies and research to prove that second-hand smoke is also hazardous to individuals who are subjected to that second-hand smoke.

We have a situation where we have tobacco smoking as a health concern, and it is not something where there are pros and cons and and, yes, there may be a concern about its negative impact, and, yes, there may not; we know for sure the conclusions are there. We have the Surgeon General in the United States and we have our own officials here in Canada who have actually gone that step and said to tobacco companies, you must put warnings on your advertising and warnings on the packages saying, we know tobacco smoke is hazardous to one's health. The evidence is there, it is very clear.

What must we do as a Government to in fact ensure that individuals are educated in the area of the negative effects of tobacco smoking. I think it is very important to note we have made some move forward in the last five or six years in the areas of what I would call health promotion or preventative health. It is far better for us to be able to educate school children and young people

about the hazards of smoking so they do not begin this—what I call filthy habit—so they do not begin smoking. It is far better to educate them than to have to deal with them when they are older in terms of having to break the habit, or to have to deal with them when they are older when they are in the health care system and using up our health care dollars because tobacco smoke in fact has contributed to their ill health.

* (1710)

What can we do as a province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ensure that we educate our young people? We know in the last five or six years we have had an increase in cigarette smoking among our young people, particularly among young women. We have to start targeting education programs to those particular groups.

We know we now have a move away to people, who have smoked for a number of years, who are now quitting. We have seen the studies to indicate that. We have programs through the Interagency Council on Smoking that talks about tuning-in to health, and we as Liberals have been somewhat disturbed by the lack of answers or comments from the Minister of Health in regard to this program.

The Minister of Health would have us believe there is in fact a comprehensive program throughout the Province of Manitoba in all the schools that talks about smoking prevention. Well, yes, there are programs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but they are not comprehensive and they are not carried out in all the schools in the province. It is something that is done hit or miss in some schools. If a teacher takes the initiative to develop that comprehensive program and use it throughout the school year, it is a good sign, it is very important those particular students benefit, but there is no co-ordinated approach in this school system or through the Department of Education in regard to tuning-in to health in regard to looking at the prevention of smoking.

We also know from studies and research that tobacco and alcohol use with younger individuals is a precursor to drug use. Studies have proven that as well. So if we can go a long way to not only preventing tobacco smoke because of its own ill effects, we also need to do it because of what can happen in the future, there can be an incidence of higher use of drugs because of alcohol and tobacco smoke.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know there are health risks associated with pregnant women who smoke, we now know that our own nutritionists within the department—that educators are now working and teaching with families, with men and women talking about the ill effects of smoke to pregnant women and the encouragement of them not to smoke during pregnancy. We know there is encouragement to families to not smoke when their children are born because of the effects and studies have shown that children who are in families where there is smoke in the home—in fact there have been some studies to say that there can be some developmental delays or difficulties with those particular children.

It is a very serious issue because I think if we can look at a comprehensive program to look at smoking

prevention and reach the children who are school-aged now, we can save dollars in our health care system in the future. Not only can we save dollars but we will have a healthier population, and I think that is very important. We have a long way to go in this province as far as reaching out to those young people, and as far as looking at disincentives for storekeepers, for stores who sell cigarettes to minors.

I just had a conversation the other day, I was talking to some teacher of a school who said that a particular local store right across from the school sells individual cigarettes for 25 cents each because they know the kids from the school will go across can afford the 25 cents per cigarette although they may not necessarily be able to afford a whole package. We have some storekeepers who again are selling cigarettes singularly at 25 cents and they are encouraging those particular children to smoke because they are making those cigarettes accessible and affordable. They are not assisting in the problem.

I think it is time that we need to look at some legislation which would actually increase the penalties to retailers who are selling these tobacco products to the minors. We also need to look at the area of store owners as well, who are even selling tobacco products. I applaud some of the pharmacies which have actually gone ahead with what I consider a progressive step and said we are not going to sell tobacco products in our store. We as a pharmacy believe we are there to promote health and if we are selling tobacco products which are known precursors to ill health, we know that in fact we are contradicting ourselves and we are not going to do that. So they have actually gone that step ahead and are actually not selling tobacco products.

