



Second Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

LIB - Liberal; ND - New Democrat; PC - Progressive Conservative

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIB
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	ND
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	ND
CARR, James	Crescentwood	LIB
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIB
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	ND
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	LIB
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	ND
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	ND
DOER, Gary	Concordia	ND
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGE R, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIB
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	ND
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	ND
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	ND
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIB
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	ND
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	ND
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	LIB
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	ND
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	ND
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	ND
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	ND
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	ND
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	ND
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	ND
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	ND
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	ND

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 12, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report for A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. ending October 31, 1990.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Supplementary Information, the 1991-92 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for Industry, Trade and Tourism, and Fitness and Sport.

* (1335)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement that I would like to make at this time.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today and to announce that over 30,000 Manitobans have purchased a total of approximately \$380 million of Manitoba HydroBonds Series III.

This exciting initiative has provided the opportunity for every family and every individual to participate directly as a builder and beneficiary in the Manitoba economy. With the last three issues, over 80,000 Manitobans have purchased HydroBonds resulting in over \$760 million being raised for Manitoba Hydro. In fact, Mr. Speaker, to date, over \$62 million in interest payments have been paid out

to Manitoba HydroBond holders, not including the interest payments to come from Series III.

Mr. Speaker, this is money that otherwise would have left the province, money that is being spent here in Manitoba buying local goods and services and generating local economic growth and employment. Manitoba Hydro is a powerful public asset for the people of the province ensuring all of us efficient and inexpensive electricity for our homes and workplaces now and in the future. With the issuance of HydroBonds, we can help ensure Manitoba Hydro remains strong with the full support of the people of Manitoba putting their capital to work in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my gratitude to the people of Manitoba who have shown their overwhelming confidence in their province by investing in Manitoba Hydro Savings Bonds and making this year's issue such a huge success. I know members opposite will want to applaud all Manitobans who have seen fit to take advantage of this lending and borrowing instrument which, of course, allows all of us to extend a monetary pride in our province. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are, on this side, just absolutely pleased to see the conversion of the Minister of Finance on Crown corporations and their place in Manitoba society. It is like Paul going to Damascus. It must be the minister going to P.E.I. got a conversion on Crown corporations.

Remember the Tories a few years ago selling off some of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. Remember the members opposite, some of whom sat on the front benches of the government—we are going to sell off the hydro dam. They wanted to privatize part of Hydro, and now we see the statement today from these latter-day people in terms of Crown corporations.

What about the money that stayed in Manitoba with Manitoba Data Services before they sold it? What about that money? What about the money that used to stay in Manitoba with the General Insurance Division, investment that went to schools and hospitals and other infrastructures?

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased with the great
-(interjection)-

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

Mr. Doer: We are very pleased with this philosophical change from members opposite about the worth and value of Crown corporations in our society in Manitoba. We are pleased that the bond issue is doing well, and we hope to see more conversions of the radical right-wing Conservatives to a more moderate approach in this document. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to say that I, too, am pleased that 80,000 Manitobans have seen fit to invest in this province. God knows, it was necessary after what the NDP did. The bonds—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. Alcock: Unaccustomed as I am, Mr. Speaker, to supporting the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)—although I am a little surprised at the minister's statements about the money that is spent here in Manitoba, given that Manitoba Hydro is now purchasing things in Grand Forks and Fargo.

* (1340)

Mr. Speaker, I do think there is an important aspect of this that certainly arose as we discussed the financial situation of Manitoba with the bond-rating agencies in New York. They said it is important that Manitobans show that they are prepared to invest in this province, and they are doing so. I think the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) should be congratulated for that.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 31—The Ombudsman Amendment Act

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), that Bill 31, The Ombudsman Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Ombudsman, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Carstairs: This bill is a necessary addition, I believe, Mr. Speaker, to a bill which was passed just one year ago and that allowed the people of the city

of Winnipeg to, in fact, access the services of the Ombudsman. This particular act will allow people in rural municipalities to do the same thing. We believe it is not something which is particularly political in nature. It just simply extends a service to all Manitobans.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 62—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), that Bill 62, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, I regret that we must bring this bill to the attention of the House, but unfortunately, the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Derkach) has made a nonpolitical event into now a political event. He has politicized the appointments of the student representatives to the Board of Governors at the University of Manitoba.

This bill will ensure that students elect their representatives, and those students, in turn, are chosen to be their duly elected representatives on the Board of Governors of the University of Manitoba.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon, from the Westmount School Complex, twenty-four Grades 7 and 8 students, and they are under the direction of Mr. Dean Schofield. This school is located in the constituency of the Speaker of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly (Mr. Rocan).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

* (1345)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Whiteshell Management Plan Cottage Subdivisions

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in 1982, a change was implemented in terms of the Whiteshell Management Plan, and members opposite may recall some of the controversy in the late '70s on condominium proposals. I think it was called the Jarmoc proposal and other proposals that required a strong hand of the government to have limits on private subdivisions in a high density provincial park. We have learned and we have been hearing for the last few months that the government has proceeded to change a subdivision and approve a subdivision in the same Whiteshell Provincial Park.

My question is to the acting Premier: When did the cabinet change the provincial Whiteshell Management Park Plan, or was this subdivision approved by the Minister of Natural Resources contrary to the management park plan in the Whiteshell?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to respond to the honourable member and indicate to him that the Whiteshell Park was under active review last year. That review made certain recommendations. I shall read one of the recommendations into the record, that the 1983 plan will be revised to permit consideration of private land subdivisions in intensive recreation zones only provided that present development densities are maintained or reduced.

That was a policy change to the management plan of the Whiteshell that is currently being distributed to all interested parties in the Parks system of Manitoba. The provisional approval of the subdivision in question certainly meets that criteria and is contrary to the report carried by the Winnipeg Free Press that says that subdivision is being opened on private lands, period. That is not the case. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in this instance, this is a decreasing of the density of development on Dorothy Lake; one, quite frankly, that I would expect environmentalists and park watchers to applaud.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, environmentalists and other citizens who have been talking to us are very worried about the government proceeding on ad hoc private developments of higher density approved by the minister, whether they are based on merit, based

on friendship or based on whatever else connection to the provincial Conservative government.

I would ask the minister then, in light of his comments, why on April 26, 1991, the supervisor of leases and permits for the Parks Branch of his own Department of Natural Resources says, and I quote: the government has halted development of any new cottage subdivisions.

Mr. Speaker, who is acting and communicating with the people of Manitoba consistent with the government's own Parks plan, the minister who says there is a paper out there somewhere for discussion or the government's Parks plan which has been communicated by the minister's own employees to the people of Manitoba?

* (1350)

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, the actions of that individual quoted, indeed the actions of my colleague, the member for Rhineland, who was then minister responsible, was absolutely in keeping with the course of action as defined under the management plan controlling the development within the Whiteshell Park.

The same application for subdivision was made to my predecessor and was rejected pending further review and revision of the Whiteshell Management Park Plan. That review was undertaken in the year '90-91. That review has produced these kinds of recommendations, and it is under those recommendations that the provisional approval was given.

I might point out, if the honourable member insists and wants to personalize this matter, that on the same lake, there is another individual with private property who has a similar request for subdivision of his property that is being denied. For the record, because it will be public record, it happens to be an eminent Manitoban, a former chief justice of the province, Justice Tritschler, who owns property on the same lake, has repeatedly asked the former minister, myself, for the approval to subdivide his private land within the park.

The approval has been denied for the reasons because I am following the recommendations of the Whiteshell Management Plan, that this would, in fact, be an increase in the density and in the use of that lake that has been described by my Parks planners as having maximum development.

Mr. Speaker, the subdivision under question decreases from 28 to 17 the amount of users on the

lake, certainly well in keeping with the intent, well in keeping with the provisions of the Whiteshell Management Plan.

Revisions

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the employee of the Department of Natural Resources was communicating to the public the actual policy of the government as it existed on April 26 where no subdivisions would be allowed.

The question is—and the minister is using recommendations, discussion papers and management plans in an interchangeable way—when did the cabinet change the management plan for the Whiteshell Provincial Park? What date did they change that and when did they change Section 651 dealing with private land parcels within the park will not be eligible for cottage subdivision? When did they change it?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, firstly, I can indicate to the honourable member that the changes to the management plan are under revision at this time. The tentative approval granted is just that, and the tenants in question have been notified, were notified last September, that this was the intent. It disturbs me, of course, that according to, regrettably, some of our environmentalist spokespersons in Manitoba, it is not an issue of being environmentally correct, it is a question—environmentalists are upset with Enns' decision because it violates NDP policy.

Since when does NDP policy be the end-all of all things right environmentally? They were 10 out of 10 on all environmentalist issues. Their policy, Mr. Speaker, was not to examine a major construction project like the Limestone under the environmental review. Our policy is different.

I am disappointed, quite frankly. I thought that my action ought to be applauded by the environmentalists in Manitoba because I am reducing, in this case, developmental pressure on a lake that is at maximum level.

Immigration Consultants Independent Investigation

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government's approach to immigration will be encouraging the sale of Canadian visas and citizenships. I am going to table documents that show that an immigration consultant in Manitoba has tied the sale of a

Manitoba business to a Canadian citizenship as a condition.

Given this relationship between the long-lasting problems in immigration policy in the country, the backlog of appeals, the relationship between those things to influence peddling and the brokerage of Manitoba businesses and conflict of interest, and in the interest of the ethnocultural communities, will the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship encourage her government to commission an independent inquiry into immigration consulting to show how we can change the system so that it will not be so easily exploited by this situation?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I believe that very same question has been asked many, many times of different members of the government, and my answer will be the same as previous answers have been. In fact, there is an RCMP investigation ongoing; there is a Civil Service investigation ongoing. The results of those investigations will determine future action on the part of government.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, we are concerned that the investigation is not going to be enough because I keep hearing over and over again that it is the tip of the iceberg.

Immigrant Refugee Appeal Board Staff Reductions

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): With the immigration consulting business booming in Manitoba and in Canada, we are trying to increase immigrations. The government has decided to cut services.

For the same minister: Was this minister consulted before the cuts of 11 staff from the immigrant refugee appeal board for Manitoba were made, and can she explain the impact of those cuts on Manitoba?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I guess the research by the NDP party from a newspaper article this morning does indicate that they have no more idea than we do what cuts or reductions are going to be made, if any. There are hypothetical allegations in the paper, and in fact, we have no way of knowing whether they will take place.

An Honourable Member: Oh, you do not know. That is a good answer.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, do you?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1355)

Immigration Policy Negotiations

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, this government is in negotiations with the federal government on immigration policy. Will the government tell the House if the negotiations currently going on include family class and refugee class as well as their focus on the independent investor class?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I missed the first part of that question. Could I ask if it might be repeated?

Ms. Cerlill: I asked the question, if the negotiations currently with the federal government will include the family class and the refugee class of immigrants as well as the independent investor class?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, our aim in Manitoba with an immigration agreement is to ensure that we get our fair share of immigrants to the province of Manitoba. That would be an increase from what we traditionally get or have been getting over the last number of years, even under an NDP administration, so in fact, we are going to be dealing and negotiating in our immigration agreement with all aspects of immigration.

Health Care System Reform

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on June 7, five days ago, the Minister of Health said in this House that the physicians of Manitoba would be partners in the changing, evolving and reforming health care system in the province of Manitoba. Well, it would appear from the committees that have been structured by the minister that not only doctors, but administrators of hospitals will be involved in a number of issues, including the issue of underfunding our hospitals, forcing them to lay off nurses, the closing of emergency departments at our hospitals, thereby denying health care service to Manitobans and changing an acute care facility to a long-term facility. So much for the Conservative promise that they would never close an acute care bed.

Can the minister tell the House today why he is taking this approach to trimming the costs in health care instead of implementing genuine health care reform, which has been proposed in study after study that this government has already received?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my honourable friend's question and her obvious interest in the issue of health care reform, because the exact process we have undertaken involving the CEOs of the urban hospitals, including Brandon General Hospital, is a process that is very new to Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I might add to my honourable friend that, to the best of my knowledge, it is unique to Canada. No other province has the wealth of co-operation that we enjoy currently in Manitoba to bring the chief executive officers of the major hospitals, which spend a very, very significant portion of the \$915 million approximately that we are going to spend in the hospital system this current fiscal year, around the table to discuss issues that all have brought forward in terms of making the health care system work for the patients.

Not every province has that opportunity. That opportunity did not exist previously within this province, and we believe, and people in the health care system believe, it is by far the most reasoned approach to reforming the health care system that exists in Canada.

Seven Oaks Hospital Nursing Staff Layoffs

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): I would like to know how this minister thinks that he is going to be enhancing the health care to patients by a cut of 33 nurses and nurses' assistants at Seven Oaks, and will he tell the House today how many fewer patients will be treated as a result of those cuts.

* (1400)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my honourable friend has now focused in on an issue. Obviously, she is not very informed on the Seven Oaks proposal that hit the news.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this issue was brought up some three weeks ago where my honourable friend the official Health opposition critic was concerned about jobs in the nursing profession, not the patients served in the hospitals.

Seven Oaks has a proposal which will bring together panelled patients located throughout the hospital, provide the accommodation for those panelled patients in one area, so that the area can be staffed to provide long-term care and quality of long-term care to enhance the quality of care to those individuals, to just as many of them as before with no reductions in numbers, so you end up with a win-win situation. You contain costs and you provide better patient care services.

I hardly think my honourable friend in the Liberal Party would object to those two—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Unfortunately, the minister has not explained to this House how patients are going to receive better care with 33 fewer nurses and nursing assistants delivering that care.

Health Care Facilities Emergency Room Hours

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Will the minister now tell us how the patients of Manitoba are going to be better served by the closure of 24-hour emergency rooms for certain hours of the day, because that also seems to be one of the areas to which this minister is now devoting a great deal of time and attention.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to my honourable friend, she obviously does not understand the issue very well, because within the Seven Oaks proposal which they hope to implement October 7 of this year, there is an increased requirement of aides and other staffing levels of 21 to provide that kind of care to those individuals. That is why I say to my honourable friend, the quality of care will not be compromised in this issue.

My honourable friend brings up a second issue of emergency department operations. That is an issue that is currently being discussed at the Urban Hospital Council. Mr. Speaker, we have received no recommendation on closures anywhere in the system, reduced hours anywhere in the system.

We are asking, through the Urban Hospital Council, that all initiatives in health care in the hospital service delivery level be considered to assure—and I have told my honourable friend in the past that the guiding principles behind this is to provide service which guarantees patient care.

Seven Oaks Hospital Nursing Staff Layoffs

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I think it is becoming increasingly clear that the urban hospital authority with its 48 studies is being used as a cover by this minister for Tory cutbacks.

On May 17, I tabled—as the minister referenced—in this House, the Seven Oaks Hospital document showing plans for significant layoffs of nurses and other cutbacks. I will table that document again, because we have not been getting straight answers, honest answers from the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, to withdraw that remark.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw that remark—

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, thank you very much.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: —and indicate that the minister has not been straightforward with this House or with the people of Manitoba. These cuts are political. As expressed by Nick Kalansky in the Free Press today, they are part of a decision—

Mr. Speaker: Question.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I will ask the minister, since he conveyed the decision to urban hospitals to cut \$90 million at a meeting of February 21, will the minister lift his demand for hospital cutbacks? Will he end the hardship being imposed on up to 40 nurses? Will he stop jeopardizing patient care—

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

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased my honourable friend brought up documents which she tabled yesterday. The document my honourable friend tabled is not the document the Urban Hospital Council is considering in terms of issues.

As I indicated to the media yesterday, the outlined issue my honourable friend flagged, which included the consideration of user fees, was rejected by government. It is not under consideration by this government, by the ministry of Health, by the commission. My honourable friend knows that.

Now, my honourable friend says, when are we going to bring some focus to the system. She uses

the argument that she has constantly used incorrectly. There has been no \$19-million cutback in hospitals. There has been a \$70-million increase in hospital funding. In the narrowed opportunistic political mind of an NDP, \$70 million more becomes a cutback, but that is not the case. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friend—and I will after the next question.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: It is called giving with one hand and taking with the other, and that has been confirmed today by Nick Kalansky.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister, since what we clearly have before us is the Alberta solution of layoffs and cutbacks in retaliation for a settlement of the nurses, is it not the case that this government is punishing the nurses by wiping out the gains made by the nurses in their settlement, by laying them off and by replacing them with nurses aides who are now covered by the Draconian measures of Bill 70?

