



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 26, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of J. Sprout, S. Dunphy, A. Staniscia and others requesting the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to prevent the release of individuals where there is a substantial likelihood of further family violence.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Barbara Tapp, George Negrave, Tannis F. Negrave and others requesting the Minister of Housing consider reinstating local housing authorities with volunteer boards.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Holly McNally, Enid Krause, Eleanor Bond and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Heather Molchanko, Rosalind Muskego, Dennis Linklater and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Pat Rhodes, Laura Epps, Colleen Bruce and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Alice Vorst, Rose Buss, John Doyle and others requesting the government consider funding the Abinochi preschool program to ensure it continues to operate.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Cynthia Wood, E. Creeley,

L. Harper and others requesting the government consider funding the Abinochi preschool program to ensure it continues to operate.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member, and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT child abuse is a crime abhorred by all good citizens of our society, but nonetheless it exists in today's world; and

It is the responsibility of the government to recognize and deal with this most vicious of crimes; and

Programs like the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign raise public awareness and necessary funds to deal with crime; and

The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign. (Mr. Hickes)

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member, and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the bail review provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada currently set out that accused offenders, including those suspected of conjugal or family violence, be released unless it can be proven that the individual is a danger to society at large or

it is likely that the accused person will not reappear in court; and

The problem of conjugal and family violence is a matter of grave concern for all Canadians and requires a multifaceted approach to ensure that those at risk, particularly women and children, be protected from further harm.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to permit the courts to prevent the release of individuals where it is shown that there is a substantial likelihood of further conjugal or family violence being perpetrated. (Mr. Reid)

* * *

* (1335)

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member, and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT child abuse is a crime abhorred by all good citizens of our society, but nonetheless it exists in today's world; and

It is the responsibility of the government to recognize and deal with this most vicious of crimes; and

Programs like the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign raise public awareness and necessary funds to deal with crime; and

The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign. (Mr. Storie)

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member, and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

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The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign. (Mr. Dewar)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House, and I will await the distribution of the copies to the Leaders opposite.

I would like to provide the House with a brief report on the First Ministers' meeting on the economy which concluded yesterday in Toronto. Attached to the copies of my statement, which are being distributed to the opposition Leaders, are copies of a document entitled Outcomes of Discussions. This is not all of the ministerial statement. It is the back-up material for you.

That document summarizes the main conclusions of the conference.

Before I left for Toronto, I expressed the hope that we would make significant progress towards securing agreement on a national highways program. We did so.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Filmon: The Prime Minister has given a commitment in principle, and Ministers responsible for Highways and Transportation have been asked to work out implementation details as soon as possible—[interjection] I am being heckled by the member for Wellington about medicare. I remind her that the paper upon which the decisions were

based was prepared by the NDP government in the province of Saskatchewan.

As we expected, Mr. Speaker, there was strong support for a national highways policy from most provinces and territories. Clearly, the federal government has bought into our view that the national highways policy is fully consistent with all of Canada's major economic recovery and unity objectives. It will create jobs and bring the country closer together.

We also made some progress on other fronts as well. On interprovincial trade, we have agreed to accelerate the reduction of trade barriers and work toward a code of conduct to avoid harmful investment competition. My colleague the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) is now the chair of the Committee of Ministers on Internal Trade. The ministers will be meeting here in Winnipeg at the end of April to follow up on First Ministers' discussions.

On international trade, we had a discussion of the North American free trade agreement negotiations, and I reiterated the six conditions Manitoba has set out as conditions for our support.

* (1340)

In our statement of conclusions, we agreed on the need for an updated review of trade priorities, co-operation in trade promotion, and the importance of a strong and assertive policy approach by the Canadian government to defending Canada's trading rights in international agreements. We also agreed on the need for improved consultation and will continue to press that point.

On health care, we agreed on a joint meeting of Health and Finance ministers and a joint commitment to co-operation and program management and reform. We also agreed on the importance of better co-ordination in integration of other social programs including income support. On training, we identified two major priorities: the need to review disincentives to work in training and existing unemployment insurance and social assistance programs, and ways to encourage more private sector investment and skills upgrading.