We have some provinces who even have better legislation than we do in regard to smoking. One goes to Vancouver and walks through shopping malls, they are smoke free, smoking is not allowed in the malls. One walks through a mall in downtown Winnipeg, or any of the malls throughout the province—in fact the young people who are sitting in the aisles and smoking—it is a very disturbing sight for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it is the young people who are actually taking up the smoking. It is because they are not aware of what the ill effects are. I think we have a responsibility as a province, through the Department of Health and through the education system, to make sure those young people are informed.

I think it is very important that the Government, and it certainly would be supported by myself, also forge ahead similarly to some of the Government offices in terms of providing a smoke-free environment in our own working environment, and that is the Legislature. We now have some regulations, shall we say, or guidelines which we use in this Legislature, where smoking is only allowed in parts of the cafeteria and in the blue room across—and I do not refer to blue as the colour of the carpet but I refer to blue as the colour of the air.

It is allowed in those particular areas, but in fact we as legislators ourselves do not even abide by the guidelines in this particular Legislature because many of the individuals who smoke flaunt that particular

guideline and they smoke in their offices.- (interjection)-
The press gallery as well smokes.

We have health offices -(interjection)- Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery) talks about allegations. I can only assume he has never talked to the press in their own offices if he is not aware of them. But there are Government offices, which I think is important, which have actually taken that step and provided a smoke-free environment to their employees because they know that, yes, an individual may have the right to smoke but they do not have the right to pollute someone else's air. I think that is the key.

We should be looking at a smoke-free environment in this particular Legislature. It is very obvious that as soon as the doors are opened in this Chamber you can smell the cigarette smoke from across the hall. I do not feel we set a very good example when it comes to looking at smoke-free legislation.

I would like to see smoke-free legislation in terms of providing more disincentives to retailers, to people who are selling products, but even more importantly, I think education is very, very necessary in our school system. We now have a move where some of the school divisions are actually becoming smoke free. It is a slow move but it is coming along. We have to move where we have educators and people who are in positions of responsibility and authority who are recognizing in fact that it is important that we have smoke-free environments.

We now seem to be seeing a lot more individuals who seem to have allergies and seem to be affected by that second-hand smoke. I think it is very important that if we can teach our children the ill effects of smoking, and if we can provide a program such as Tuning in to Health which is a very positive type of program to say this is what the effects of smoking are, I think we would go a long way. We are not going to necessarily see the benefits of that type of program in one or two years, but in 10 years and 15 years where it is going to be even more crucial that our health care costs are less, that is when we would see the benefits.

* (1720)

I would certainly support that we should actually have a mandatory program, rather than a voluntary program so that it is a very integral part of the education that students receive.

I see that my time is coming to a close, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would like to close by saying I would urge all Members of this House to support this resolution, that we would be united on this and move towards more smoke-free environment for the benefit of all Manitobans.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am compelled to put a few comments on the record with respect to the resolution that has been presented to us by the Honourable Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not take issue with much of what she has said in the last 15 minutes, although

I suppose there would be grounds to take issue with her on some of the assumptions that non-smokers make, but I choose not to and, by and large, accept the validity of much of what she says about the inadvisability of anybody using tobacco.

What I am most concerned about is her solution to the problem. A solution by the way that we, in this province and other legislators indeed in other jurisdictions, all too often apply when admittedly there may be a problem to be resolved. That is a legislative one, that is passing a law, making a criminal out of somebody who, for one reason or another, indulges in the soothing, pleasing aspects of inhaling on a fine Virginia tobacco, or if he is so inclined a blend of Turkish and other exotic tobaccos to go with the blends, as is indeed our custom by our American friends opposite.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if it has been noted, but one of the substantial cultural differences between us and the Americans, we are often lumped together culturally speaking, but it has always surprised me that Americans smoke blended tobaccos, Canadians smoke straight tobaccos. Some of you non-smokers may not be aware of it, but that is a fact as you would know. My objection is her solution to the problem as contained in the RESOLVED, legislation, laws, passing of laws.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a very serious study done by a more learned psychologist than I, one that I have a great deal of respect for because what she does not realize is that her solution is a very dangerous one in my opinion, extremely dangerous. Her solution is to trivialize law. Her solution is to breed contempt among the citizens about laws and to encourage the daily breaking of laws. This kind of legislation is called scoff laws. They have coined a phrase for it, scoff laws, and legislators ought not to introduce laws that they know that a large percentage, 40 percent, 50 percent, 60 percent of the people will break on a daily basis because that leads you to scoffing at the law and breaking the law.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against the mandatory or compulsory use of seat belts for the same reason. I do not argue with the Ministry of Transportation or other experts that brought reasonable expert opinion evidence that seat belts are a very worthwhile safety tool in the operation of a motor vehicle, and that people ought to be encouraged to wear seat belts, ought particularly to be encouraged to wear seat belts because we have a joint and shared responsibility in the sense that we collectively tax ourselves to pay for the injury costs that occur from automobile accidents.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question of where I stand, or that I do not appreciate the value of encouraging drivers to wear the safety belt, but I am opposed to the legislation because I know that I believe 54 percent of Manitobans, every morning when they get into the car, scoff at that law, break that law, and are in fact criminals under the eyes of the law. The danger is if you begin to scoff at one law, if you disregard one law what next law do you scoff at and do you break, and you engender in the general population that well, some