Mr. Orchard: Absolute balderdash, Mr. Speaker, absolute, unequivocal balderdash.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the New Democratic Health critic, is wanting to create an issue where she is trying to make a \$70 million increase to hospitals a cutback, hardly an issue that anyone, any independent observer in the listening audience, would say is an accurate statement. I mean, not even the alchemist could make gold from lead. My honourable friend cannot make a cutback out of a \$70 million increase.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the process that we are following is substantially different than the process that was followed October 23, 1987, when then Health minister Wilson Parasiuk said the hospital budget plans had been approved. What was dictated to the hospitals in 1987 by Wilson Parasiuk, NDP Health minister, was the forced closure of in excess of 110 acute care beds in the province of Manitoba to contain the budget. We have not undertaken any such measure.

Mr. Speaker, what we have done is we have asked the management of the hospitals within their existing contracts, their settled contracts, to work through management initiatives which will, as in the case of Seven Oaks and Victoria hospitals, provide better quality patient care to those panelled patients in those hospitals and, win-win situation, save some taxpayer dollars while delivering quality health care—not a bad combination.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: If the minister is saying that there have been no cutbacks, then the layoffs of up to 40 nurses do not matter, and the care of patients does not matter to this minister.

How can the patients at Seven Oaks General Hospital be assured of quality care when these Tory cutbacks will leave nurses responsible for up to 30 patients at any one time and with incredible workloads? How is he going to assure quality patient care?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me the liberty of a lengthy answer, I could answer my honourable friend.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition have been allowing this minister liberty for most of this session, the last session, the previous session with his lengthy answers.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, I ask him to follow our rules and finally answer briefly and succinctly some of the direct questions instead of this meandering debate we get from the minister in the disguise of an answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised, I would remind all honourable ministers that answers to questions should be as brief as possible.

* * *

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, in the constrained time of Question Period, I know we will make up, because I notice we have 59 hours and four minutes left that we can dedicate to the discussion of Health Estimates. I know my honourable friend will want to do just that, so she can have her fears and concerns allayed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friend that the initiative at both Victoria and Seven Oaks hospitals will improve the quality of care for panelled patients throughout the hospital, because instead of being intermingled and sprinkled throughout the hospital, mixed with acute care patients, et cetera, they will be placed in wards where all panelled patients will be there.

That allows staff to focus on appropriate program, service delivery and care, and it will improve, not decrease, the opportunity to provide those panelled patients, who are there temporarily awaiting

permanent placement in a personal care home, quality care. That is the objective of this exercise.

* (1410)

Provincial Campsites Staffing

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it is clear, despite the government's claims to the contrary, that the cuts in Natural Resources staff and services are having a devastating effect on recreation and tourism in the province. Campsites in the Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake, Thompson areas are being destroyed—a direct result of these cutbacks.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources: Given that these cutbacks are proving extremely harmful for the tourism industry in these northern areas, will the minister reverse the cutbacks and ensure that services are reinstated in these northern recreation areas?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied—and we have just concluded the examinations of the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources—that we can, with the better use of personnel available to us, contain or provide the kind of services that the honourable member for Interlake speaks of.

We are fortunate, indeed, that we have throughout northern Manitoba the kind of natural environment that attracts a large number of tourists. We hope to continue doing the same job that we have been able to do in the past years.

Provincial Campsites Staffing

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, in the March throne speech, this government said it recognizes the tourism industry as a key to Manitoba's economic development, and I ask the Minister responsible for Tourism, can he tell this House how these devastating cutbacks in Natural Resources are going to promote tourism and economic development throughout Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), I believe, just answered that question in terms of looking into the situation, and if there is a problem, rectifying it.

In terms of our department, I have had a meeting with one group just this week expressing that very

concern, and we have put together an internal working group to work with Natural Resources to look at rectifying it. So certainly, if there is a problem, I anticipate it will be rectified.

Provincial Campsites Staffing

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, we have an approximately 12 percent decrease in tourism in Manitoba now. This minister is going along with what the Minister of Natural Resources is saying.

Will the Minister of Natural Resources tell this House how many more recreation spots in the province will be destroyed as a direct result of this department's cutbacks? How many more?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the honourable member with certainty there will not be the mayhem and the chaos caused by an NDP Minister of Natural Resources, that went through this province smashing barbecues, picnic tables, park stands wherever he could find them. What this Minister of Natural Resources will do—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The honourable member for the Interlake has posed a question, and I believe he would like to hear the answer, as I would.

Mr. Enns: What this Minister of Natural Resources is doing, and what this government is committed in doing, where there are situations like at Cranberry Portage, where the community has asked us to take over a campsite in a park and, in fact, are providing better service than we could provide, where private individuals, like the Springhill Ski Resort, asked us and took over the running of the ski resort and have increased the skiing opportunities by hours and days and have provided a better facility, or the Norquay Beach facility that is now being run in a first-class manner.

Mr. Speaker, the criteria for divestiture, and there will be divestiture taken from time to time, is simply this—that continued service is paramount and it has to be, if anything, improved.

Health Care Facilities Emergency Room Hours

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Emergency care and acute care are the bloodline to any community hospital. Yesterday, in the Estimates discussion, I asked the Minister of Health whether this government was considering closing the emergency rooms in one or more of the hospitals. The minister did not deny that was a part of this government's agenda.

Can the minister tell this House today why he thinks the emergency rooms, acute care, are not an essential part of a community hospital, and why he is going to save tax dollars on the backs of acute care patients?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): You know my honourable friend used to be quite good in his offering of reasonable suggestions, but he seems to be falling in the NDP trap of rhetorical display and I regret that.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend posed the question yesterday. My honourable friend is not accurate in some of his preamble to his statement this afternoon. What I indicated to my honourable friend is that, within the Urban Hospital Council's range of issues to be discussed with recommendations that meet the needs of the system, one of those issues currently being discussed by the Urban Hospital Council, which is all of the hospitals in the city of Winnipeg, is the hours of operation of emergencies.

I indicated to my honourable friend yesterday, I indicate to my honourable friend today, there has been no recommendation made regarding any change of hours in the emergency departments within the hospitals of the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, the minister has set up a committee to look at the possibilities of shutting down or creating one acute care hospital extended care facility. The minister's statement to have one emergency room closed either partially or full time is leaving the evidence, is clearly indicating that this minister and this government is serious to cut health care funding.

I will again give him a chance to clarify which hospital is going to suffer because of the Tory cuts for acute care in Manitoba.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind my honourable friend that the hospitals in Manitoba are getting \$70 million more to operate with this year. They wanted more than \$70 million. They wanted \$19 million more than that, which was not available from the taxpayers of Manitoba.

I simply want to inform my honourable friend, as he speaks on behalf of the Liberal Party in this province, we did not take the initiative that was taken by the government of Newfoundland, which happens to be a Liberal government, wherein they ordered, through their budgetary process, the layoff of some 300 nurses. The government mandated that, not the institutions.

Mr. Speaker, that was because the financiers control the budget in Newfoundland. They do not do that in Manitoba. We still have the opportunity in Manitoba to make intelligent decisions around the delivery of health care to protect patient care, to make services available throughout the length and breadth of this province in a reasoned and constructive reform-minded method of change, something my honourable friends have urged on me for three years. We are going to take their advice and do it.

Mr. Cheema: If the closing of acute care and emergency wards is an intelligent decision, I think then we have to review the minister's intelligence.

Mr. Speaker, can the acting Premier tell this House what area of Winnipeg will suffer, and can he assure us that emergencies will not be closed on the politically motivated decision, so that The Maples, Wolseley, Kildonan, Inkster will not suffer because they did not vote right?

* (1420)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I regret my honourable friend did not show a little more courtesy to the chief executive officers of the urban hospitals in Winnipeg and Brandon because my honourable friend has said the council, which is dealing with a number of issues on which they are asking for advice and decisions from professionals, he has just said that all of those people, if they make a decision, are going to be political in their decision.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. I, quite frankly, cannot tell you what the politics are of the chief executive officers of the hospitals in the city of Winnipeg, and that is exactly contrary to any initiative we have taken. We do not go around insisting that someone produce a party card before they give us advice on health care.

We have not done that at all, and when my honourable friend makes that accusation of the Urban Hospital Council, he does all of those dedicated people a disservice, as they did in their private members' resolution. I wish he would

apologize to those individuals who are working to make a better health care system in Manitoba.

Income Tax Rate Setting

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

At the recent meeting of provincial and federal Finance ministers, there was agreement, in principle, to allow provinces to set their own tax rates apart from the federal system. Unfortunately, Manitoba is a have-not province, both economically and financially. Unfortunately, this new arrangement could open the door to losing federal transfer payments in the future.

My question to the minister is: What position has the Minister of Finance taken on this matter? Does he support the principle that each province should be able to set its own income tax level, or is he indeed apprehensive about this proposal?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that I was able, through some prompting, to have the member rise to ask this question because it was No. 1 on the agenda yesterday with his Leader, with respect to questions in the House. It is an important issue and I stand here and will attempt to provide a full answer to it.

Mr. Speaker, what is apparent is that the NDP, of course, is trying to catch this wave of disgust, by most citizens, with respect to high levels of taxation. I would say to them, they have no credibility. The NDP are synonymous with taxation, and I would say that nobody will convince the citizens of this nation that they are going to be able to change their spots.

Mr. Speaker, what was worked toward yesterday, or the day before, was an understanding originally started by my predecessor, Mr. Kostyra, back some years ago when he was given one alternative and that was to impose a flat tax, something called a 2 percent tax on net income. Everybody knows that this is a comprehensive tax that is sort of hidden. In essence, right now, if we took it into account as a percent of federal tax, it would be upwards somewhere between 65 percent and 68 percent of the federal tax. Some provinces have it, some do not, and what is being requested by the provinces is a streamlined system that is in place for all, tax on taxable income.

It has been sought by the provinces now long before this government came into being, and the

federal government now is prepared to address the question and is doing and preparing a technical paper on it. I understand they will be releasing that paper in short course.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I would gather then from the minister's last statement that there is a technical paper being prepared by the Department of Finance, and it will be made available for public discussion, unlike the position taken by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) yesterday where he seemed to be very reluctant to make this paper available.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was not reluctant yesterday. The Premier would not have the knowledge that I have today with respect to that issue. Why does the member not be honest and state categorically that, of course, it could never be expected the Premier would have that information when the question was posed yesterday?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable government House leader did not have a point of order. It was a dispute over the facts, but I would ask the honourable government House leader to withdraw the remarks that he has just allocated to the honourable member for Brandon East about being honest.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member not to mislead the public and I withdraw the reference to being honest.

* * *

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, another question. I realize it is a proposal, it is still a principle that we are dealing with, but nevertheless, will this proposed new system not lead to unhealthy competition among the provinces for business through tax incentives that could cause losses in corporate tax revenues and also cause more confusion and complexity? I ask this question because this has been predicted by various tax experts at this time.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I have never seen those comments from so-called tax experts. I do know right now, if the member wants to talk about different rates, right today, if we were to roll in our flat tax on top of our percentage of federal tax, in

essence we would have a marginal provincial tax rate in the area of 65 percent to 68 percent as compared to 48 percent.

An Honourable Member: Well, change it. You have four budgets, go change it, Mr. big talker.

Mr. Manness: The Leader says change it. We did. We brought it down from 54 percent to 52 percent, Mr. Speaker, and if members across the way were not driving us to spend, spend, spend more on a daily basis, maybe we could even reduce it more.

The reality is there are differences across Canada and what this proposal will do, if indeed it is accepted, it will, for once, introduce much greater simplicity into the tax form from a provincial standpoint so that the taxpayers know what they are paying vis-a-vis other provinces.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may have leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Ovide Mercredi who was successful in his election yesterday as the leader of the Assembly of First Nations of this country; a Manitoba-born Native of the Grand Rapids area will have the responsibility of the stewardship of some 500,000 status Indians in this country. Many challenges lie before him as I am sure the people of this House realize.

I want to wish Mr. Mercredi well in his endeavours as a national leader and wish him well in his efforts on behalf of the Native people of this country.

I, as well, want to acknowledge the tremendous showing of Mr. Phil Fontaine who has done an excellent job in the leadership of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs here in Manitoba. His leadership, I am sure, would have been equally as well received by the country and wish him well on the excellent showing of which he made, as well as the other candidates.

I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to hear some of the speeches the other night and the excellent presentations that were made on behalf of the Native people of this country, and I wish them well

in their future endeavours in working to better all the interests of the Native people of this country.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, could I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to make a nonpolitical statements? Leave? Agreed.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs to congratulate Ovide Mercredi on his election last evening as the national chief. It was a long election process.

I think what all Canadians must have been impressed with was the quality of each and every candidate who spoke to the delegates assembled, who expressed to them in eloquent language their aspirations for the aboriginal peoples of Canada, particularly important, I think, that recently we have learned of activities that may not always picture our aboriginal peoples in such a positive light.

What we saw yesterday and the day before that was clearly a people that can speak to all of us in this country, that have a message for all of us in this nation that we must listen to, that we must pay attention to and that we must move forward so that they are full participants in the Canadian political and economic life of this nation.

We must say, I think, with clarity that we were particularly pleased of the two Manitoba candidates who ran. Both Phil Fontaine and Ovide Mercredi were excellent examples of the skills required for the tough job that is going to be required by aboriginal leadership in the years to come. It is comforting, I think, for all of us to know that such competence is expressed by those people and that our aboriginal peoples are in such very good hands.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, could I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Agreed.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to take the opportunity at this time to congratulate Ovide Mercredi for having been elected to the top office of the Assembly of First Nations.

I was able to take part in some of the activities that went on at the Convention Centre, which started Sunday and then through Monday and yesterday, as an observer and talking to different people. What

struck me, as I spent partially the three days at the Convention Centre, was that who would have thought 15 years ago that the national media would be staying at the Convention Centre throughout the three days, at least the three days that I was there anyway.

Who would have thought 15 years ago such an event like that would have been covered by the national media? I remember as a young man, when I attended for the first time national conferences, there was never any attention paid to the aboriginal conferences by the media, and so that was the one thing that impressed me even last night. At two o'clock this morning, the national media was still present at the Convention Centre.

The most important thing that I wanted to mention here is the fact that aboriginal people—despite the roadblocks, despite the obstacles, despite the situations that we have lived in over the past many years—have gone through a tremendous growth and development in terms of the education that we now have. We are now starting to graduate more university students. We are now starting to have more aboriginal lawyers, and we are now starting to have more aboriginal people becoming involved in the political system. So in other words, throughout the different stages of development, I think the aboriginal people have come a long, long way.

* (1430)

I also would like to extend a very sincere thank you and sincere appreciation to Phil Fontaine for having put up such a credible campaign in his bid to become the national chief. I would say that both people were excellent candidates, but I guess I, too, also am happy for Ovide Mercredi. I am happy for aboriginal people across the country. I am especially happy for aboriginal people in Manitoba for having one of their own people elected into the highest office of the AFN because, after all, Manitoba has come to be known as a place of beginnings.

Last June, I think, was the beginning of a new era for aboriginal people development, and as my honourable friend from Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) continually said in this House, things will never be the same anymore. So I thank Phil Fontaine for having entered the race and putting on an incredible campaign.

I also would like to thank the other candidates, Bill Wilson, Neil Sterritt, Mike Mitchell and Bill Montour,

again for having shown the interest in the affairs of aboriginal people. Thank you.

Committee Change

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: The Maples (Mr. Cheema) for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before I call orders of the day, I wonder if there is a disposition to waive private members' hour today.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? No? Leave is denied.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, would you then call bills in the following order: first of all, second readings, Bills 61, 63, 59, 64, and then adjourn debate on second readings Bill 44, Bill 5, Bill 19, Bill 70.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 61—The Communities Economic Development Fund Amendment Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 61, The Communities Economic Development Fund Amendment Act; (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Fonds de développement économique local), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce The Communities Economic Development Fund and to speak to the House today on second reading, Bill 61, The Communities Economic Development Fund Amendment Act.

The existing Communities Economic Development Fund Act has created administrative and legal difficulties for the fund due to its ambiguity. The terminology "remote and isolated communities" in the existing act has never been satisfactorily defined, and the geographical mandate for the

lending criteria has never been clearly established to the satisfaction of the fund. The current act may be interpreted as a northern act; however, the word "northern" is not mentioned in its contents.

Subsection 26.6 of the amendment act protects the fund on all loans that may have been considered ultra vires under the existing act. The government is particularly sensitive to meeting the changing needs of the people of northern Manitoba, and it was imperative that a clear mandate to support economic growth in this area be defined.