On Agriculture, we discussed a number of issues and all provinces reiterated their full commitment to an early resolution of the GATT based on Canada's balanced position.

Our discussion on fisheries focused on foreign overfishing and the need for strong federal action in this area as well.

We also confirmed plans for the federal government to begin collecting provincial taxes on liquor and tobacco at the border, and we agreed to continue discussions of other options for creating a more level playing field for Canadian retailers.

These conclusions and the others we reached in Toronto represent useful progress, but the progress we made was admittedly more limited than what we might have achieved. We hoped to accomplish more. Most provinces worked hard to make the conference as productive as possible, but there were some problems. Consensus was difficult to achieve on a number of key issues. At the meeting itself, some provinces apparently made a decision to place a higher priority on their own agendas than on co-operation among governments.

As members are aware much of the debate outside the meeting, and to an extent inside, centred around federal offloading and its impact on the Ontario budget. Ontario made several valid points about the negative effects of federal cutbacks, but it went beyond those points to start threatening equalization and other federal transfer payments for the smaller provinces. The fact is that Ontario's economy and budget are in serious trouble. No one denies that they have massive problems. Our concern is that they seem to be responding to those problems in a very parochial way. Severe as they are, I do not believe Ontario's problems should be used as an excuse for threatening the cornerstones of federalism such as equalization.

Part of the reason Ontario's economy became so strong over the years is that it was protected and favoured by national policies such as tariffs and freight rates. Equalization was established to make sure the economic benefits of those protective measures were shared more fairly across the country. The fact is that to greater or lesser degrees all governments are under heavy pressure right now.

These problems are only partly related to revenues. There are also expenditure control problems, both have to be addressed. The best way of dealing with these problems is to work co-operatively with other provinces.

Both the federal government and the provinces have responsibilities which must be met. Federal

offloading has to stop, but provinces have to make some tough and difficult choices and decisions too, and we have to work together.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1345)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to respond to the statement of the Premier to this Chamber, the results of the March 24-25 meeting—operative word, results, Mr. Speaker.

We on this side heard a lot of debate in the last three meetings with the First Ministers, listened very carefully to the media reports arising out of the meetings. We just received the copies of the communiques that were arrived at over those meetings just a moment ago.

Mr. Speaker, we hope that there were positive results from the meeting because the 1.5 million Canadians who are unemployed, the 52,000 Manitobans who are unemployed, the huge numbers of people increasing every day on our welfare rates need results. They do not need statements and communiques full of sound and fury signifying nothing.

On the good news side, our former Minister of Transportation, our present Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) and many Ministers of Transportation over the last number of years have fought very hard for a national transportation system in this country—an east and west link. Many of us believe that we should be building up our east and west links over the last number of years instead of moving very quickly to our north and south routes, Mr. Speaker, like the Premier opposite.

Mr. Speaker, we await the results of the meeting on the highways position. Will it be a national system? Will it be just a federal-provincial system? Will it be \$850 million over the next 10 years from the federal government to the provinces? Will it be \$250 million, that we heard from the Minister of Transportation, over the next 10 years from the federal government? Will it be new money for job creation on our highway development program or will it be as the Prime Minister stated yesterday in his statement, it will be the reallocation of federal money? That begs the question, where will the reallocation come from. Will it come from Manitoba? Will it come from Ontario? Will it come from some other region? Will it come from the core area agreement for education and training? We do not know, Mr. Speaker, because today the Premier

announced a national program but there is no funding in the agreement and no announcement of specifics in this agreement.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with the proposal. We would like to see what the proposal actually is in terms of what the federal government agrees to. As our member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) stated yesterday, we have had lots of promises before from the federal government. Before the last federal election we had the national child care program promised, made right here in front of the Western Glove corporation, and that evaporated after the election.