laws are for real, some laws we will obey. Like most of us, a very large percentage, the same 54 percent of our motorists who on a daily basis scoff at the seat belt law, do not scoff at the red light law. When they come to a traffic light, I would say 99.9 percent of the same motorists come to a halt. They respect that law, the law is there. It makes absolute good sense and it has the broad acceptance of the population that it is designed to serve.

When we get into the realm of human behaviour, as flawed as it may be and, Mr. Speaker, there have been countless examples of moving in this direction in a way that does not bring the results. Perhaps the classic move in this direction, both in the Legislatures of this country and those of other states, notably the Americans, have been their prohibition of the use of alcohol. What did that lead to? Did it reduce the consumption of alcohol? No. Did it breed a whole industry of organized crime? Yes. Did it cause mayhem on the streets, wholesale contravention of the laws of the land? Yes. It brought the lawmaking of the country into disrespect.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say there is a serious element to this resolution that one ought not to pass laws that we knowingly know in advance are going to be scoffed at and are going to be disregarded. What we ought to do, and I encourage the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) to do precisely what she did here, that we should be educating our young, we should be speaking to our young, we should be penalizing or making it less attractive as we do for anybody that has lately bought a package of cigarettes. We call them sin taxes, the taxes that we impose on liquor and on tobacco.

Mr. Speaker, I had a solution to the problem of encouraging people to wear seat belts. I would have believed that it would have been quite in order to have charged that person injured in an automobile accident not wearing his seat belt 15 percent of his injury costs. Had we gone that route, 95 percent of the people would be buckled up in the province right now, not 50 percent as we are doing right now.

So what is the goal of this kind of legislation? Yes, it always sounds a little appealing and it becomes faddish because there is a concern, quite rightfully so. Mr. Speaker, I know that you, in these days of your own personal travails and difficulties, ought to pay particular attention to the words of the Honourable Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray). Let me join her words in support of him, because we have a deep affection, sir, not only for your office but you as a person, and we would want to ensure that you yourself would take seriously these thoughts that were expressed admittedly to the broad general public, but with a special feeling for you at this particular time.

Coming back to the RESOLVEDs of this resolution, I make it very clear, I do not take issue with the intent of the resolution. I do not take issue with the fact that we ought to be concerned about the fact that while it would appear that more and more adults are quitting the practice, I think that is generally true although I cannot say that I have done the kind of research that I normally do in preparation for all of my comments in the House, but if one of my age, in company or at

social gatherings, one cannot help but notice the large number of adults that have dropped the habit in the use of tobacco. But I accept the comments by the Honourable Member for Ellice when she points out that, regrettably, that does not seem to be the case with our younger citizens, and so I think any measures that we can undertake to provide greater educational background on this not desirable habit has to be applauded.

Mr. Speaker, I appeal to Honourable Members to think about whether or not the passing of legislation on questions of this kind are in fact the solution. In my judgment, they are not.

* (1730)

Mr. Cowan: This resolution is one whose time has really come. It is more a product of a lot of things happening outside of this Chamber, and this is not meant in any way to take away anything from the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), it is a product of outside factors as much as it is a product of her own personal beliefs and her own approach to this particular area.