The Communities Economic Development Fund is especially focused on small business development. The main purpose of the amending act is to clearly define the geographical mandate of the fund. The focus of the fund will then support the economic development of northern Manitoba north of the 53rd parallel and including those communities under the Northern Affairs jurisdiction south of the 53rd parallel.

The government, at the same time, recognizes that certain programs supporting a class of industry may have a more encompassing geographical requirement and, therefore, the boundaries are extended to support all financial assistance approved in support of a loan program for the fishing industry. It further includes all financial assistance approved in conjunction with the Government of Canada aboriginal economic development programs outside the city of Winnipeg.

Regulations establishing criteria for qualifying for financial assistance have been removed from the act and will now be set by by-laws and Orders-in-Council. This allows more flexibility in delivery of different classes of loans and allows the fund to adjust to changing economic conditions in keeping with the current economic climate.

In summary, the amending act addresses the following issues: Clear definition of geographical mandate; focus of northern economic development, especially pertaining to small business development and community development corporations; removal of ambiguous terminology and criteria, replacing it with clear, descriptive language; removal of sexist language; criteria is simplified or removed from the act, allowing the fund to deliver various classes of financial assistance such as the fishing industry loan program.

I, Mr. Speaker, would hope that we have unanimous support on this bill so that the

Communities Economic Development Fund can in fact clearly support those industries in northern Manitoba, the fishing industry and those connected with the aboriginal community that will enhance their way of life.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 63—The Northern Affairs Amendment Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 63, The Northern Affairs Amendment Act; (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les Affaires du Nord), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief in my introduction of The Northern Affairs Act. However, it does not in any way diminish the importance of the amendments which are being presented to the Assembly. I believe it has been some many, many years, approximately 14 years, since The Northern Affairs Act has seen any major amendments. The staff, over the last few years, have been working with the people of northern Manitoba, the communities of northern Manitoba and have been bringing forward an array of recommendations. Major consultations have taken place with northern communities and basically, I believe, has the support of the majority of those community people.

* (1440)

Mr. Speaker, one may say that it is to a large extent a major housekeeping bill. I will say that to the greatest extent. However, there are major areas of clarification of wording to remove any doubt as to whether the minister has taxation powers, and I want to make sure that is clear. There is the validation of the current practice in appointing a contact person in a new community and making sure that the authority is there. The clarification of a process that the minister can use to determine whether or not to continue the status of an existing community and how to change that status will be included in this act.

Clarification of the councillor liability with respect to unauthorized expenditure or a councillor's misuse

of powers; clarification of method in dealing with the vacancies in council; ensuring consistency of terms of office for incorporated councils as well as community councils; provision for in-camera meetings for councils to enable communities to deal with confidential matters in a fair manner; clarification of wording of some sections to remove doubt and possible wrong interpretations, Mr. Speaker, clarifying the minister's and the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council's powers relating to community elections and community expenses; add provisions for a penalty of an offence committed under the act, including some sections presently referenced to other legislation as these relate to administrative procedures of community councils; clarification of the powers of the minister and the LGD respecting assessment, taxation and fees in lieu of taxes, community election, administrative of election process, are all generally those of, as I said earlier, a housekeeping nature, Mr. Speaker.

I would encourage support for this bill as it has been some time since The Northern Affairs Act has been in fact brought before the Legislature. I welcome the debate which will ensue and would hope for unanimous support for the people of northern Manitoba and the passage of this bill.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 59—The Workers Compensation Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for and charged with the administration of The Workers Compensation Act): Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Downey), that Bill 59, The Workers Compensation Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail et diverses dispositions législatives, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the introduction for second reading of The Workers Compensation Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act.

Both as Minister responsible for The Workers Compensation Act and as Minister of Labour, I am most pleased with the advantages this fair and balanced bill confers upon employees and employers in our province.

It is the culmination of six to seven years of effort by several governments of Manitoba, and it will fittingly come into effect, I hope, with the support of this Legislature on January 1, 1992, the 75th anniversary of Workers Compensation operations in our province.

Let me summarize the principal merits of this act. Among other features, those of particular interest to the employees covered by the act will include: automatic indexation of all benefits by the full change under most circumstances in the average industrial wage; an increase of \$7,500 in the covered wage ceiling, raising it to \$45,500 indexed; an impairment lump sum award of up to \$91,000, the largest in Canada; a generous program of benefits for survivors, including tax free annuities and special provisions in case of hardship, as well as the promise of the elimination of the uncertainty caused by the unfunded liability.

Employers will also benefit from this legislation with the removal of the unfunded liability over a period of years. As well, employers are assured of the clear demarcation between WCB and private coverage and an end to the threat of cross-subsidization and overinsurance; balanced, accessed information; a properly administered and fiscally accountable agency financially less bound to government; a WCB better able to protect the general class of employers against poor safety records or receivership of a few employers; and, in the end, a stable and competitive assessment rate.

If we are wise and generous in our deliberations, Mr. Speaker, on these provisions, I hope that we can lay a sure and just foundation for employer-supported insurance for injured workers in our province, as our predecessors attempted to do three-quarters of a century ago.

As some members may be aware, it was in 1916 that The Workers Compensation Act of Manitoba was enacted. That statute was based upon principles enunciated following the public hearings and study by Mr. Justice Sir William Ralph Meredith in 1914 in the province of Ontario. Mr. Justice Meredith—and this may not be well known to members of this House, particularly members of the

New Democratic Party—was a former Leader of the Conservative Party of Ontario who had been elevated to the Supreme Court of that province before commencing his work on Workers Compensation. In fact, he once wrote, there are two kinds of socialists, there is a very bad kind and another kind not so bad. I hope members opposite belong to the latter group.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Meredith's report contained a number of forthright and insightful observations, some of which we should perhaps keep in mind today. For example, Workers Compensation is a contract between employers and employees. As well, it is a social contract between employees and employers that rests upon a wider interest of society at large and, thirdly, that the state can ensure a neutral administration of the scheme.

From such observations, Mr. Justice Meredith distilled a number of principles which yet today undergird Workers Compensation across Canada. Firstly, compensation should be for work-related injuries; two, it should be an entirely employer-funded program; thirdly, the state should administer that program; fourthly, there should be a system of collective liability; fifthly, that it should be broadly based, if not a universal program; and sixthly, that it should be a no-fault program which has the effect of abolishing tort action against employers.

These principles were almost immediately implemented into law in Ontario by the then—and I would point this out to members of the New Democratic Party—Conservative government of Ontario. Perhaps because of their simplicity and balance, they were soon also enacted into law across Canada and, as I said a moment or two ago, came into Manitoba in 1916.

Before I indicate further some of the more salient features of progress in the intervening years, let me turn for a moment to the main purposes of this legislation. Madam Deputy Speaker, members are aware of the fact that 50,000 or so accidents are recorded annually among the about three-quarters of the work force which is covered by the Workers Compensation Board in Manitoba.

* (1450)

Perhaps 20,000 of these accidents annually result, sadly, in time lost from employment. About

600 lead, more regrettably, to impairment. These individuals will carry disfunctioning, disfigurement, a scar, the loss of a limb throughout their lives. Finally, between 20 and 30 of these workers are most tragically killed. Their survivors, of course, must bear that most irrevocable and heaviest of burdens.

In the spirit of Mr. Justice Meredith, this government cannot, and will not, turn its back on the needs of those injured workers. Members of both sides of the House know and see, face to face, constituents who are hurt, maimed or have become ill as a consequence of accidents in the workplace.

As part of this government's commitment to the social and economic infrastructure of Manitoba, we will maintain and strengthen this program so that working men and women will receive fair benefits in the unfortunate event of an accident. In considering Workers Compensation, however, we must also remember that it is supported entirely by the employers of Manitoba. Nearly 19,000 of them pay premiums in the form of assessments to the Workers Compensation Board annually.

Most of these firms are very small. Perhaps only 250 employ more than 100 workers. The overwhelming bulk of them employ less than 10 workers. The many small employers of Manitoba are, as we know, the source of most of the new job creations in our economy. As well, like workers, these people are our neighbours and friends. They share the concern of this Legislature with the physical and emotional cost of injuries suffered by their employees and certainly want to ensure that they are properly covered by Workers Compensation should they be injured.

Nonetheless, like other small business people everywhere, and this also applies to some extent to larger businesses, they have to be concerned with payments which they make to the Workers Compensation Board, and the services which their injured employees receive in return. Employers have viewed, with increasing alarm, the dramatic increases in the unfunded liabilities at the board. The total liabilities now stand at \$550 million, while the cash reserves stand at only \$330 million, leaving a deficit of \$220 million accumulated during the period of office of the New Democratic Party.

With cautious optimism, within the total program expenditure of \$180 million annually, small annual operating surpluses were achieved in 1989 of \$7

million and in 1990 of \$2 million. I hope members opposite pay heed to that fact, given their record in Workers Compensation. These only go a very small way to reducing the unfunded liability. Such an unfunded liability does not mean that a considerable amount of interest income—or does mean that a considerable amount of interest income, which would otherwise be available, is foregone. Thus, present assessment rates must be higher than they would otherwise have to be. This is what is meant by shifting cost from past to present and from present to future employers. —(interjection)—

Madam Deputy Speaker, I hear comments across the way, and I would remind them that when we came to power there were 200 boxes of active files in the basement of WCB that no one knew what was in them. As well, they did not even have enough telephone lines in at the board to take calls, so I do not think any member across the way can lecture this administration or the current administration at WCB on how to operate a workers compensation scheme in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, employers also witnessed substantial rate increases from 1983 through 1988. In one year, rates jumped 24 percent and averaged almost 20 percent annually over that six-year period. Had such increases continued over the past three years, then rates would have shot up to more than \$4.08 on average per \$100 for the general class of employers.

Instead, since this government has assumed office, rates have declined modestly and now stand, as members may know, at about \$2.30 per \$100 of payroll on average. Such average rates, of course, conceal a wide range of premiums in practice, from less than \$1 per \$100 for retail stores and restaurants to above \$13 for the logging industry. These rates, of course, correspond to the experience of these various classes of employers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government, consistent with the principles enunciated when it was first elected, has maintained an arm's length relationship with the Workers Compensation Board. Mr. Meredith's belief in board impartiality is thus, under this government at least, being maintained, although that was quite doubtful under the previous administration. Nonetheless, I would be remiss if I did not recognize in this Legislature this government's goal that the WCB provide excellence in service. In this vein, we have been gratified to note that the reform efforts which have been going

on at the board since 1988 have taken place on a number of fronts.

A whole host of policies have been adopted by a succession of boards of directors over the last three years. A number of management and personnel changes have been made as well as automated systems introduced. A variety of program changes and controls have been implemented accompanied by reorganization. Finally, a number of service deficiencies are in the process of being addressed.

I am not saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we have yet met our service goal of excellence and service. We still have a long way to go. At least we are on the right path. Naturally, it is in the legislative area in which government has the greatest responsibilities. Our priorities in developing this legislative amendment package were that these would, in conjunction with board policy and practice: (1) provide a fair and reasonable benefit program to employees in Manitoba; (2) address the issue of the unfunded liability which the Provincial Auditor, among others, has repeatedly pointed out is illegal and which negatively affects the rates levied upon registered employers; (3) provide for competitive assessment rates within the Canadian context supportive of an expanding economy and work force in our province.

Why then are such thoroughgoing legislative changes necessary? The laws, enacted at the urgings of Meredith, occurred at a time when there was no income tax and, hence, no difference essentially between a gross wage and a net wage; no inflation and, hence, no need to index benefits; no other significant social programs and, hence, no need to integrate financial benefits among the programs; no other financial vehicles for delivering benefits such as various kinds of annuities; and not much difference between the loss of physical capacity and the proportional loss of wages, as most people were labouring people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, since 1916 no Legislative Assembly of this province has seen fit to modernize this law in a fundamental way. Rather, reform has confined to improving the percentage of income replaced.

In 1916 it was 55 percent of gross wages. In 1923 it was increased to 66-2/3 percent of gross wages, in 1953 to 70 percent of gross wages and in 1956 to 75 percent of gross wages, or as well in changing a few clauses, for example to index pensions.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I point out that none of those changes was brought about by New Democratic Party governments.

Nevertheless, the whole system was extraordinarily robust, but by the late 1970s considerable pressure had been brought to bear upon it. Beginning with the New Democratic Party administration in Saskatchewan in 1979—and I hope honourable members opposite would note what their colleagues in Saskatchewan did in 1979—a number of new approaches to the problems of compensating injured workers emerged.

The dual award system, a lump-sum impairment and separate wage loss benefit package came to replace a pension for life, done by the New Democrats in Saskatchewan. A net income calculation came to replace gross income compensation, done by the New Democrats in Saskatchewan. Rehabilitation for surviving spouses was provided, done by the New Democrats in Saskatchewan. The amount of covered wages was increased markedly and automatic indexation was introduced, again all done by the New Democratic Party in Saskatchewan in 1979. I should note that today, I understand, Saskatchewan is one of the few provinces with a very competitive rate system and virtually no deficit.

In Manitoba, the impetus for change came from both employers and labour, resulting in the establishment of the tripartite Legislative Review Committee from 1985 to 1987. This committee, as members know, conducted public hearings and received many written and verbal presentations. The main views of the employer and labour communities were thus catalogued and I believe still remained abundantly clear. The then government of Manitoba responded to the LRC recommendations by establishing a staff team for workers compensation reform which began to study actual legislative proposals during 1987 and 1988.

In 1989, this government wound down the implementation team and transferred some of its responsibilities for planning to the Workers Compensation Board itself, while vesting other responsibilities in the Steering Committee for Legislative Reform, an advisory group to the minister. The steering committee consists of a number of technical advisors to the government, such as lawyers, actuaries and accountants, as well

as several senior officials from the Workers Compensation Board itself.

*(1500)

During the term of the steering committee's deliberations, the WCB established a number of documents indicating the likely impact on its operations of some policy and legislative changes. In particular, in 1989, the WCB published a comprehensive plan in which it laid out some of the financial consequences of adopting a number of changes to the legislation along the lines of the present amendments before us today.

The members will be aware that beginning on April 18, myself and Graham Lane, the chair of the steering committee and CEO of the board, have conducted a series of consultations with a number of interested parties. These include the Manitoba Federation of Labour, the Employers' Task Force on Compensation, the chambers of commerce, the Injured Workers Association, among others. In response to these consultations and further directions from myself and my caucus, the amendments which we are about to examine have been modified in some significant ways. I am particularly pleased that a hardship clause has been introduced for surviving spouses who are 50 years of age and older in the case of a fatality.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would now like to summarize, for the benefit of honourable members, the main elements of the proposals before turning to a brief synopsis of the technical amendments. The first major proposal is automatic indexation of benefits. The amendments propose that all benefits be indexed to the average industrial weekly wage, capped annually to a maximum increase of 6 percent. Where the average wage increase is greater than 6 percent, there will be a carry forward proposed of excess indexation into other years. Indexation initially follows a two year delay but is yearly thereafter.

These amendments supplement a variety of ad hoc indexations which are currently in the act and, of course, provide for automatic indexation in many cases where there was never any before. These stipulations also apply to current pensioners until they are age 65 and beyond for those spouses of fatality victims, a guarantee of pension integrity for these pensioners which have not had that for many years.

Number 2: Increase maximum insured earnings. It is proposed that the maximum insured earnings be fixed at \$45,500 for 1992, an increase from \$38,000 in 1991. This new level approximates 190 percent of the average industrial wage. It equates to that level forecast for Ontario in 1992 and to the Canadian average. At this new level, I am informed that more than 95 percent of all those covered by the act will have their incomes fully insured.

Number 3: Conversion of wage loss from gross income to net income. Under this proposed legislation, an injured worker would receive 90 percent of average loss net income up until the date of retirement, death or return to work. However, after 24 months of accumulated benefits, the level of wage loss would be reduced to 80 percent of net income with the addition of 5 percent of income paid to a WCB administered pension plan as well as up to an additional 5 percent used to provide life insurance to the claimant.

As to the top-ups by employers, many of these currently allow a WCB recipient to take home more while on WCB benefits, particularly when tax consequences are considered, than when they were working. One must remember that all WCB benefits are tax free. As a consequence, this legislation is proposing that any top-ups which raise benefits beyond 90 percent of net income be deducted from WCB benefits paid. The one exception to this is for employees where their employers are in the self-insured category where we propose a grandparenting to 100 percent of net income provided in cases where the current collective agreement in place in the self-insured industries provide a top-up.