We suggest to the Premier, you better get the cheque from the Conservatives and you better be sure that they are marching to the beat of a real economic agenda and not just marching to the beat of their own Conservative election agenda in this country, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier raised the issue of Education and Training. We are pleased to see that the First Ministers are dealing with the issues of disincentives. We have spent, ourselves, in this Chamber \$90 million more on social assistance over two budgets from the provincial government; yet they, themselves, cut \$10 million out of the community colleges last year and said they were going to spend \$2.5 million more in this budget but added \$1.1 million in their own actual Estimates. We want to see real results in this area, Mr. Speaker, and again we will await to see the announcements of the government.

On the issue of cross-border shopping, we do support the Premier's position that the federal government should not require the provinces to harmonize the GST as a condition of dealing with cross-border shopping. We agree with the Premiers of the country on that point. It is absolutely—what should I say, the term blackmail is inappropriate—but it is absolutely wrong for a federal government to require the provinces to harmonize their dastardly GST that has resulted in thousands of Canadians losing their jobs, has resulted in a devastation of our retail sector, devastation of our tourism sector. It is absolutely unconscionable that the federal Conservative government would require all the provinces to bring in that harmonization, and we applaud the Premier for saying "no" to that harmonization. We look forward to what results they may come up with in this whole area that seems to be at an impasse

between the federal government and the provincial government.

In the area of interprovincial trade, Mr. Speaker, we were pleased to see some announcements on interprovincial trade. I have often felt, and we have often felt, that something like the investment initiative is a good thing. Provinces bidding against provinces, whether it is Manitoba bidding against Cargill, or Saskatchewan having another plant of Cargill bidding against the Manitoba Simplot plant, is not good for Canadians. It is not good for Canada. I hope that the minister and the government can get some initiatives on investment procedures in this country.

We note, Mr. Speaker, that there is again another meeting in September on interprovincial barriers. We also note that the communiques include a reference to regional realities, and we would ask the government to pay particular attention to the regional reality of 90 percent unemployment in northern Manitoba which we always felt required special attention from all governments of all political parties.

In the area of agriculture, I was surprised the government did not mention the whole issue of the offloading of the federal government onto the provinces of partial payments on agriculture. This is a big problem in western Canada, but we are pleased that the Premiers have agreed to a review of the impact of the changes in programs on western Canadian life. There is no question for any of us that western Canada has been devastated by the changing international markets, by the depressed grain prices and by the offloading, I believe, by the federal government onto the provinces. We would want to work with the government on the whole area of agriculture and we too hope that GATT resolves itself.

* (1350)

In the area of health care reform, it raises the whole question, and this is a question for all governments of all stripes including NDP governments, Liberal governments and Conservative governments. What public input is going to go on for this ministers' meeting? The Finance ministers are going to meet, the Health ministers are going to meet, but when is the public, the greatest stakeholder in our health care system, going to have some say on the kind of reforms that are going to take place in our health care system?

I would urge this government to open the doors and open the windows on health care reform in this province. There is committee after committee after committee, and we want to have access, the public wants to know what is going on, Mr. Speaker, in their health care system.

I note that the Premier made a big point of raising the whole issue of offloading, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely clear that the federal government, over the last 10 years, the federal Conservative government especially after 1984, has proceeded with massive offloading onto the provinces. I would hope that all the Premiers stand together on the federal offloading dealing with the federal government.

I remember that when we asked this body across the way, when they were in opposition in 1985, to join us in standing up for medicare and post-secondary education, they refused to do so, Mr. Speaker.

One final point dealing with the communique which we will be raising is of course to the North American free trade agreement. We, on this side, do not believe the public has any say on what is going on with this international trade agreement. We, on this side, will be fighting for public input into the trade arrangements that are so crucial to everybody's daily lives in this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is good to have the Premier back in the House. Unfortunately, it is sad that he could not bring anything of any concrete measure with him today. I do not lay all of that blame with our Premier, but we have a situation in which 13 governments sat for 14 hours and did not come up with one concrete proposal about anything. They have commitments in principle, but no money. They have more studies. They have more ministerial debates and conversations but not a single initiative to address the very serious economic problems facing Canada today.