This type of resolution would not be one that would have found favour within any of the caucuses, I think, perhaps 10-15 years ago. It would not have been tolerated and it would not have been brought forward. I assume that it is being brought forward now on the basis of general support within the Liberal Party, and certainly there is general support from the New Democratic Party for this. I would sense, notwithstanding the most recent Speaker from the Conservative side of the House, there would be general support among the Conservative Party, statistically, for this type of resolution.

I hope that the support is there and this resolution will gain the support of this House, for I think it is a worthy resolution as far as it goes. I must also note that the New Democratic Party has introduced an Act to protect the health of non-smokers which deals with all of these issues. When that is reintroduced in the House in its new wording, which I think has strengthened the original intent somewhat, it will also gain the support of this House because I believe in doing so we are not leading the general population, but we are reinforcing and reaffirming what seems to be a general trend among Manitobans, Canadians, and others generally with respect to the rate and prevalence of smoking, and the rights of non-smokers.

I note the previous speaker, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), made some personal reference, Mr. Speaker, to yourself and we all know you do from time to time smoke far too much. Now that is not meant as an admonition, Mr. Speaker; it is meant to make a point. I think even you would agree, as would the Member for Lakeside, and as would others who smoke, that smoking at all is smoking much too much. If you had your choice you would prefer not to have started smoking in the first instance, because it is very difficult to stop.

I at one time did smoke and am now a non-smoker and have been so for many, many years, and I can still

remember how difficult it was to stop. I can still remember why it was I wanted to stop and how much better I feel now that I do not smoke. I myself would have preferred never to have started smoking, and the intent of this particular Bill I believe is aimed at young people who oftentimes start smoking without full awareness of what they are doing to their own health. What they are doing to the health of those around them, and what they are doing to society and the health needs of society in general.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

It would be far better had the Speaker, or had the Member for Lakeside, had myself, had others never smoked rather than smoked and found it difficult to stop, or smoked and stopped at a later date. I think the resolution is very much in keeping with what we would like to see personally, even if we are smokers or non-smokers and in keeping with what is happening out in society generally.

This resolution as I indicated earlier is a resolution that would not have found its way into this Chamber a number of years ago. It does what we would not have thought possible to do, I think, five years ago. Five years ago I remember the discussions in Cabinet, and I remember the discussions in caucus, and I remember the discussions generally with representatives of the Manitoba Government Employees' Association, with representatives of others who worked in this House with respect to making this building a non-smoking building.

There were very difficult discussions and it was a very difficult choice, but the Government of the Day decided it was an important thing to do and there was criticism, not just from one Party, one political Party or one organization, but there was general criticism about what we were doing. There were philosophical questions about the rights of smokers as well as the rights of non-smokers that were brought forward. There were questions of implementation; could it be implemented effectively? We decided to go ahead in consultation with the employees groups, in consultation with the different Parties in this House to make this building a non-smoking building, except for a couple of designated areas. I believe it has worked very well.

I believe it has reduced the amount of smoke non-smokers are subjected to in this building, I know that to be the case. I believe it has also encouraged people who were finding difficulty in stopping their own personal habit of smoking, to stop smoking. I believe it has had that effect. There were programs designed to complement the overall thrust, which helped people stop smoking. I believe it has resulted in what we had hoped it would be, and that is fewer smokers and less second-hand smoke for non-smokers.

I think it is an important resolution in that way, in that it builds upon what has been done previously. It is timely for that reason and I also believe it complements the legislation which has been introduced in this House previously by the Leader of the New Democratic Party, and one which we would hope to see passed by this House, this Session.

I want to speak to a couple of the comments made by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). He said he

was not as concerned about the WHEREASES as he was about the RESOLVEDS and the action it called upon the Government and this Legislature to take. I believe he is not as concerned with the WHEREASES because they are a very accurate description of circumstances as they exist today. Smoking is damaging to personal health. Smoking does damage the health of others through exposure to second-hand smoke. It is unlikely, although I do not know if it is very unlikely, that someone who has not smoked leading up to their 20's will start that habit later in life. A few do, but even if they do after 20 they will find it easier to quit because we know the less people have smoked in the past, the easier it is for them to quit. We do know that tobacco products are freely available and sold indiscriminately to anyone who can afford them, despite legislation to the contrary.