This offset provision also recognizes that the current system of paying 75 percent of gross earnings regardless of the number of dependents gives rise to severe inequities in that married or single persons with similar gross incomes are now treated the same despite the fact that their after-tax incomes are certainly different. Under the proposed system, some individuals will receive more while others receive less. Generally speaking, low income married workers with dependents will receive more while single persons with larger incomes with no dependents will generally receive less. I am sure even the New Democratic Party recognizes that there is an inequity in the current system and that should be redressed.

Number 4: Lump sum payments for permanent disability. It is proposed that a lump sum rather than a lifetime pension compensate for physical disability or loss of functioning, again, similar to the Saskatchewan model developed in 1979. Madam Deputy Speaker, impairments are generally calculated everywhere in North America on a percentage basis according to tables established by medical practitioners.

Under the proposal for those whose impairment lies between 1 percent and 5 percent, a \$500 lump sum would be paid. For those whose impairment lies between 5 percent and 10 percent, a \$1,000 lump sum would be paid. For those whose impairment percentage is greater than 10 percent, a \$1,000 additional lump sum would be paid for every percent up to a maximum of \$91,000. These amounts would be reduced by 2 percent a year for workers over the age of 45 to a maximum reduction of 40 percent. This stipulation takes into account the number of years of loss of functioning which the worker is likely to suffer. These amounts of up to \$91,000 compensate for nonwage monetary losses. Members should note this is in addition to wage loss benefits, which the recipient would also receive.

As well, the recipient would receive vocational rehabilitation payments, medical costs, disability related expenses such as vehicle and home modifications, prosthetic devices, et cetera. So an impaired worker would receive benefits from three sources: wage loss, lump sum, and all of the other different costs that they may incur for alterations to their home, medical care, et cetera. So the three come together. This lump sum may be granted at the recipient's request as a board administered annuity, that is on a tax-free basis so as to ensure ongoing availability of the capital.

I am sure that members of this House will be pleased to compare this amount to those provided in other jurisdictions. The governments of Saskatchewan and Ontario provide \$22,600 and \$65,000 respectively representing the range of other jurisdictions across Canada. As all members can see this is the most substantial plan anywhere in the country. I would remind members it would be indexed annually.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fifth major area, Fatality Benefits. This is an area where I am sure all members are concerned with compensating for grievous loss. Under our proposals a surviving spouse may receive a lump sum of up to one-half of

the full impairment award or one-half of \$91,000 equaling \$45,500. This, too, will be reduced by a percentage where the worker was over age 45 but will also be indexed annually.

In addition, a spouse will be entitled to monthly payments equal to the total wage loss to which the worker would have been entitled had he or she been totally unable to work. These payments will continue generally for a period of five years or until the youngest child is 18, whichever is longer. In addition, the surviving spouse is entitled to rehabilitation services in order to assist them in re-entering the labour force.

If the spouse is 50 years or older and death cause is a hardship, as there is insufficient or inadequate family income, that spouse may elect to substitute continuing wage loss until retirement rather than receive the lump sum payment.

Dependent children are also entitled to an amount of \$250 per month compared to about \$200 today. Amounts are also payable to adult dependents, for example, an elderly relative of up to an aggregate of \$2,000 per month. Some of these amounts may also be converted to annuities.

In the area of Occupational Disease, Madam Deputy Speaker—compensation for industrial, or as we now say occupational illness is an issue that has bedevilled Workers Compensation for many years. Indeed, Mr. Justice Meredith made some comments about the difficulties in this regard. Some of these difficulties arise because of the multifactoral nature of most diseases, which include the effects of lifestyle, nonworkplace exposure and other confounding factors.

The standard test—did the accident arise out of and in the course of employment, given that this program is 100 percent employer funded and given the presence of other nonspecific disability compensation plans such as the Canada Pension Plan and employer long-term disability plan as well as coverage which may be obtained privately is certainly a test that fits the framework for occupational disease.

I am pleased therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, that these provisions address both the general issue of occupational disease and the more specific concerns with one disease, that being stress. The amendments explicitly recognize occupational disease within the definition of accident, albeit with a number of reasonable restrictions and exclusions.

Among these is the restriction on compensating stress other than that arising from an acute reaction to a traumatic event due to the extreme multicausal nature of stress. Also occupational disease coverage does not include ordinary diseases of life, a concept consistent with most North American jurisdictions. Consistent with the general terms of the act, occupational disease is to be compensated where it arises, and I quote, out of and in the course of employment, but it must also be due to causes peculiar to the trade, occupation or the particular employment.

* (1510)

In other words, we are basically defining the present practice or interpretation of occupational disease in this legislation. The one significant change in this area of occupational disease arises in another area where the WCB administration is caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, industrial disease is covered if it arises out of the course of employment.

On the other hand, the act currently stipulates apportionment when there are multiple causes. Under such criteria, how are causes such as myocardial infarctions with multiple causes to be adjudicated? Should it matter where the heart attack occurs or the immediate circumstance around the event? What are the triggers or thresholds for apportionment—a significant work-related cause, a dominant cause or any cause? Should the same tests apply to asbestosis for a smoker? What about psychological and stress conditions? Such uncertainty cannot be the basis for good public service or policy.

We must also tread carefully so as to not charge all the costs of disease, no matter how tenuously related to the workplace, to employers. It is a tenet of public policy that the incidence charges should bear on those who can effect a diminution of that cost. But how can employers affect the consequences of smoking, obesity, or other lifestyle practices short of not hiring such persons? Is that what we want? Should not society, in general, or the employee, bear a share?

If so, how can we straightforwardly and equitably assess that share? It makes some sense to not saddle employers with the diseases of ordinary life which happen to all of us, including some employees. It also makes sense to me to apply a test suggesting that the disease to be compensable

be peculiar to a process or workplace. This is something which the employer has in his/her power to remedy.

Therefore, I am pleased to point out that our proposal is to provide compensation where the conditions of the workplace are the dominant cause of the illness. Consequently, we propose that the current apportioning provisions of the current act be repealed.

With regard to stress, members are likely to be aware that Hans Selye's theory suggests stress can be a positive or negative influence on our lives, and that chronic stress, like other chronic psychological conditions or physiological conditions, is a product of many influences from before our working lives begin, from outside our working lives and from during our working lives. This level of complexity means that medicine cannot attribute cause to events, or even determine whether an event, if a cause, was a positive or negative factor. After all, not working can also be very stressful.

In light of this, I do believe this Legislature should be clear in dealing with stress. It should be limited to negative stress reactions to traumatic events at the workplace.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would now like to provide information to members respecting a number of the proposed technical amendments to the act. These amendments, although not in and of themselves individually as important as the main components of the act, are nonetheless significant in their achievements with respect to protecting rights of workers, extending benefits, protecting rights of employers, controlling or reassigning costs and strengthening both the administration of the WCB and the level of appropriate control exercised by the government and the Legislature.

Manitoba injured workers will, in my judgment, be pleased to learn of the following proposed amendments to the act:

Number 1: A number of minor benefits have been enriched or extended. The lump sum funeral entitlement has been consolidated and raised from about \$2,800 to \$5,000. As well, no offset has been provided for a like amount which is separately available from the Canada Pension Plan. Annuities are to be available to an injured worker or his or her surviving spouse in a number of circumstances. Finally, I would like to mention that the definition of

worker has been expanded to include companions of the elderly.

Number 2: A number of new rights and protections have been conferred on workers. I am pleased to note, in particular, that workers may not be subject to coercion with respect to accident reporting. Where employers do so, they are subject to significant penalties under this proposed law. As well, workers are entitled to elect to seek MPIC benefits, where these are richer benefits, rather than WCB benefits in appropriate cases.

Workers are also entitled to receive replacements for damaged prosthetic devices, dentures, eyeglasses, clothing and the like in cases where there has been a personal injury on a no-fault basis. As well, reasonable wage loss benefits may henceforth be paid to the worker where the loss or damage to a prosthetic device, eyeglass or the like prevents the injured worker from working. Finally, the vocational rehabilitation clauses of the act have been consolidated and upgraded to include preventative rehabilitation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the employers in Manitoba who are covered under this act will also benefit from a number of favourable amendments. Costs will be more appropriately established and allocated, for example, the ability of a worker to elect or receive MPIC benefits where that is appropriate rather than have that born by the WCB system.

As well, several provisions address the ability of the board to credit those with good safety records over and above their excellence rating while surcharging those with poor safety records, thus ensuring greater equity for those who support the Workers Compensation Board and ensure a safe workplace.

Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, the WCB and the appeal commission may, under certain circumstances, charge for medical review panels and appeal panels where the request for the panel is deemed to be frivolous. Under these amendments, the board will also be in a better position to recover its administrative costs associated with successful third party legal actions. Finally, the employers are to be individually protected from high-cost fatalities, as these costs may be averaged over all fatalities.

The legal rights of employers have been extended consistent, in some cases, with current practice. For example, the experience rating system now in

use has been enshrined under these amendments in law. Again, it is presently in use. As well, the waiting period for employers to file a report has been set at five business days rather than the current three. That comes with general recognition by all stakeholders that it is a more reasonable period of time.

Finally, employer rights with respect to access to information are solidified through the employer having access to relevant medical information in support of an appeal. To deny employers access to this information would mean that they would be approaching the appeal in ignorance of a number of issues under appeal.

From current judicial opinion which is developing across the country, it would appear that at some point we would be forced to do this in practice by the courts rather than putting in our act at this time. However, I can assure honourable members that we are protecting workers with a proper notification, process and appeal procedure which, in many ways, mirrors that currently in use in Ontario and which in fact I believe is probably stronger than the protections for employees that are currently in place in Ontario.

The employer may also be protected through a variety of measures. Specifically, directors of corporations will henceforth be held responsible for unpaid assessments. As well, the unpaid assessments due to the WCB will receive priority in nonbankruptcy situations. Madam Deputy Speaker, as well, the WCB has, and I will describe in a moment, been granted considerably greater authority with respect to administrative flexibility. A number of important controls are also being proposed, one that the board must prepare an annual five-year operating plan and submit it to the minister along with the annual report.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

As well, we are proposing that the Workers Compensation Board, their annual report and operating plan have to be reviewed by a standing committee of this Legislature on an annual basis. To date, there has never been that type of accountability to the Legislative Assembly.

We are also proposing, Mr. Speaker, that the board may publish assessment rates rather than having to mail them individually to employers. The act contains stipulation which, while recognizing that unfunded liabilities may arise from time to time,

it will require the WCB to recover any future shortfall with respect to one year over the succeeding three-year period. I would hope, with respect to this provisional loan, that a certain amount of fiscal stability will be brought to the operations of the board.

Mr. Speaker, as well, a number of program enrichments and improvements have also been introduced to the very considerable advantage of both employers and injured workers. These stipulations include establishing a rate stabilization fund and a relief-of-cost fund. Finally, the new provisions allow for coverage to extend to all employees of the company including executive officers, but excluding only directors who may seek voluntary coverage.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude, there is one other consideration that I would like to make, and that is with respect to the Legislative Review Committee which existed from 1985 to 1987 in Manitoba. I hope members of the New Democratic Party will pay heed to this information. Mr. Speaker, let me compare for a moment the main benefit provisions in this proposed package to that of the Legislative Review Committee that they established when they were in government.

* (1520)

The LRC recommended a dual-award system and prospective wage-loss pension. In these amendments we adopt the dual-award system although the wage loss will be continually calculated over time rather than solidified in the form of a pension. The LRC's majority recommended wage loss at 90 percent. Under these provisions, we adopt a 90 percent wage loss system for the first 24 months with a reduction to 80 percent with approximately 10 percent of benefits to make up that difference. The LRC recommended that the WCB set aside 10 percent of wage-loss benefits so that the injured worker might subsequently purchase a pension. We are providing that 5 percent in a pension with the option of recipients of topping it up to 5 percent. The LRC set the maximum impairment level at \$50,000.

As members are aware, these provisions establish it at \$91,000; however, the LRC did not make a recommendation regarding any reductions in lump sum according to age. Consequently, they are very close to one another although this is probably a better package than that recommended.

The LRC also recommended that benefits be escalated annually and these provisions do so. The LRC recommended that the surviving spouse be entitled to a \$175,000 lump sum. Under this act, we are providing for up to a \$45,500 lump sum with continuing wage loss. If one calculates these totals and does some numbers based on a five-year period, it could range anywhere in reality from \$160,000 to \$500,000. Again, I think we have more than met those expectations.

The LRC recommended the amount of \$225 be provided to surviving dependent children. We are recommending \$250. Mr. Speaker, the LRC recommended that pre-accident earnings be adjusted for the special circumstances of younger workers. These amendments provide for special arrangements for youth and apprentices. Finally, the LRC, in majority, recommended that the maximum wage ceiling for coverage be twice the average industrial wage, while the labour minority recommended two-and-a-half times, both to be indexed annually. Maximum earning under these provisions are set at about 1.9 times the average industrial wage and are indexed annually.

I am pleased to say that with these provisions enacted into law, at least 75 percent of the 178 recommendations made by the New Democratic Party-initiated LRC will have been adopted by either the government, or WCB itself administratively.

Before closing, I would like to mention that the proposals, though not in the legislative context, have been provided to the statutorily established policy committee to the board of directors beginning in January of 1991. They have had a chance to review those proposals, again, not in text but in proposal form.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind this House, and particularly members of the New Democratic Party, that although I hear comments on a continual basis about a management agenda that this is not for workers, the vast majority of these provisions follow from a process that they began and bear the recommendations that were being made to them when they were in government.

They may try to make some politics out of this. They may try to claim that this is not a fair package, but this package brings Manitoba into line with virtually every other province. At least the majority of the provinces in Canada follows the lead that was taken by the NDP in Saskatchewan in 1979 and

implements a majority of the provisions that their own initiated review recommended. So if they are to get up on some sort of a political high horse to attack this as if this has come out of the blue, then I think what they are inviting is the label of hypocrite, because it certainly would not fit with the history of the development of workers compensation across Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your attention.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 64—The Energy Rate Stabilization Repeal Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), that Bill 64, The Energy Rate Stabilization Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la stabilisation des emprunts d'Hydro-Manitoba à l'étranger, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, Bill 64 provides the legislative authority for the province to make a present value settlement with Manitoba Hydro respecting its remaining liability under the Hydro Rate Stabilization program and repeal The Energy Rate Stabilization Act.

The Energy Rate Stabilization Act was previously amended so that Manitoba Hydro assumed responsibility for fluctuation on all of its foreign currency debt by March 31, 1989, beyond the amount which has been amortized on the province's books. The province has established in its accounts the liability to Manitoba Hydro equal to the amount that the province has amortized on its books, in respect to the difference in value of Hydro's foreign currency debt from the date of issue to the dates when Manitoba Hydro assumed responsibility for its foreign currency debt.

Bill 64 will allow the province to make a present value settlement with Manitoba Hydro, and thereby terminate the province's obligations under the Hydro Rate Stabilization program. This will permit The Energy Rate Stabilization Act to be repealed.

Mr. Speaker, I will just spend a couple of minutes again reviewing the history of this particular piece of

legislation—and I am talking now about the act itself, it is presently in effect.

The program was announced in the 1979 Budget Address, and the program was intended to guarantee a five-year fixed power rate for all Manitoba consumers other than bulk purchases and those on other separate contracts.

In order to facilitate this rate freeze, the government relieved Manitoba Hydro, as of April 1, 1979, of the risk associated with its foreign currency debt by charging interest on the debt based on Canadian equivalent rates in effect on the dates of issue of the debt.

Mr. Speaker, I digress for only a second to indicate to members it was during this period of time that the Canadian dollar was falling as a rock against the other currencies in the world. Of course, the NDP government previously had accepted the flirtation of borrowing in Swiss francs, in Japanese yen, in German marks, in European economic units of account, it seems to me or whatever the term is, in everything but Canadian dollars. They went for the cheap coupon rate and inevitably got trapped when the Canadian dollar dropped to below 70 cents.

What the Lyon government of the day did, was said, okay, we will save harmless the rate payers of Manitoba Hydro from having to meet these incredible foreign exchange losses. In exchange, we will ask Manitoba Hydro to freeze the rates of hydro associated with usage. That is the quick history.

The rate freeze on Manitoba Hydro was removed in 1984 but the government's undertaking to relieve Hydro of the currency fluctuation risk associated with its foreign currency debt was continued. That was a political decision made by the NDP in 1984. In 1987, The Energy Rate Stabilization Act was amended so that Manitoba Hydro assumed responsibility for fluctuation on outstanding and new U.S. dollar denominated debt as of April 1, 1987, and for any other new foreign currency debt issued by or on behalf of Manitoba Hydro on or after April 1, 1987.