Mr. Speaker, rather than deal with every single one of the areas, I want to deal specifically with one. When the minister went on Tuesday—just the evening before, the day before we had some discussions about the need for training and retraining—he said there were going to be some positive initiatives. Well, look at what has come out of this. We are going to review the disincentives to

work. What terrifies me is there is the sense that somehow or other thousands and thousands and thousands of Canadians are not working because we are not providing them with the right incentives. Thousands and thousands and thousands of Canadians are not working because there are not any jobs out there. There is nothing in this documentation that provides them with jobs.

The second thing they said they were going to do was they were going to encourage the private sector to invest more in the training of workers. There is a total opt-out of responsibility on the part of all of the First Ministers of this nation to do anything for the people in this country who need appropriate post-secondary education, who need appropriate retraining as they move from job to job to job. There is nothing for them to even have a glimmer of hope that we are going to be able to meet the competitive challenge that faces all of us as we end this century and begin the next one. It is a lot of words directed towards the most vulnerable, but no commitment to change the system that got us into this position now and will do nothing to encourage us to get out of it.

* (1355)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): I would like, Mr. Speaker, to table the Supplementary Report of the Winnipeg Wards Boundaries Commission.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1989-90 Annual Report of the Conservation Districts of Manitoba.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

North American Free Trade Agreement Public Hearings

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the First Minister has opposed the North American free trade agreement in August of 1990. He has now modified his position, and he has the conditional position of the provincial government, the six conditions which he reiterated in his statement in the Chamber today.

We discussed this issue in the Premier's Estimates on Monday night, and he stated to us that he would be raising the whole issue of the proposed North American free trade agreement with Mexico

and United States in the First Ministers' meeting. He has indicated in the statement that he reiterated the six conditions in that meeting, Mr. Speaker, but there was a great deal of conflicting information coming from the meeting from different Premiers on the level, or lack of level of input, from Premiers and the public in the whole area of the free trade agreement with Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, some Premiers are saying, shelve this agreement until we have digested the effects of the American Free Trade Agreement. Others were asking for a greater commitment for input.

I would ask the Premier: Did he receive from the Prime Minister a commitment that the Canadian public would have input into this very, very vital proposed trade agreement that would affect their lives in Manitoba and across Canada? Did he get any commitment from the Prime Minister that Canadians and Manitobans would have input into this very important trade proposal?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Again, that is consistent with the Prime Minister's comments of treating the Premiers, to some degree, without any commitment for even a First Ministers' meeting and treating the Canadian public as if this is a matter of imperial debate with the governments and not a matter for the public.

Manitoba Conditions

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): A further question, Mr. Speaker. We have a copy, as many other members of the Canadian public, of the Dallas draft of the free trade agreement. The government has had this draft for over a week now. The Premier has indicated that they are analyzing this draft.

I would ask the Premier: How many of the six conditions that Manitoba has established are contained within the last draft that his government has reviewed on the trade agreement with Mexico?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, that matter is being reviewed by the officials of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism and the minister. After they have done their review and analysis of the draft, they will be reporting to cabinet, and I will be able to discuss that matter further with the Leader of the Opposition when I have received that analysis.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed the document. Some of the crucial areas established

by the Premier, areas like health and safety standards, areas like workers' rights, areas such as the environment which we raised in the Premier's Estimates on Monday night, are not specifically covered by this agreement. There is absolutely no protection in the draft document.

I would ask the Premier: When is Manitoba going to move from a position of conditionally looking at this agreement? When are we going to end our silence and be opposed to it, because it does not meet the conditions the Premier established?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, we will do, I think, what people expect of us, and that is to review the matter very carefully. I am not certain whether the document that the Leader of the Opposition has is the collective draft position of the three countries. I am not sure whether it is some other older version or what it is, so I would not want to jump at that conclusion.

I will report further when we have done the analysis, when our officials have made their concerns known and when we are in a position to discuss it further.

Red River Community College Funding

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

The Premier has just identified, as a priority, the need to review disincentives to work and training for Manitobans, but I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the biggest disincentive for Manitobans is in fact the decrease of places for post-secondary education in Manitoba. Last year, this government eliminated more than 500 places at Red River Community College. This year, when there are 3,000 more youths unemployed and the youth unemployment rate has risen from 14.6 percent to 16.7 percent, the community college budget is still \$9 million less than it was two years ago.