We know all the WHEREASES to be true. Therefore, we know there is a problem because the WHEREASES do in fact identify and highlight a problem for society, and that is what we are here as legislators to do, to deal with some of those problems, and we pick and choose what we believe to be priority areas that we should pursue. This is one of those areas being pursued through the Private Members' legislation brought forward by the New Democratic Party Caucus and the resolution before us which is brought forward by the Liberal Caucus.

So then we have to concern ourselves with whether or not the objectives, as presented by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) are in fact objections which we find logical and reasonable. He based his whole series of objections and the bulk of his comments on what he felt was a negative impact of this proposed resolution. If legislation was brought forward—and let us be very clear about what that legislation is intended to do—that legislation is intended to provide increased penalties for retailers selling tobacco products to minors, and also to tighten existing tobacco control laws to significantly increase the penalties for retailers selling tobacco products to minors. That is exactly what it is intended to do. It goes no further. It is very focused in what it intends to do.

* (1740)

In fact, if we listen to the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), he believes that law would be one that would not be enforced, if we read into his comments what he was suggesting, and because it would not be enforced, it would be trivializing law generally. He went on to explain his theory about a term he used, scoff laws, laws which he said would be largely violated by a large population or a large percentage of the population. He went on to expand the theory of scoff laws into the domino theory of scoff laws. In other words, if people do not obey one law because they scoff at it, then they are more likely not to obey another law, because they scoffed at the previous law having nothing to do with the second law. That is illogical.

If that was the case because there have been laws which have been very difficult to implement and enforce, and there have been laws in the past which did not find much public support—if that were the case we

would have the entire population out there totally lawless, violating all the laws, because at one point in their life they scoffed at a law. I do not think that is the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I think that portion of the argument is highly illogical as well.

I do think the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) had a point when he talked about the trivialization of law, in other words we should not have laws that trivialize the issues we are attempting to deal with, or laws that are trivial in their approach. I believe that if he understood the law we have in place now, because there is a law with respect to selling tobacco products to minors, he would understand how much that trivializes the process, and why if one uses his own argument, one would want to support this resolution to make that law more enforceable and stronger so as to gain more general support among the population and have more, in effect.

Because that law which is a federal law now, calls for a \$10 penalty for retailers selling tobacco products to minors, I believe it is a \$10 penalty—it may even be a bit less and because of that, the law is not enforced. No agency is going to go out to enforce a law that if they find the individual guilty of the law it is only a \$10 penalty. They have to go through all of the activities associated with arresting someone, bringing them to court, filling out all the complaint forms, and then the person can go to court, plead guilty and walk away with a \$10 penalty which is probably a very small percentage of the profit they make on the illegal activity in the first instance.

So if there is a trivialization of the law, it is the trivialization that comes from the very weak penalty which this resolution intends to strengthen and make a more powerful deterrent so the law is better enforced. I think in his comments, not only did some of the original premises upon which he based his comments appear illogical and not in keeping with what is actually happening but the conclusion to which he came is also illogical.

In fact, if he would think carefully about the situation as it exists today and if he would put this proposed legislation within the context of the present law and within the context of present societal mores, he would determine that he would be strengthening the law by following through with this proposed resolution and therefore accomplishing what he said he felt was important with respect to legislation and that is making legislation that, in fact, is enforceable and one which is respected by the general population.

He then went on to indicate that he had some concerns about seat belt laws and he referenced those concerns to this resolution in the following manner. He said that in his own instance he voted against the seat belt laws because a large percentage of the population would violate those laws. I want to relate to him my own personal experience with respect to seat belt laws, because I think I am not out of the ordinary with regard to how the law affected ordinary Manitobans.

I think that my own example is somewhat illustrative and some lessons can be drawn from it, not because it happened to me but because I think a lot of

Manitobans went through the same thought process as did I. I did not wear seat belts consistently before the law came into effect. I did wear seat belts consistently after the law came into effect, not so much because I was worried about violating the law but because it made me think very seriously about what seat belts meant to me as an individual and how they could provide a safer environment for myself.