The province accepted liability for foreign exchange losses with respect to Hydro's U.S. dollar denominated debt equal to the amount accumulated as of March 31, 1987, in its provision account for the Hydro rate stabilization program. The province retained responsibility for the currency fluctuation

respecting Manitoba Hydro's debt denominated in foreign currency other than U.S. dollars issued by or on behalf of Manitoba Hydro prior to April 1, 1987.

In 1989, Mr. Speaker, this is the first time the new government brought forward legislation dealing with The Energy Rate Stabilization Act. In '89 that act was again amended so that Manitoba Hydro assumed responsibility for the fluctuation on its debt denominated in foreign currencies other than U.S. dollars which was issued prior to April 1, 1987. The province accepted liability for foreign exchange losses on this debt calculated at March 31, 1989, exchange rates. After this amendment, Hydro became responsible for the foreign exchange fluctuation on all of its foreign currency debt.

I only say this as a backdrop to the import and the principle behind Bill 64. It is complicated, I know, but what we are talking about are tens leading to hundreds of millions of dollars of exposure that the ratepayers of Manitoba Hydro and, therefore indirectly, the taxpayers of the province, have had to face up because of the flirtation—for the want of a better word—of borrowing what appeared to be at very low rates, coupon rates, but not having hedged the Canadian dollar, vis-a-vis the other currencies in which the borrowing took place.

So, Mr. Speaker, I commend this bill to the House. I hope that opposition members will see fit to give speedy and quick passage to this bill, as it now clears up part of our history associated with Manitoba Hydro and the borrowing program that Hydro followed for a period of time in the 1970s which, of course, for the most part, has proven unproductive. Thank you very much.

* (1530)

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that debate on the motion be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 44—The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), Bill 44, The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Régie des services publics, standing in

the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. Agreed.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put some comments on the record regarding Bill 44 dealing with Centra Gas, put forward by the Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh).

I think it is interesting, Mr. Speaker, to note, first of all, that for reasons known only to the minister and her cabinet colleagues, that the bill was only introduced on May 15 for second reading despite the promises of her predecessor the former Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the honourable member for Portage (Mr. Connery), that this bill was to be his crowning achievement in his legislative career. I would like to also state that the government is now demanding quick and urgent movement of this bill through the legislative process.

I would like to put on record our party's concerns about some of the elements in this bill, some of the potential problems that may arise out of this bill, should it be passed in an unamended form. We are looking forward to debate in the House, reasoned and well-thought out debate on all parties, and also to the public hearing process where we understand that there will be a fair number of public groups that will be making presentations, and private individuals will be making presentations, on this bill, which has far-ranging impacts on, not only the Centra Gas company, but also individuals and private citizens in the province of Manitoba.

One of the things that strikes us on this side of the House is that when you look at Centra Gas and its rate of return, which I think is an important thing to do in this regard because Centra Gas is asking for the ability, and this bill is giving Centra Gas the ability to cut off delinquent accounts, I think one of the things that all people who are debating and talking about this bill need to take a look at is the necessity for Centra Gas to be making this request and the reasons behind the government's very quick and easy acquiescence to Centra Gas's request. Centra Gas and its predecessor, ICG Utilities, have enjoyed a profitable monopoly for very many years, a monopoly which has not gone unnoticed by the marketplace. In November of 1989, Mr. Speaker,

Greater Winnipeg Gas Company purchased
-(interjection)-

I am actually glad to hear the comments of the minister responsible on this issue. It has been a long time coming, and I am sure that we will be sharing a great many hours in front of the public in committee hearings. We will refer this bill to committee hearings when we have completed our statements on the bill. -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) will have ample opportunity to put her remarks on the record when she does close the debate. Right now, the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has the floor.

Ms. Barrett: In November of 1989, Greater Winnipeg Gas Company purchased all of the issued and outstanding common stock of ICG Utilities Manitoba Limited. Less than six months later, on April 18, 1990, West Coast Energy purchased all of the 99.9 percent outstanding common shares previously owned indirectly by Inter-City Gas Corporation. This year, 1991, just prior to the public board hearings in early February into yet another request for a rate increase, the name was changed once more, this time to Centra Gas.

Members will recall the expensive advertising campaign featuring ads with a photo and comments of Cary Grant who we all know changed his name from a name that I cannot remember right now to Cary Grant and consequently went on to bigger and better things. I assume that part of the reason for the name change was to ensure that Centra Gas would be able to go on to bigger and better things. Should this bill go through unamended, we are certain to see that happen, along with the large increases that the Public Utilities Board has already given to Centra Gas.

We would like to put on record some of the financial information that has been given out in regards to Centra Gas's financial situation which, as I stated earlier, is an important component when dealing with this bill which makes assumptions about the need for Centra Gas to have the ability to cut off delinquent accounts. Centra Gas is not short of cash flow. It has operating revenues in excess of \$200 million a year that from this side of the House would appear to be a fairly substantial amount of money in and out in one year. Since 1985, revenues have averaged well above \$200 million

per year. In the latest report, the operating revenue was \$210.6 million, up by 10 percent; operating profit increased by 25 percent to \$23.5 million; and net income after tax increased by 31 percent to \$9.5 million.

Centra Gas is not exactly a poor cousin in the energy business. One wonders at the need in these recessionary times when this government is making students take a \$30 a month cut in their High School Bursary Programs, is making social assistance individuals who are attempting to go back to school and improve themselves so that they can get away from the cycle of poverty, a \$30 a month cut bringing their monthly income to \$210. Putting that into the context, Centra Gas is not exactly hurting.

Another element to the Centra Gas story is that the total customers exceed over 200,000 in Greater Winnipeg, almost all until recently having no option but to use ICG. The firm has been indeed in a fortunate situation financially. They have not had to go onto social assistance, and they should be very grateful that they have not had to access the system that is available to the poorest people in our province.

* (1540)

Another element that we would like to bring to the public's attention in this regard, which also talks about Centra Gas' role and need for being able to cut off individuals and companies with delinquent accounts, is Centra's own unpaid and delinquent accounts which are not entitled delinquent accounts but accumulated, unrecorded, deferred income tax. This is a very large federal and provincial Conservative government way of taking taxes that are legitimately owed by profit-making corporations and deferring them so that the companies are not required to pay those taxes, can use that money to increase their profits and not be good corporate citizens.

At the same time that at the federal level over the last years the individual income taxpayer, particularly the moderate and middle-income taxpayer who does not have advantage of the tax loopholes that federal Liberal and Conservative federal governments have instituted over the last 30 or 40 years, those individuals are paying well over 50 percent of the tax revenue that the federal government takes in each year while profit-making corporations, of which Centra Gas is certainly one, are paying less than 10 percent now. I think when

we put that in as some of the background on the discussion of the background of this bill, it becomes clear whose agenda is being followed here.

ICG's 1989 Annual Report stated that they had an accumulated, unrecorded, deferred income tax bill, i.e., taxes that should have been paid, but were allowed not to be paid of \$28,958,300, almost \$29 million, a figure very close to the \$30 million that this provincial government has added to its Social Assistance line in its provincial Family Services budget as additional funds that are required by this government because it has absolutely no job creation strategy, no funding put into helping people who have been laid off, people who do not have access to large corporations and their high profit margins.

It would be interesting to note what this government could have done with just under \$30 million in additional revenue, \$30 million that ICG in 1989 agreed was income tax that they legitimately owed to society. That amount of money, almost \$29 million, was in one year up from \$21,393,500. In one year, the deferred taxes owed by that corporation increased by \$7 million.

Now there has been some deregulation in the industry in the last little while and ICG/Centra has faced some competition for commercial accounts but has not recently faced the same pressures on the residential market, which until very recently has been captive to the bosses at ICG/Centra and the Public Utilities Board.

The Public Utilities Board is now in the process of holding hearings on the direct purchasing of natural gas from brokers, agents or producers by Manitoba consumers. Centra Gas Manitoba Inc., otherwise known as Centra, entered into a longer term gas supply contract with Western Gas Marketing Ltd. in 1988. The Public Utilities Board is requested to approve rates for gas pursuant to that contract. The current price under that contract expires October 31, 1991, and the rates to consumers may change thereafter.

The Public Utilities Board in previous public hearings has approved terms and conditions under which Centra offers direct purchasing arrangements to large volume customers, another area where ICG/Centra has made some interesting philosophical decisions that flow directly from their close alignment with federal and provincial Conservative thinking, which is, you charge large

volume customers, i.e., large profit-making corporations less, and small volume customers, i.e., residential users, many of whom are on fixed and low incomes, more per unit.

A number of companies are now proposing to enter the Manitoba market with the intention of offering direct purchasing arrangements to smaller volume customers to enable them to participate in the deregulated market. A public hearing to review these issues is going to be held on July 16 and, if necessary, July 17 of this year. We anticipate a fair number of individuals to make presentation before the Public Utilities Board at that time.

If nothing else, we hope that these hearings will result in a situation where consumers will no longer be captive to the demands of a single monopoly for regular rate increases.

The request earlier this year to the Public Utilities Board by Centra for an increase of 12.5 percent in the residential monthly charge and a decrease of an average of 2.5 percent of commercial charges points to the priorities of the firm and also fits in very nicely with the ideology of the governments of the day, both provincial and federal.

As I spoke of earlier, it is a strange kind of a situation where, in an era where we are supposed to be saving energy, we are supposed to be talking about sustainable development, we are supposed to be talking about conserving our resources, it is saying that the larger you are, the more you use, the less we will charge you, and that the smaller you are, the less you use, the more we will charge you. There is an internal logic here, but it is not a logic that we advocate, nor are we in favour of any changes to the rates that will carry that on.

What this means again is that smaller individuals, moderate- and lower-income people, those on social assistance, will find their incomes decreased by a fairly hefty percentage when you are talking about a social allowance monthly income or you are talking about a minimum wage family or you are talking about the largest single increase in type of family, which is a single parent family headed by a mother living below the poverty line, when you are talking about families who are required to have two incomes in order to have even the most modest standard of living. When you have an average of 12.5 percent increase on their Centra Gas bill, that makes a big difference, a large difference.

Another group of families that is going to be adversely affected by these kinds of rate changes are the families who are currently making use of the daycare system in our province. With an increase of 48 percent for infant day care spaces and almost 20 percent for preschool spaces, families just above the subsidy cutoff line, moderate- and middle-income families are finding it very difficult to make ends meet and increases—

* (1550)

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): This is very much a technical bill. It deals with a process but, Mr. Speaker, what it does not purport to deal with is all the social problems of the day, even though there may be reason to discuss them and other issues. Certainly Bill 44 in its principles does not deal with those issues, and I think the member is straying far off base. I would ask you to bring her back to the purport of the bill.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would remind the honourable member for Wellington that the question before the House is The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act, and I would ask the honourable member to keep her remarks relevant to said question.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, to get back to the increase of 12.5 percent in the residential monthly charge, the same request before the Public Utilities Board was defended by the firm as necessary to cover costs of unpaid accounts. All residential customers, as we all know, were given in their January bills an insert called "You Ought To Know," stating that the primary reason for the then upcoming rate increase request was because unpaid accounts were costing \$90 per year for the average customer. Before the Public Utilities Board hearing even began on February 7, the former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs rushed in to defend the firm with his announcement that the government would be bringing in the current bill, which was finally brought in on May 15.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Not surprisingly, far from withdrawing the rate increase, the firm then said they needed the money regardless of the legislation. At the hearings, my colleague, the consumer affairs critic for the NDP, questioned the figures put forward by the firm.

Under examination, representatives of the firm admitted that the \$90 figure was at least \$55 too high and perhaps even more than that. In fact, like all other uncollectable accounts of other businesses, these unpaid bills are tax deductible, another fact that the Centra Gas would like the people of Manitoba to forget.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

The question members on this side of the House are certainly going to ask is why the Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) is merely monitoring her prices like her predecessor did. Either the rates are too high with the legislation or the legislation is not necessary. Why the firm should be granted both the legislation and the rate increase is a question that deserves some attention, and I am sure that the public hearings will certainly bring this and other issues to the fore.

The issue of granting this firm special powers to collect on its accounts has been before this Legislature previously, and it is not an accident that in the middle of a recession this majority Conservative government has felt that this matter would reach the top of the legislative agenda. In June of 1989, almost two years ago, the firm announced it had racked up an operating profit of \$18.9 million in 1988, an increase of about 70 percent from the previous year. As well, ICG Utilities, Greater Winnipeg Gas Company, more than doubled its net income after all expenses and taxes to \$7.3 million from \$3.2 million in '87. The net income per common share was \$4.53, more than double its common share return of 2.2 in 1987.

Surprisingly—or not surprisingly, I guess you might say—Manitoba Energy minister Harold Neufeld said on June 19, 1989, that he did not consider the company's request for a 14.5 percent return on investment too excessive. The current Manitoba HydroBonds by comparison pay only 9.25 percent. Just why Manitobans should want to guarantee Centra Gas 14.5 percent return is a question also worth exploring, and I am sure one that will be high on the agenda of the committee hearings.

In December of 1989, after two rate request hearings in three months, the firm publicly lobbied the minority government to give them the powers of Bill 44. According to Centra President, Dale Hoffman, and I quote: We approached the

government this fall. They feel it is not on their political agenda right now, he said, adding, the government likely thinks it is too controversial.

Then Consumer Affairs minister Ed Connery said the matter will eventually be dealt with even though cabinet decided it was not the right time to introduce such legislation, although now we are being asked to put this legislation through immediately.

What has changed since then to make it the right time? Certainly it was not the concerns of this government over the growth in food banks, urban-poor unemployed struggling to survive on student social allowances, high school bursaries, or the ACCESS programs which have been cut. Obviously, it is the majority situation which has changed, which has made this government confident enough to bring in Bill 44.

I would like to conclude my remarks today, Mr. Acting Speaker, with another perspective on this bill. I would like to read into the record some concerns STITCO Utilities, a small utilities company, has with this bill. I think members will find this interesting, particularly in light of the advertising campaign going on in newspapers across this province by Centra Gas. I will read this letter dated May 30 of this year to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province:

Dear Sir, re: Bill 44, The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act. We are a small Manitoba utility company serving propane vapour to commercial and residential customers in the cities of Thompson and Flin Flon and commercial customers in the town of Snow Lake. We have operated in these communities for over 25 years. During this time we have exercised our right, when absolutely necessary, to discontinue service to those customers who refuse to pay their bills.

We were shocked to receive a letter from the Public Utilities Board dated May 9, 1991, to find that our company has been included in the proposed legislation to restrict our ability to discontinue service to residential customers who do not pay their bills. We have approximately 950 residential customers in the city of Thompson who will be affected by this legislation.

Some of our customers will only pay their bills after having received a shut-off notice. A shut-off notice is our single most successful tool in collecting late and delinquent accounts. In March of 1991, our Thompson office sent out 113 shut-off notices. Of

this number, only five were disconnected and these have subsequently been reconnected.

Our product provides the residents of northern Manitoba with an alternative choice as to the method of heating, electricity and fuel oil being the other alternatives. As a small private-enterprise company, we have traditionally had a difficult time competing with Manitoba Hydro on the basis of cost. We are advised that Manitoba Hydro has, and will continue to have, the right to discontinue service to residential customers who do not pay their bills, and this right exists throughout the year.

If we are unable to use the possibility of discontinuing service throughout the year, our customers who pay their bills on time will be subsidizing those customers who do not pay. This subsidy could be considered a form of welfare paid only by our customers who pay their bills when due. This situation will result in increased rates, which will make it more difficult for us to be competitive in the residential market area.

We hope that the Province of Manitoba will realize the far-reaching aspects of this proposed legislation. We are certain that we will never be able to attract capital to install a gas distribution system in any residential area in the province of Manitoba under the proposed legislation.

It is our understanding that this legislation was prompted as a result of a deficiency in the legislation that covers Centra Gas. Our company is not affected by the Centra Gas legislation. The proposed amendment in its present form does not apply to our company, and we wish to bring to your attention the far-reaching aspects to the proposed amendments.

It appears to us that in attempting to eliminate a unique problem for Centra Gas, the government of Manitoba is on the verge of enacting legislation that will have significant adverse effects on development in the North and as such on the northern residents of Manitoba.

* (1600)

It is signed, Yours truly, G. S. Stitt, President, and the letter was sent to the Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) and the Public Utilities Board as well as to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

I just wanted to put that on the record, Mr. Acting Speaker, to show that it is not only New Democrats

who have some serious concerns and reservations about the impact of this bill, but also other utility companies, and we look forward to a great deal of debate both in the House and when we have public hearings on this bill.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand here today and speak on this particular Bill 44. This is a bill that deserves to go to committee in rather quick fashion. We have the minister, who has brought it forward back on May 15, and I wanted to comment in terms of some of the remarks that I have received. This is one of those issues that has caused a lot of interest within the riding. -(interjection)-

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. I remind all members, if they want to debate the bills before their turn comes or after their turn has already expired that they do so outside of this Chamber or use the loges to have these kinds of discussions.

Mr. Lamoureux: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. There are issues that come before us every so often that cause a great deal of our constituents to give us a call. This is one of those issues that I received a wide variety and a large number of telephone calls on. People are concerned about the delinquent accounts and having to pay, good customers having to pay or subsidize those who have chosen to not pay, in good faith, the accounts that they have incurred over the past number of months, in fact, the past number of years.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not plan to speak very long on this particular bill, rather just to get a couple of remarks on the record because I do believe that this is a bill that does deserve support. There are some questions that we in the Liberal party have to ask. We would like to put forward those questions in the committee stage. We are very concerned in terms of how it will affect tenants if a landlord chooses to neglect his or her gas bill, that in fact the gas will not be turned off even though the tenant has been faithful in paying their rent.

There is a concern there. Otherwise this is a bill that does, as I say, deserve to go to committee. I would encourage the New Democratic Party to allow it to go to committee for public input. I can only say that this is a bill that I am sure a number of their constituents have given them a call on, and if they have expressed the same interest as my constituents have, I am sure, in fact, that they will

see fit to allow it to at least go to committee so it can be heard.

It is a bill that could protect our consumers of gas. We take a look at the delinquent accounts. They are not typical northenders or individuals who are on the upper scale, I should say lower scale or middle class scale income level. These are, in many cases, commercial businesses that are choosing not to pay their bills for whatever reasons. The primary reason is, of course, that they cannot turn off gas, and that is in the legislation. As a direct result of that, many individuals, many companies or commercial companies, have exploited those who have been paying their bills in good faith.

The point of myself standing up here today is just to stress the concern that many constituents of mine have expressed to me, and that is that there is a natural injustice, a natural injustice that does need to be resolved. This bill does resolve it in most part and as I say, there is a concern we do have on it. We want it to go to the committee stage. We encourage the New Democratic Party to stop second reading debate. They can continue on third reading debate if they see fit but at least allow it to go to committee because so many Manitobans, so many consumers I should say, Mr. Acting Speaker, would benefit by this bill being passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Bill 5—The Mental Health Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), Bill 5, The Mental Health Amendment Act; (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale), standing in the name of the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), who has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, I welcome the opportunity again to finish my remaining time on this bill, because it gives me an opportunity to reiterate perhaps what I closed with when I last spoke on this bill.

I believe I closed with the statement that I did not want to create the impression that every time somebody became ill, we admit that person into a facility. In my last speech, I talked about the lack of facilities, particularly in the North. I also wanted to further elaborate on the myth that mentally ill people

belong in institutions. That is why I want to come back to that part of the speech, Mr. Acting Speaker.

When I spoke previously on this bill, I mentioned the lack of facilities in the North. Indeed, Mr. Acting Speaker, I made reference to a suggestion that was made by an emergency medical doctor in a hospital up North when he was approached by a family with a case wherein one of the family members was in extreme distress. This person could not be admitted into the facility because the facility for that area or for up North was just not appropriate or was not conducive to any effective assistance or treatment for the patient. The emergency medical doctor's suggestion at the time was that in a larger facility, such as those that are available in the South, this particular patient would definitely have been admitted for treatment.

I want to again go back to the lack of programs and services that are available right within the communities that I am talking about. When you live in Winnipeg, facilities are readily available. You do not have to travel a great distance to access the facilities for treatment.

I outlined, I believe, three or four basic needs for some type of a mental health service in the North. One of those basic needs that would assist in resolving or alleviating some of the problems that our people run into in trying to access this sort of treatment and care is a 24-hour crisis response service to be located right within the community. I also suggested that a certain number of hospital beds be designated in the hospitals that are located in the North along with psychiatric nursing staff.

I also went on to mention that it would go a long way towards helping or assisting these patients who are living in the North if we were to give provisions, or some provisions were made on site, for services such as a psychiatrist or a trained psychiatric nurse who would be able to assess each patient as required. I also mentioned the need for provision of housing for six to eight individuals with two staff operating on a 24-hour basis. Those are some of the very basic programs and services that are badly needed in the North, Mr. Acting Speaker, very basic, indeed.

* (1610)

Now, I just want to maybe finish off my time on this bill by referencing the notion that mentally ill people belong in institutions. While I talk about the lack of facilities, I am certainly not suggesting in any

way that anyone who may be ill should be admitted immediately into a facility and taken away from the community, and away from family members, and away from any support services that may be available in the communities.

I believe, Mr. Acting Speaker, there are many people who are, in one way or another, affected by mental illness who have joined the Canadian Mental Health Association. I believe some of these people joined the Canadian Mental Health Association simply because that is the only place where they can get assistance in the form of, perhaps, counselling; and also the fact that if their family members are affected by mental illness, that is one way of getting to understand the needs and wants of a family member who may be affected by mental illness.

Through the Canadian Mental Health Association, people are able to access information through various means, including the use of video tapes. They are able to learn about the programs that the Canadian Mental Health Association is creating to bring about the kinds of changes that could make a difference to a family member's life or the family life or in indeed the life of the community.

Even though the Canadian Mental Health office might be located in Winnipeg, far away from home, just by the fact that people are able to talk to the staff by phone gives them some sort of a strength, and it empowers family members to be able to more effectively deal with the stressful situation that mental illness creates in a family setting. People, I believe, do not feel that they are so alone or so abandoned by their ability to access information and encouragement and counselling from such associations.

People also start work as volunteers for the Canadian Mental Health Association because they believe that their approach to helping people with mental illness will really have a positive impact, not only on the association, but all of those people who are connected with the association.

The Canadian Mental Health Association is striving to develop community services so that the support I was talking about earlier, besides capital facilities, will be available and accessible to everyone who may need it. We have a long ways to go, Mr. Acting Speaker, in the area of mental illness. People with mental illness in their families, what they need the most is ongoing, lifelong support programs and services, and that kind of program or

service simply cannot come from such a long distance as is the case now. It has to come right from the home and right from the community.

Right now the Canadian Mental Health Association is helping communities organize support groups and self-help groups. Through those programs people are able to learn how to take care of themselves and for each other, as well as working to improve the way we treat people with mental illness. They also believe that they can bring hope to others by getting involved in these programs.

I would like to close, Mr. Acting Speaker, by again maybe summarizing the points that I have tried to make in the time that I have been allotted to speak on this bill, and that is, facilities are needed right in the community. We have had medical doctors say that, over and over again for some time now. We need to have support programs and services available right within the community. I am also not suggesting that any time a person becomes ill he or she be admitted into a facility right away. I am also suggesting that the family be given every consideration when it comes to support programs and services.

I believe that is all I have to say about this bill. Mr. Acting Speaker, I appreciate the time that I have been given.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Acting Speaker, discussion, debate and dialogue on Bill 5, amendments to The Mental Health Act, cannot be done without addressing mental health policy.

Legislation flows from policy. It is one of the tools for implementing and complementing mental health policy but is sometimes the forerunner to policy, and it often requires unwilling governments to act, at least makes it more difficult for them to introduce regressive changes to very important policies.

* (1620)

It is important to put Bill 5 in the context of the government's policies, practices and plans on mental health policies and services. It is important to ask, where do these amendments fit? Are they consistent with announced intentions? Above all, do they advance policies? Do they redress current imbalances in the system? Do they significantly improve the quality of life for people suffering from mental illness? That is a very significant question, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it is the essence of this debate on Bill 5, because by all accounts, by policy

experts, by government reports, by community organizations and the patients themselves, our mental health system is outdated, it is not cost effective, and it is insensitive to the needs of those who rely on mental health services and legislation.

Most recently, on May 7 to be precise, a discussion paper was released by the Canadian Nurses' Association. It concludes the mental health system is failing to help many of the people who need it, and the situation will only worsen without a major overhaul. More to the point, the association's executive director said, Canada's current overpriced approach to mental health care is failing consumers miserably. Clearly a restructuring of mental health services is needed, and it is time for a new direction. We all know that Canada can no longer afford an expensive hospital-based system, and that is the end of her quote.

Nowhere, Mr. Acting Speaker, is this more apparent than in Manitoba which, according to a recent national study released on April 10 of this year, Manitoba spends the most of all provinces in hospital care and the least on community mental health services. That study, called Community Reinvestment Towards Rebalancing Canada's Mental Health System, documents that in Manitoba the institutional sector is allocated 88 percent of the mental health dollar while the community component receives only 12 percent of mental health expenditure. To bring that even closer to home, only about 3 percent of the mental health budget goes towards mental health community workers.

In human terms this means there is little or no support for disabled people who live most of their lives outside of hospital. They must cope with poor housing, inadequate case management, little or no rehabilitation supports, few opportunities to work, little or no support for self-help and a very poor and limited crisis response system.

Mr. Acting Speaker, most of us in this Chamber will be familiar with some of the stories of patients, of the system and of parents of patients suffering with a mental health disability.

I think the case has been put no better than by Jerry Marek who, all in this House will know, lost a son through suicide. He writes in a letter that we all received the following:

People with mental health problems often do not get credit for what they can do. Nobody seems to

really listen to them or recognize that there is a real human underneath who has all the same needs as a healthy person, who deserves the same respect, who deserves to be consulted about his future. As a result, people with mental illness often feel isolated, cut off from society.

I speak from experience, Mr. Marek goes on. I often think we have a more humane and progressive approach to the care of zoo animals than we do towards a person who has a mental illness, and there were occasions when I thought, if my son had committed a crime or broken a leg or gotten cancer, he would have had much more attention and support.

Did my son get the respect, consideration and support he deserved? No. Did my wife and I get the help and support we needed? No. Were we surprised when our son took his own life? No. His suicide was the culmination of a 10-year tragedy.

My wife and I were his best friends and staunchest supporters. We did everything we could to help him. If we had lived in the city it might have been a little more convenient and a little less expensive to care for him, but the fact is that a lot of things have to change in both rural and urban Manitoba before we can prevent the desperation and hopelessness that cause people with mental illness to take their own lives.

Mr. Acting Speaker, help put this debate into proper context, help focus our attention on the necessary changes that are required both in terms of our services and with respect to legislation. The findings of the studies that I have just reported on, those findings are not new. The recommendations are not novel. They have been repeated time and time again going back many years.

I do not know exactly how far back this debate goes, but I would like to take this Legislature for a moment back to 1962 when a debate occurred in this Legislature not unlike the one we are having today. It was on Bill 45, an act to amend The Mental Diseases Act introduced by our present Lieutenant-Governor, the Honourable George Johnson, in his capacity then as Minister of Health.

That bill made amendments in terms of the institution known then as the Psychopathic Hospital. It gave the power to appoint other psychiatrists as admitting authorities. It also gave the staff 18 hours before they had to have a complete psychiatric history made. That is the most interesting comment

given, given that is a far tighter time frame than either is presently the case in legislation or is being proposed under Bill 5.

Mr. Acting Speaker, most interesting about that debate were the comments made by David Orlikow, the MLA for my constituency. He was quite prophetic in his comments, and it is regrettable that his feelings and the concerns of others in his time were not taken more seriously. He said during this debate what we need to do is take the problem into the community rather than isolate it in the old traditional hospitals. He goes on to say, in the field of mental health in this province, if we are moving at all, we are moving too late and too slow.

Sadly, 30 years later those words are still true today. If we are moving at all, we are moving too late and too slow. Since 1962 there have been many other studies including the 1983 Pascoe Report which said mental health services in Manitoba are not comprehensive, balanced or integrated for optimal effect or efficiency. It also said The Mental Health Act is badly out of date and is no longer in keeping with current day concepts of mental disturbance, treatment and human rights.

The failure, this failure to act, it crosses all governments and political parties. All of us have to take responsibility for the failure to address the needs and wishes of people living with a mental illness.

* (1630)

Mental health services have suffered historically from a general lack of adequate planning and co-ordination and from the lack of political will to challenge the status quo and to shift dollars and energy and resources from the institutional to community based models. The present minister and the current government have yet to prove that they are exceptions to this dismal, historical record.

I give the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) credit for his personal concerns, his expressed intentions, his public pronouncements. For three years now we have been hearing about the so-called new partnership for mental health in Manitoba, but there is little evidence of those words, that rhetoric, those pronouncements being translated into action.

Mr. Acting Speaker, patience is running out, not just here in this Legislature but throughout Manitoba. Clearly more than enough time has passed to expect the translation of these policy intentions into concrete plans. The minister has

now presented his fourth set of departmental Estimates and to this day there has been absolutely no shift from institutional to community-based care. Spending has remained constant in terms of institutional care, at 87 percent of the budget. In fact, it may be even higher as a result of this minister and this government's action given their plans, their commitment for an expanded psychiatric services building at the Health Sciences Centre, which, Mr. Acting Speaker, clearly flies in the face of this minister's stated intentions.

Lovely words, but the actions and words do not seem to have any resemblance. Other decisions of this minister and this government call into question the sincerity of our Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), most notably the decision by this government to close the Selkirk School of Psychiatric Nursing. The minister euphemistically calls it an amalgamation, but in reality it is a closure; it is a loss to our community in terms of jobs; it is a loss in terms of services desperately needed throughout communities in Manitoba.

More recently, just in the last couple of days, news that this minister is, in effect, de-insuring psychoanalysis does not bring this minister's actions in line with his words. The whole point of moving to mental health reform, of moving from an institutional to a community-based model is to provide a continuum of care wherever Manitobans live. Part of that continuum of care is psychoanalysis, which is part of psychotherapy, which is insured by this government.

For this government to be looking at not allowing psychoanalysis without providing us with any scientific data that psychoanalysis is not a necessary service, without consulting with the community about this mode of therapy, is a clear indication that the minister is not sincere in his words about mental health reform. If anything, we should be working very hard, the minister included, to move away from a drug oriented, shock oriented mode of treatment to one where the full range of services, including psychoanalysis, are available.

Mr. Acting Speaker, a commitment to community-based mental health services requires policies, requires dollars, and it requires legislative change. We have seen no movement in the mental health budget, very few specific policies or programs and now no legislation to back up, to underpin, that long-stated promise of mental health reform.

Legislation plays a very significant role in mental health reform. I refer the minister and members of this House to a document entitled "Manitoba's Mental Health Services: Towards a Balanced System" of March 1989, prepared by the Community Coalition on Mental Health. It clearly indicates that mental health legislation has a very strong bearing on services and policies available to Manitobans. I quote from that paper: A strong relationship exists between the availability of community-based programs and the type of legislation before that jurisdiction.

This document points to several examples where legislation has either backed up mental health reform or has been the forerunner to mental health reform. It states very clearly that if we are serious about mental health reform here in Manitoba, we would have an act that would direct the type and quality of services that will be provided to Manitobans; we would have legislation to mandate the kinds of program standards, local government structures, with authority to provide community-based services; it would direct the formation and maintenance of a balanced mental health system.

Such legislation would specify that every Manitoban in need has a right to treatment in or near the community where they live. It would uphold the principle of the right of citizens to the least restrictive care adequate to meet their needs.

Such legislation would provide time lines assuring the orderly transfer of persons and funds from the institutions to community care.

Such legislation would establish and fund community mental health services in each of Manitoba's health regions. It would mandate regional health services and specify the composition of those bodies, and soon and so forth, Mr. Acting Speaker. The literature is very clear.

Here in Manitoba, the legislation we now have exists to facilitate the operation of psychiatric facilities in hospitals. It is more about the rights of hospitals and staff than about the rights of mentally ill persons. That point has been clearly stated by an organization that the minister is in close contact with.

In their brief to all of us around Bill 5, the Canadian Mental Health Association states: The structure of The Mental Health Act and the administrative and fiscal structures of the health care system

encourage public authorities to use hospitalization and involuntary treatment as a quick and dirty answer to the problems presented by chronic mental illness and forces consumers and families to accept this.

We believe that society tries to put the mentally ill away. A century ago, and even only three decades ago, the mentally ill were put away in asylums. Today, the mentally ill are put away on skid row, with welfare cheques and prescriptions for psychiatric medications. The Mental Health Act does not assist them. The act allows for enforced visits to hospitals when their behaviour begins to alarm other citizens.