I came to the conclusion that it would be quite ridiculous to have the opportunity to wear the seat belts and to have legislation which demanded the wearing of seat belts and not to wear the seat belts. Therefore, when I drive now I feel quite uncomfortable if I do not have seat belts on. As a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel as uncomfortable now without seat belts as I felt uncomfortable with seat belts before I started to wear them consistently. The educative process of implementing a law and having people think about an issue and having them change their behaviour because of that is one that was clearly identifiable in the seat belt legislation circumstances, and I believe would be equally identifiable in this particular instance.

I think retailers would start to think seriously about the fact they are violating a law, because of the educative component of this resolution and the legislation which we are bringing forward by the way, but also because they are then forced in their own minds to try to deal with the issues at hand. I think when you have such a logical issue such as this and such a persuasive issue with respect to smoking that anyone who seriously thinks about it sets aside their own personal needs or their own personal biases and will come to the conclusion that they should not smoke and they should not encourage others to smoke, especially they should not encourage others to smoke by breaking legislation which is now in place now and should be made stronger.

With those comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope the Assembly will support this resolution and the legislation the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has brought forward in this area.

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to put a few words on record regarding this particular resolution and I must admit it is with a little bit of, not necessarily hesitation or reluctance which I agreed to second this motion.

I have to be perfectly honest that some nights after having sat through several hours of the Legislature here, there is nothing that I would enjoy more than to go home and turn on the television set and perhaps watch the Maple Leafs beat the Canadiens and draw on a nice Havana cigar, or saving that, a Wolf Brothers Crook cigar or sit down and have a couple of pipefuls of Bond Street in a pipe.

I still have my pipe collection sitting at home, but I have not utilized it for several years. I guess the reasons I have not utilized it for several years are twofold. One is that I took some—I guess took myself to task when I realized I could become a slave to something like tobacco. I think the addictive aspect of tobacco is one thing everyone has to regard as something that you

certainly have to be a little concerned about if you allow yourself to become enslaved by something like that.

The second thing and this is also very personal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that a close member of my family passed away recently in the Princess Elizabeth Hospital and for that reason I spent quite a few hours up there in the last few months. What concerned me the most is over a period of months you would go up there and there was a small group of people who were always in the solarium or visitor's room, as you might call it, and they were all cancer victims. I guess they felt it was only logical at this stage of their disease to allow them to continue to smoke. Invariably there would be a significant number of them in there who had gone to a point where their health had deteriorated to where they had to be helped to have their cigarette. They were still coming in at that point and having their cigarette.

I guess the part that had more of an impact on me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that every once in a while you would go in there and you would find that one of the regulars was no longer there. In other words, this was sort of the stop of last resort. They were not going to leave that place. That was going to be the location where they would terminate their lives, and you would see these people and you would look at them—you would not know them, but you would gain an acquaintance with them over this period of time—and you would look at these individuals and you would say, well, there is a relatively old lady or an old gentleman. Then you would go back the next day and you would look in the obituary column and you would find these people who, in my impression, looked as though they were relatively aged. Then you would find they had died at the age of 58 or 61, or something like that, and at the bottom it would say, in lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Cancer Society.

* (1750)

When you look at that, you realize very quickly the severity of the utilization of tobacco and the impact that it has on a person's health. Then when you reach my age where you are contemplating retirement in the not too distant future and you think, my God, if I were to continue smoking, I may find that my retirement is very short-lived and that I would not be able to utilize the pension that I had developed at the University of Manitoba. So one then becomes somewhat, I suppose, monetary in your viewpoint, and you think, well, I feel in some respects I have deserved this opportunity to retire. Why should I reduce the possibility of having a lengthy retirement by being addicted to tobacco?

I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the reason I agreed to second this resolution, but the reason I was a little hesitant to it is because I am one of those who philosophically disagree with the concept of restricting civil liberties. I think that one should be allowed to do what one feels is appropriate to them as long as it falls within the laws of the country that you are living in. So I guess what would worry me slightly here, and I do not think it is a major concern, is that if you are going to legislate against the utilization of tobacco, what will be next?

I am not going to go into the list of things that one might contemplate as the things that one might want to do away with, but—

An Honourable Member: Laurie, you cannot just say that and walk away. What will be next?