We consider that The Mental Health Act does not even begin to address the full range of needs of persons who are ill.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, today we have a situation where funding patterns and legislative provisions are geared to protect society from a problem rather than to help empower people with mental illness. In fact, as members of the community have said so often, we are asking the wrong question. We should not be asking what is your problem; we should be asking what is your power?

We are left today, in the form of Bill 5, with legislation that tinkers with the present law. It is a bill that is more in line with institutional interests than community organizations. It appears to come more out of the wishes and concerns of an organization representing institutions, the Manitoba Health Organizations, than it does reflect the interests and concerns of the organization representing community-based services, the Canadian Mental Health Association. I make that statement because of the brief presented in 1990 by the Manitoba Health Organizations and on Page 16, making a case, yes, for changes to The Mental Health Act, but making a request for changes to build upon and enhance our institutional model, our hospitalization model.

* (1640)

Specifically, MHO makes the following points: complaints arose that patients could be involuntarily committed but could still refuse treatment; the preparation required for a review board hearing was time consuming and was almost always found to be unnecessary because the patient had meanwhile been discharged or at least recovered sufficiently to drop the case; the 72-hour time limit for the required second assessment prior to involuntary committal

was sometimes very difficult to comply with, particularly for remote rural areas; the definitions with respect to psychiatric units are too restrictive, and so on and so forth. Statutory changes are therefore recommended says MHO.

That kind of concern, about whether or not the institutions have the time and the ability to spend on this issue and the whole concerns of the institutions, seems to be the focus once again of the legislation before us.

The historical pattern around legislation also mirrors the inaction we have seen on the policy side. I make this point because I am the first one to say that all governments and all political parties are responsible for the inaction on the legislative side as well as on the policy and service side.

The 1965, the 1987 legislation, the 1988 amendments, are all hospital statutes and contrary to current day concepts of human rights, and certainly not dealing head on with the issue of community day services nor fully developed in terms of broad, thorough community consultation. The amendments before us constitute a degree of improvement in the rights of individuals, so I want the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to know we acknowledge that there has been some improvement, even if it is in the context of tinkering with the institutional model as reflected in legislation.

There has been a degree of improvement in the consultation process. I will be the first to admit that. The minister has worked very hard to consult with the community but, Mr. Acting Speaker, the process has not been perfect. There have still been many flaws in the process of consultation that this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) had with the community.

I refer specifically to the brief of the Canadian Mental Health Association where they state: We note with gratitude the minister's continuing insistence that his departmental officers continue to consult and search for legislation that represented the best consensus of the community in this difficult field. We want to make sure that the consultation process was fully understood. The composition and agenda of the committee were set by the provincial psychiatrists. We consider that the composition of the committee substantially represented the interests of hospitals and the psychiatric speciality to the virtual exclusion of other professions and community groups. The agenda of the committee excluded discussion of any

fundamental reforms of mental health law or any program changes in the delivery of mental health services. The agenda of the committee was to try to make Part 1 of The Mental Health Act more effective in ensuring that quality care was delivered to persons with the most serious needs in the context of hospital care and in ensuring that civil rights and the Charter were respected. It was a relatively narrow agenda.

On another page in that brief the Canadian Mental Health Association states: We can support the major amendments in Bill 5 because they represent progress in improving the rights of individuals who have to be in hospital. We do not view the results as major or dramatic, and we frankly wonder if part of the time spent in that process could have been put to better use.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we in the New Democratic Party are left with a dilemma. The legislation before us is not in keeping with the times nor the minister's policy intentions. We are left with the minister's word about another time, another place in terms of community-based mental health legislation. Based on the minister's track record, we can only assume that major reform of mental health legislation will be a long time coming.

This is the real world of politics and not the best of all worlds. Of course, our own track record is a problem. We are left to deal with legislation that is before us, to accept the fact that it takes some steps toward improving the rights of patients, and we are left with the position of making those amendments within this limited context the very best possible amendments.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to know that we will work with him in making Bill 5 a better bill. He knows now from the community that there are some very serious concerns with some of the amendments in Bill 5. We expect, and the community expects, that those flaws will be corrected. We will be looking to the minister himself for amendments to his amendments.

A summary of those concerns by those of us in the New Democratic Party and many members of the community can best be framed in terms of that question I posed earlier that the community says we should be asking and that is, what is your power, not what is your problem? The concerns we have with respect to Bill 5 that we feel must be addressed have

to do with patient rights, current day concepts of human rights, and we want to work to ensure that this bill is improved in that area. If the intention of this bill is to improve patient rights, then it can do better. Fundamental to those rights, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the right to make decisions about treatment.

Bill 59 in 1987 did not adequately deal with this issue. Bill 38 in 1988 did not adequately deal with this issue, and now Bill 5 falls short. Bill 5 replaces the present situation of having consent to treatment left in the hands of the Public Trustee with the idea of a substituted decision maker, as long as that substitute is a guardian or nearest relative.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, it is our view that this is contrary to current day thinking in terms of human rights. It negates the wishes and rights of a patient to designate a specific person to be the consent giver, whether that means a specific family member or a person other than a family member. That is not a new idea. The legislation in Ontario allows a patient to name a person to make decisions, and the person named has the right to make decisions over the form of treatment. It is something that could be tried here in Manitoba, even if other legislation in the health care area does not make provision for this right.

My question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is, why not try it here? Why not take a step in the right direction? Why not move, even if it is one step at a time, to good legislative provisions for patients' rights? I believe the minister has probably received some of the same correspondence that I have on this matter.

One letter came from Eileen Morand, who is with the Survivors Network, and she has put a very strong case forward in terms of the right of patients to designate who they wish to make decisions about their treatment. She writes, also, in a letter to the Free Press—according to the Free Press story, the power to make decisions on behalf of those deemed incompetent will be transferred from the office of the Public Trustee to the patients' families under the proposed amendments unless no consenting relative can be found.

While this may seem like a sympathetic change which favours the patient, it could turn out that the families who give consent to treatment are even less informed than the Public Trustees about the adverse effects of antipsychotic drugs and

electroshock treatments. How many families own a copy of the Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties? Does the office of the Public Trustee consult its copy of the CPS when giving consent to treatment on behalf of its wards, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, she makes the very good point that it may not always be appropriate for a guardian or nearest relative to make decisions. In some cases, a family member may not be appropriate at all. In other cases, the nearest relative may be less appropriate than a more distant relative.

*(1650)

We believe that this is an area that deserves serious consideration and should be proposed as a further amendment to Bill 5. The absence of patients' rights legislation generally should not be used as an excuse for inaction.

Along the same lines, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the rights of patients, the minister has heard from many, as we have heard, about the appeal provisions. The appeal provisions are central to the whole notion of patients' rights and human rights. I have been critical about our own party throughout this debate.

On this point, I want you to know that, in fact, the appeal process was an innovation brought in under Bill 59 in 1987 by the Honourable Larry Desjardins, but problems with respect to the appeal process have occurred. They have become a hindrance to the notion of patients' rights, of human rights.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that this minister and this government should be very seriously considering amendments to this legislation which will deal with the question of delays and the schedules of appeals, will deal with the excessive time allotted to the setting of review board hearings and to reconsider its provision for a seven-day notice and a hearing 21 days after the board receives an appeal.

Mr. Speaker, again this is not untried. This is not new territory. It has been done, for example, in Ontario where regulations require each hospital to start a review by seven days and to rule one day after the conclusion of the hearing.

Again on that same theme of rights of patients, we in the New Democratic Party are very concerned about a provision in this bill which allows 72 hours for a psychiatric assessment for a voluntary patient. We believe that perhaps there was an oversight or

an error made on the part of this minister or his staff when this change was put into Bill 5.

We will also be suggesting changes and expecting to see changes from this minister on Section 17, on Section 10, on Section 45.

I know that my time is running out. I do want to conclude today and to finalize the comments of our New Democratic Party vis-a-vis Bill 5, so that this bill can proceed to committee as expeditiously as possible, so that we can all benefit from more thorough input and advice about how to make Bill 5 a better bill.

Mr. Speaker, our position is that we regret very much that we are, once again, dealing with very limited legislation that is not based on current-day thinking with respect to human rights, treatment and services in the mental health area. We know that it will be a long time coming before new legislation is put before this Chamber. We know that there are some serious inconsistencies in this government's policies, that there is a poor fit between the words and the actions of this minister and this government, so we have some very serious concerns and some very serious doubts about when we will see mental health reform and when we will see a legislative framework for making community-based mental health services a reality and a possibility in the province of Manitoba.

In that context and having said that, Mr. Speaker, we know that this bill makes a few steps in the right direction, and at the same time it entrenches some very questionable and regressive practices. Those issues must be dealt with. We will be expecting and looking for and hoping for amendments to those issues that I have outlined very briefly in my remarks today.

Our support for this legislation rests with the openness and willingness of this minister to redress some of those serious problems outlined to him by us and other members and members of the community over the last several months.

Mr. Speaker, our concern is that in this year, 1991, we as a Legislature take long overdue action to redressing the imbalances in our mental health system. We will be devoting our energy and time to ensuring policies and programs are put in place to reflect the need for a more balanced system, and we will be anxiously awaiting the minister's response to the concerns expressed by Bill 5. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, with the closing debate.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to close debate on Bill 5. I appreciate my honourable friend's comments. They could have been made two months ago so we had this bill through committee and passed.

My honourable friend talks about wanting to move ahead with this legislation and make these small modest improvements, my honourable friend mentions begrudgingly, in this legislation part of the Manitoba legislative environment. My honourable friend has already forgotten that with agreement with herself and the Liberal Health critic last session, we decided to put this bill over for immediate introduction this session and rapid passage this session. My honourable friend had the bill prior to the mid-term break and did not even know that it was tabled.

I accept legitimate criticism, but I do not accept some of the narrowed little barbs that my honourable friend put on the record without knowledge. First of all, my honourable friend full well knows that the intention of this bill was not community mental health legislation. The purpose of this legislation, Bill 5, was to improve on errors legislated into The Mental Health Act in 1987 by the government that she was part of. You know, I appreciate my honourable friend's contributions, but I would also appreciate my honourable friend's sincerity in making those contributions to be a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention to my honourable friend, she said something to the effect that the construction of the psych building at the Health Sciences Centre was not a policy which her party would agree to. I have a press clipping from the Winnipeg Free Press, April 8, 1988. The headline on it is, Doer targets health care. On mental health service, he said—Mr. Doer is the "he" referred to here who was her Leader during the 1988 election campaign and still is—on mental health services, he said the NDP would go ahead with planned construction of an acute care psychiatric facility at the Health Sciences Centre. Is my honourable friend now saying that she is against the party policy and her Leader's policy from 1988? -(interjection)-

* (1700)

Oh, now we are down to the sort of argument that it is not really what is being done, it is how it is being done, the old argument, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, I will deal with some of the issues that she put on the record inaccurately about no progress in reform and move to a community based system. There are a number of initiatives that are already delivering community based services, and there will be more to follow, and the test will be, to my honourable friends in the New Democratic Party, whether they sincerely believe in their rhetoric, because their action in government was nonexistent. My honourable friend was a member of a cabinet with nonexistent action both legislatively and program-wise to reform the mental health system, and as critic I offered to them many, many, many positive suggestions, most of which I am moving along with.

An Honourable Member: Time.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have 36 minutes remaining.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Business.

ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Speaker: The order for return, standing in the name of the honourable member for Osborne.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, it was some time ago when I approached the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and asked him whether it was possible to get some information about all of the investigations that have been undertaken since this government came to office. After having a series of discussions with the minister, it became apparent that despite all of the statements that this government has made about open governance, about a willingness to share information and about the need for the community to know, they are simply unwilling to undertake any kind of action to see that information is brought forward.

Now I some time ago brought before the House and moved this request, very simply, that a summary of findings and recommendations arising from special investigations undertaken by the

Department of Family Family Services in the fiscal years '89-90 and '90-91.

Now, at first blush, some people might say, am I asking for confidential information and should such information be withheld? I would agree absolutely. Confidential information that comes out of these investigations should be withheld. We should not be delving into the pain of the individuals and families that receive service in such a public manner, but out of each investigation that the minister has requested and the former minister requested, there are a number of findings and recommendations, findings on the issue that led to the investigation in the first place, and often that issue was a public one, and recommendations for changes and hopefully improvements in the services offered by the agencies that were first implicated in the issue that arose.

I think that we in the community have a right to know. When there is a public issue, and, in fact, a number of the ones where the minister undertook to do investigations arose from very public cases. One of them involved agencies in the city of Winnipeg where there was an allegation that there had been some extremely inappropriate casework that resulted in a form of institutional abuse to the families and the children involved.

Mr. Speaker, in the stories that appeared in the press that led to the calling of the investigation, no fewer than four agencies were implicated, and there were some very, very serious concerns raised. I think we have a right to know whether or not all four agencies acted in an inappropriate manner, all four agencies had in some way or other contributed to the abuse of this kid. I think we have a right to know that, and I think we have a right to know what action the government is taking to see that whatever was discovered in the investigation has been resolved, that there has been a new protocol brought into place or that they have investigated and they have discovered that there was no problem.

That is all we are asking for. We are not asking the minister to come in here with the details of some personal case or some intimate matter that involves a single family, but when they have undertaken to investigate the actions of an agency, I think we have a right to know what they found out relative to the policies and procedures of the agency and what action was taken, if any action was required to see that this circumstance did not arise again.

I believe that the operations of these agencies, in fact, suffer from and hide behind confidentiality in a way that acts to the detriment of all of us. I want to refer to a few things that are contained within The Child and Family Services Act that was assented to on July 11, 1985. There was a declaration of principles attached to that act. The declaration was something that we debated at great length because a declaration of principles is something that is relatively new in Canadian law. At that time there was a lot of opinion from the lawyers that we should not have such a declaration because it was not hard law. What it was, was an indication to the community of the things that we wanted them to know about why we brought this legislation forward.

The very first thing we said is that the best interests of children are a fundamental responsibility of society, not just of their families, but of society, of us, of the community.

I guess the question I ask the minister is: If they are that, if he believes in that, if he administers this act as he is charged to do, do we not have a right to participate? Do we not have a right to be informed about the services that are offered under this act?

We went on. I mean, there are a number of principles here that I will be speaking about on the Address for Papers, but I want to draw the ministers attention to another one. It is No. 10, which says that communities have a responsibility to promote the best interests of their children and families and have the right to participate in services to their families and children. So it is not just agencies, families and children; it is communities also. Communities have a role to play in the provision of services to families.

Now, this was discussed at great length, certainly among the people in the system, and it was debated at great length in this Chamber, because what it says is that if we want to promote health in families, if we want to promote a reduction in the things that lead to child abuse, for example, then the community should be informed of it. We should know what is going on.

Just from the perspective of providing high-quality services, just from the perspective of building an informed community, I think it is important for the department to share information with those people who have a responsibility, not just the right, but a responsibility to promote the best interests and a

right to participate in the services. They need to know what is going on.

Now, I trust the judgment of this minister. Well, wait a second, I want to be careful about that. I am not certain I do trust the judgment of this minister, given some recent circumstances. I trust the minister to this extent, that if he would go through these reports, if he would review them with his staff and if he would see that the information that is contained within is modified to the extent that specific identifying information—we do not need to know all the things that went on. We do not need to know all the details of what went on in a case, but we need to know what the problem was.

I am just going to cite one case. There are four agencies that have had their reputation blackened by a case that appeared in the paper a little over a year ago. Four agencies were involved in an investigation and, to date, we have heard nothing about the outcome of that investigation. The agencies have, but the public has not.

Anybody who read those reports in the paper are left with the belief that all four agencies, all of the staff within those agencies, all of the management, the boards, the volunteers in the community somehow acted in a manner that was not in the best interests of children, and they do not know what happened.

They do not know whether that charge was substantiated or whether or not there were extenuating circumstances that explained what happened. They do not know that if the charge was substantive—and that certainly was the indication in the paper—that steps have been taken to see that this will not happen to any other family.

I would submit to the minister that they have the right to know, that in the legislation, certainly the principles of the act say that they have a right to participate. I would say to the minister that they have the right to know, and they should be allowed to get involved in the services that are offered.

In fact, the more that they do, I think two things will happen. I think the less misunderstanding we will have about the services that these agencies offer and the very difficult work that these workers do and the more we bring these services into the mainstream, the less of the institutional abuse that we inflict on kids will continue.