Mr. Laurie Evans: Well, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) asks what will be next and I suspect that, in my view, the opportunity to take a drink when I felt like it. I would hate to see that restricted. Some of the other things that are usually regarded—well, after that, when you get to my age, it is probably not too important, but when you start to look at these things, you can anticipate that there is a possibility of the erosion of your civil liberties.

I would like to put a very brief agricultural slant to this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because here we have a situation where a knighthood was awarded to the individual who was responsible for identifying the fact that the North American Indians were smoking tobacco and took it back.—(interjection)—The Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) is absolutely right. The knighthood was made on Sir Walter Raleigh. Most of us remember him as being the one that supposedly put his coat down so the Queen could walk over a puddle, but I think he is also more importantly remembered for the one who brought tobacco back from the so-called new world to Europe.

The other interesting thing about tobacco is the fact that it is still one of the strongest lobbying groups that exists in North America. When I was a youngster, you used to see advertising of Lucky Strike and Pall Mall and various other brands that have sort of disappeared from the scene over the years, but the thing that probably was most impressionistic upon youth at that time was the fact that tobacco companies were extremely heavily involved in advertising of athletic activities and that type of thing.

We only have to look, for example, at the Briar. Here in Canada for many years, the Briar was supported by the MacDonald Tobacco Company and it was identified then as something that was—nothing wrong with doing it. Fortunately, we have moved a long way in terms of curtailing advertisement of tobacco during the prime hours, but at the same time we are getting a fair amount of static from the tobacco companies, even today, for the fact that they are no longer allowing them to advertise when they support various sporting organizations and sporting functions.

Also in the agricultural area it is interesting to note that tobacco, while it occupies far less than 1 percent of the total acreage in the United States, still ranks as No. 13 as far as the value of agricultural commodities in the U.S. is concerned. Tobacco has had one of the most extensive research programs of any crop that is currently grown in North America. If you take a look at the range of tobaccos that are grown, you have the wrappers, the fillers, the flue-cured, the fire-cured and the whole range of them, and if you go to a tobacco auction you cannot even understand the language. You would think it was —(interjection)— Well, there is probably only one Member in the Legislature that understands the lingo that is used in a tobacco auction.

The fact that we are attempting and have to some extent curtailed the utilization of tobacco has had a negative impact on some of the agricultural areas, particularly in southern Ontario where they are still looking for a crop to replace the acreage that was originally planted to tobacco. So we still have in this country a lobby that is trying to do its best to maintain the production and the sale of tobacco.

The other things that one has to bear in mind when you look at something like tobacco and the utilization of it is not only the implications to health care—and my colleague from Ellice has mentioned the impact that it can have on pregnancies. I have mentioned the cancer issue; there is also the problem with allergies. There is also, every year, a certain number of lives that are lost simply because of the failure to properly use cigarettes. In other words, a fire occurs and the reason for the fire is attributed to careless smoking in bed, and these are the types of things that then lead to loss of life, lead to property damage.

It has been mentioned here today, and I do not disagree with the concept, that perhaps we should be looking at some sort of a surcharge when it comes to health care for those who are smoking and - (interjection)- The Member opposite talks about user fees, but I think it is a totally different concept, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a situation here where the risk is much higher. That has already been taken into account with the life insurance agencies. If you are a non-smoker, you get a life insurance policy for a lower rate or lower premium than the smoker does. These are the types of things that I think should be considered.

I think the other reason that one has to be supportive of this legislation is that here we have a situation where it requires the consideration of others, and while I was a smoker I found it somewhat offensive when somebody would come up to me and say, would you please put out your cigar or your cigarette? I thought, well, who in the world has the authority to tell me what I can or cannot do, but now I have come to realize that this is a thing that has—as second-hand smoke is more offensive and more damaging than perhaps first-hand smoke, and therefore I think we have a responsibility to be considerate of others, realizing of course that it does have potential to be detrimental to the health of the non-smokers because of that.

So for those reasons I am quite prepared and pleased to support this resolution, and I would hope that it would find favour with all sides of the House and that before we adjourn here this afternoon that it could be given passage so that it can be identified as having had the full support of all Members in this Chamber. Thank you.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): I wonder, would it be the disposition of the House to call it six o'clock.- (interjection)- No, no, otherwise I will speak.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, tomorrow will be Friday. This House is now adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. (Thursday).