I know of five investigations that were launched by the former minister. I probably do not know of all

of them, but where investigations were undertaken by the former minister or by this minister, where they have reached conclusions and where there are shareable findings, I think the minister should be forthcoming as his government has promised.

I mean, think about it from the other perspective. What is the government afraid of? What do you fear in telling us what went on? What possible negative consequence can arise from telling people that either there was not a problem or that, yes, there was a problem, and this is how it has been dealt with?

I think that might go a long way to clearing the air. If there are agencies who were implicated in the story who are completely blameless or who, in fact, might have been the saviour of the situation, then the public should know that because one of the things that we do not do in this very difficult business is reward people.

We have a very a sensitive issue before us right now, and I do not want to get into the situation that currently confronts us with all of the abuse allegations, except to say this—it is an exceptionally serious, sensitive and touchy subject. It is one in which, when allegations arise, an awful lot of people are hurt whether they did anything or not. In all that has been discussed, you know, if all the people that have been talked about—they could be entirely blameless, and yet they will carry with them the scars of having it alleged that they were somehow not.

* (1710)

I think we owe it to them to investigate thoroughly and then to tell the people, the community, who have a right to know, what has gone on so that they are vindicated. If they are blameless, if there has been a misunderstanding, or if it has been something that has been poorly conveyed and that, in fact, there was no illegal or some malicious intent, that this is conveyed, so those people can hold their heads up again, that they do not need to walk around feeling that their peers and the members of their communities are looking askance at them.

I think the more that we know about things in this community, the better off we are, except there are some private things that happen within families, and we have a privacy act that allows for some protection. I am not asking the minister to step aside from that right now.

The thing that confuses me, when I look at this, is that a lot of the things that have been talked about are not child abuse. They are not the very sensitive issues. They are management practices within the agencies, management practices within the agencies that are mandated by community boards, and any member of the community can get elected to those boards assuming they can convince some of their peers to vote for them, and they can participate directly in the day-to-day management of those agencies.

We allow people to become involved. Why do we keep this information away from the other members of the community? Why do we not allow free disclosure of the findings of the investigations that have been conducted by the minister? Perhaps, and it is certainly possible—I mean, the same thing took place—there was a big investigation of some of the northern Native agencies, and in these same principles to this same legislation, No. 11 says, Indian bands are entitled to the provision of child and family services. Indian communities have an involvement, have a role to play.

There was all sorts of allegations of an extremely damaging nature about the agencies in the North, and today we still do not know whether those problems have been resolved. We hope they are. We think maybe because of the silence that has ensued they are, but we do not know that. We have no subjective evidence that says that they are.

I would like the minister to bring some of this into the light, and that is why I brought this forward. I would like him to help us teach the community about the services that are offered by these agencies and help us spend some time promoting the strengths, the very important services that these agencies deliver and the very good work that is done by a large number of workers.

I would like us to act a little bit to expose some of the strengths of these organizations, because I think we can do both through being a little bit more forthcoming. There are a lot of people who act every day to protect children. There are a lot of people who put an awful lot of their own time and energy into caring for children and to try to help families remain whole and support and care for their children. There are a lot of people who give an awful lot of their time and energy and their caring and a good deal of their career to try to make this truly a kinder, gentler world.

They are entitled to our support, and we should be giving it to them because we asked them to do this. We wrote this act. This Legislature passed this act. The communities involved participated in the drafting of this act, and now the people who are charged with enforcing this legislation, I think are entitled to some support from us.

When there are charges made against them that are investigated administratively, I think the minister can come forward and tell us whether or not the agencies were right or wrong. If right, let us tell the world that. Let us say that. Let us support them in this very difficult work they do. If there was a problem, let us identify what the problem was, solve it and move on.

Let us not just move past it and keep leaving on the record this sense that somehow these agencies are not very good, that somehow they are not acting in the best interests of people, that somehow they are failing us, because I do not believe that is true. Certainly in any human endeavour there are problems and there are people who do not fulfill our expectations of them, but by and large, I think people do. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): I am pleased to be able to have an opportunity to talk about the issue that my honourable friend, the critic from the Liberal Party, has brought up today. I often look to him for information on child and family service issues and respect his many years of service to the community, to the agencies, and a whole career devoted to children and families in Manitoba.

I sometimes sort of see him as the embodiment of the agencies that we have, sort of a representative of the status quo in the community because he has been a part of the organization of it and has made his livelihood from it in the past and continues to act as a resource to many groups in the community.

I am sure he must feel proud of his accomplishments and of being part of a system that plays such an important role with children and families here in the city of Winnipeg and, of course, across the province.

Many interesting comments came forward that I would like to just comment on. I was interested in his comments on society's responsibility, and I could not agree more that it is society's responsibility to be involved with the families and the children in our

communities. I sometimes think that we have pushed aside some of the traditional service providers that, over the years, have been there to help families through difficult times and to help in the instruction of children. In many areas of the province, I am pleased to see the strength of the church in providing that pillar of strength that children and families need.

I notice my friend from the back row of the NDP caucus, who is a clergyman in his own right and who has brought forward issues to do with families in the city of Winnipeg, in particular, is showing some interest in this debate. I think too often our institutions have said to the faith groups and the churches to sort of back off, this is our work, we are professionally trained to do this and you get more involved with the basic religion.

I think it has been a mistake because I think the churches and faith groups have a lot to offer. I think we need to send the signal to them that their contribution has been a valuable one and that they are needed and wanted in this area to pick up what was called society's responsibility, to move forward and do the good work that they have done in the past and not feel that they are being pushed aside because a new legion of professional workers is coming forward to solve the social ills that present themselves to us on a daily basis.

* (1720)

Similarly, I think, with the education system, often we have professional educators who work with children and families on a daily basis and have a unique knowledge and understanding of the pressures that children and families face in society. I think they, too, to some extent, have been told to move to the backburner because we have professional social workers and organizations which do this sort of work.

It saddens me to see these lines drawn and the communications between these groups not as open and free as it should be. I think we are missing a component of co-operation and communication, which I would like to suggest to my honourable friend is a reform that we need to work on. It again saddens me that there is such a lack of communication between service providers from these different disciplines who, working together, could accomplish so much more rather than building fences and displaying that lack of co-operation, turf protection and petty jealousies which truly do harm

to children in families where so much more could be done.

I look forward to getting into the Estimates process where we can talk more about reforms that I have in mind, reforms that I see, I am sure my critics will join us on as we embark on some of these changes. I have spoken before on the need for a good information system, and I know my honourable friend is renowned in the world of communication, computers and automation. I see it as a place where we have to move ahead to give social workers and care providers the tools they need to do their job.

I say to my honourable friend that we need to share the professional information with the people involved in the system. I have said before, and I will say again, I know without contradiction we all share the tremendous admiration for those front line social workers who day after day do the work in society where families have broken down or parents who have not had the skills to provide the counselling and the parenting skills that are so necessary and probably as much necessary today as they have ever been. We have a lot of resources there that some communication and co-operation would allow to provide a better service for these people, and it is something that I am sure we can work towards as a group.

I recall as we ended Estimates last year—and I read your comments often—that sense of co-operation and communications we developed over 45 hours and the ability we had to provide you with information and share information about the department with you.

I know that the critic for the NDP was just mentioning to me yesterday what a tremendous job our department has done to provide that information to critics in this department. I forget what she was comparing it to, but I thank her for the compliment. I am sure she is going to put it on the record today or some time soon and acknowledge the tremendous work done by the department.

The member, I believe, is asking for confidential reports that are investigations that have been done by the department often over cases that have been referenced by the courts and asking us to bring forward more and more information, but at the same time, I know he is well aware of what we can and cannot do with the act and the information we have to maintain as confidential where it involves children

and families. I know the news media have a thirst for that information, and we simply are bound by law not to make that available. In fact, I have discussed this in recent months with the Ombudsman to get a clear understanding of what information is permissible to present to the public. I would note in an interview that I did on those reports with one of the newspapers in town, nothing appeared in print afterwards because names were not mentioned and agencies were not mentioned and I gathered it was not important unless we could reference the children and the families who were the substance of those reports. We have to protect those families and those children and simply not provide that detailed information on those investigations.

I can assure the member that thorough investigations were entered into by department staff and the appropriate recommendations were made. The appropriate follow-up took place with the individuals who were referenced and the agencies and the areas within our department that were perceived to fumble the ball on certain issues, and we took special measures to see that those things would not happen again.

I say to him that part and parcel of some of these deficiencies is the fact that we do not have a smooth flow of information when we are dealing with families who are very mobile and travel within the city two or three times and are accessing two or three different agencies, then perhaps move north and are dealt with by one of the Native child and family service agencies. Then in other areas where our department becomes the service provider, we find that the files are far behind the child and the information simply is not there. The intake worker and the social worker start from point zero again when there should be a tremendous amount of information available. It simply is not there.

So I know that he will join with me, and the critic of the NDP will join with me, in urging that we move forward with an information system as quickly as we possibly can. I want to assure him that work is underway in that area so that we can truly bring some reform to a system and I do not mean after all those words of praise I gave earlier where I indicated the honourable member was, in my mind, the system and sort of the embodiment of the status quo in the system, but I know that even though he will accept those platitudes, he will also recognize that there is room for some change. I am sure we can work together on those issues.

Going back to the idea that these reports should be made public, it is very difficult to provide sort of piecemeal information for public consumption without one question leading to another and the public thirst for this information becoming so important that more information is sought. We simply cannot do that and protect the integrity of the system and the privacy of the children and the families that are involved there. I sense that where agencies have made errors, that this is brought to their attention.

The agencies, of course, labour under the same legislation and guidelines and rules we do. They cannot simply run out to the press and say, Yes, we are exonerated on this one, or, We made mistakes here and this is what happened.

So, you know, I want to assure him that we will provide as much information as possible to the individuals involved, whether they are within our department or the agencies that we fund, so that we can indeed improve the system and provide a better system of services for children and families in Manitoba.

* (1730)

I know that the member will accept the fact that we have to reject this request, that we simply cannot make these reports public. I would say to him, even though we reject this, I know he will understand that we have made that special effort to provide the information to those who were directly involved and use it as a lesson of corrective behaviour so that these same mistakes are not made over and over again, and so that in fact it can be a learning experience for the professionals who are involved. It may be raised as the whole issue of professional development, the need for more professional development and professional skills, and perhaps even a sense of professionalism that I am sure is there, but which is not encompassed anywhere in sort of a statement where—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? Order, please. No? No.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak in support of the request by the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) for a summary of findings and recommendations arising from the special investigations undertaken by the

Department of Family Services in the last two fiscal years.

I would like to respond briefly first to some of the earlier comments made by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) in his response to the member's request, when he talked about the fact that traditional service providers such as church, faith groups and educators have been told to back off, and where the new service providers such as the professional social workers have engaged in "turf protection" and "petty jealousies."

I find this a very interesting comment on the part of the Minister of Family Services. I have had some experience in dealing with small nonprofit organizations that have relied very heavily on volunteers to do much of the work of the organizations, in particular organizations that deal with services, prevention, outreach and public education in relation to concerns that women have, women's issues. Far from the professional social workers who are in these organizations—and they are far fewer in number than the volunteers—far from them being engaged in turf protection and petty jealousies and telling traditional groups such as church groups and other groups to lay off, this is our property. They welcome with open arms the input and the help of these organizations. As a matter of fact, many of these groups have identified traditional service providers in the community, such as, not only church groups, pastors, ministers, priests and rabbis, but the police officers, the local RCMP detachments in rural areas, family physicians, those individuals, those groups that are traditionally not seen as providing front-line services to women and families in need, in crisis, but what these small organizations are saying, these people see the families and individuals as the crisis begins in many cases. They truly are the front-line workers.

We need to work with them more co-operatively in order for them to be able to help the legislated and mandated service providers. What is missing from this equation, what is not allowing this co-operation to take place, is the training that these traditional service providers need to have in order to be able to identify and provide some intervention.

Child abuse is a case in point. Up until fairly recently even professionals were very unclear as to what sort of indicators were present to show that there might be a case of child abuse, either ongoing or in the past. We now have a lot of information and a lot of indicators as to the symptoms—behavioural,

physical and psychological—of potential child abuse.

What we do not have are the resources available to share that information with other groups in society, other individuals who would be able to provide much care and counselling if they had the information, information that could be provided to ministers, to the judicial system, to the police system and to the medical system. If that basic information on some of the indicators of child abuse, only to put one item on record, were shared with these other professionals, I would venture to say that the call on the traditionally structured Family Services department social services would be reduced, because these individuals in the communities could provide much of that preliminary service and could perform an excellent service in this regard.

I would like to ask the minister to give us some examples of how professionals have told institutions such as churches and the education system to back off, to lay off. I do not know of a single instance, and I think that the minister is being very unfair to the social workers and other professionals who work in this field with enormous caseloads, not nearly enough resources, and other external pressures on them at all times. I think that he does a great disservice to the people who work in his department, the staff members who are providing services that he is mandated to provide, and I hope he recants his statements.

I would like to briefly talk more directly about the request for information. The minister in his response says, we cannot provide that information; we cannot provide reports to be made public.

First of all, the request is for a summary of findings and recommendations. The member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) never asked for the specific report on any of these cases. He understands, as does the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), as do I, as does everybody who is involved in this procedure, that of course you cannot provide the specific report. However, there is nothing to deter the minister and his staff from making a summary of the findings and the recommendations of those reports that does not endanger the privacy of any individual, be he or she a staff member, an agency or the person who was involved in the incident. That is a fallacious argument and is unworthy of the minister.

For example, the Ombudsman for the Province of Manitoba annually provides a summary of cases that come before him. He provides a summary of the cases; he also provides the recommendations that come out of those cases. Now, if the Ombudsman with his very small staff complement is able to provide a summary of the case and the recommendations, I fail to understand why the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) cannot do the same thing.

* (1740)

I would like as well to reiterate the concern that was raised by the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) in his original statements. It is incumbent upon the people who are responsible to the public to make the public aware, to educate the public as to what goes on in various government departments.

The issues have been brought forward into the media. The agencies have been pilloried in the media; the beginning of the process has certainly had extensive media coverage. We are in the midst of at least three, if not more, of these particular cases right now. I think that this whole issue will have great relevance as we carry through with this process.

In the past cases, the issues were made public; the fact that these agencies were undergoing review and investigation was made public. In some cases it has gone so far as to have gone before the judicial system where members of the media know the names of the individuals involved. They have chosen because they are professionals not to make that information public.

If we are going to actually do what the minister suggests, which is work co-operatively, then one of the major places to start is with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) saying, yes, I have a responsibility to inform the public about the outcome of these investigations—not only so that the public can be informed, but as well so that the organizations and the agencies themselves involved in the situation have a sense of closure, have a sense that the issue has been dealt with. They know privately what has happened. Other agencies do not know, the public does not know. One might even venture so far as to say that perhaps the Minister of Family Services is choosing, and he has this choice to make, not to make these recommendations, or a summary of these recommendations, public.

Perhaps I would not want to state categorically that this is his rationale, but perhaps even unwittingly he is not adverse to some of these agencies continuing to be under a cloud of suspicion. I would certainly hope that that is not the case, but by his not being willing to share a summary of the findings, one can logically come to the conclusion that he is not interested in setting the record straight in closing these cases.

The other thing that could happen if the summaries were made available is that other organizations and agencies that are providing similar services to those agencies that have been investigated, might be able to learn something. They might find out that the recommendations that fit for agency A have a great deal of validity for agency B. He is talking in his remarks about the need to communicate, to co-operate, and to work more broadly based. Well, I am suggesting here that that communication and co-operation can very nicely begin with himself, by the minister making the choice to provide a summary along the lines that the Ombudsman provides to these issues.

I would certainly hope that the minister does not take this intransigent, narrow, unhelpful stand in regard to the current investigations. He is on record as saying that he will provide a summary of what has gone on, and I can guarantee the minister that he

will be asked to provide a summary that will enable not only the agencies involved but other agencies and the public to have full confidence that the process has been concluded, that the recommendations have been implemented, and that the system does work.

Not only that these agencies have made the necessary changes but that the staff of these agencies, the workers of these agencies are not continuing to have to work under a cloud of suspicion and a cloud of wondering if they still are not performing their duties properly. If the minister is interested in having a workforce and a department staff that are competent, that continue to be competent and professional, he will behave in a competent and professional manner and provide what is his responsibility to the agencies, the staff and the public of Manitoba. Thank you.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Speaker, six o'clock?

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1.30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 12, 1991

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