Will the minister tell the House exactly how many new places will be opened to Manitoba students at Red River Community College this year?

* (1400)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, given that the Minister of Education and Training was not at the meetings in Toronto and in the preamble the member for Wolseley has referenced the statements within the communique that was issued, I want her to know that the statements with respect

to disincentives to training and work have to do with the fact that in most of the other industrialized countries of this world, the income support programs, by way of UIC and social allowances, spend approximately 75 percent to 80 percent of their funding on training and upgrading people's skills and only 20 percent to 25 percent of their money on income replacement. That is the reverse in Canada.

That is a nation-wide problem. It stems from the fact that many of the rules of these programs—and even I was not aware of how these rules especially apply to seasonal workers such as fishermen in the Atlantic provinces. They actually prevent them from going to work by virtue of the fact that they lose substantial benefits in taking on even term work, matters of six and eight weeks, when some of the plants in their shoulder season, the fishing plants are not able to—so the question is a matter of us having to remove these disincentives from the program which in fact say to people, if you go to work, you will be penalized and your income will be reduced. That is the key element of recognition of this program.

If you take away those disincentives to work and training, then you can turn your attention to the needs that are there in terms of the skill shortages that still exist in some areas of our economy and in terms of the opportunities that exist for people to go into areas where there are jobs but they lack the skills. That is the first point.

The second point of the issue is with respect to what is happening in other provinces. The NDP in Saskatchewan today issued a news release in which they have said that they will be reducing their funding overall, not increasing as we are by 3 percent to our community colleges, reducing their funding to the community colleges by 3 percent and 2 percent next year.

Ms. Friesen: How the Premier has the gall to talk about Saskatchewan—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I should remind the honourable member for Wolseley that I have recognized you for your supplementary question, and a supplementary question should not require a preamble. Would the honourable member kindly put your question, please?

Community Colleges Funding

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I will repeat my question to the Minister of Education.

Last year her government cut more than 500 places at Red River Community College. This year there are 3,000 more young Manitobans unemployed. The youth unemployment rate has risen from 14.6 percent to 16.7 percent, and the community college budget is \$9 million less than it was two years ago. What is the minister going to do about this situation? What are the incentives for young Manitobans to be trained in this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The member for Wolseley does not want to acknowledge that the New Democratic government in Saskatchewan today announced, instead of a 3 percent increase in funding to community colleges that this government is giving, the NDP government has announced today that they are decreasing funding for community colleges by 3 percent this year and an additional 2 percent reduction next year.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Beauchesne is very clear that answers should be brief and relate to the matter raised, Mr. Speaker. We were willing earlier to give the First Minister some leeway—and if indeed he wants to get involved in debate—but he is the Premier of Manitoba and he is asked a question about the situation in the community colleges in Manitoba. He will not give the people of Manitoba—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised, I shall remind all honourable ministers that answers to questions should be as brief as possible and should not provoke debate.

Mr. Filmon: I want to re-emphasize that Saskatchewan will be reducing their funding for community colleges by 3 percent this year and 2 percent next year.

I might say to you, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the preamble that was put forward by the member for Wolseley, that \$3 billion of the deficit of the Province of Saskatchewan is the same pension fund liability that was not on the books under Allan Blakeney and that never was on the books in the Province of Saskatchewan under the New Democrats. That

compares to a \$10-billion deficit that we were left here in this province by the New Democrats when they left office.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, now that all Manitobans have seen the Premier twice not answer a question, may I again put to the Minister of Education and Training, given that there are 3,000 more youths unemployed in Manitoba than there were last year, that the youth unemployment rate stays at 16.7 percent, an increase of over 3 percent from last year, what is the minister planning to do to make opportunities available for Manitobans? Is it social assistance? Is it the private colleges she is sending them to? What is it?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the member for Wolseley may not like the answers, because she may be sensitive about the mismanagement of the New Democrats who left \$10 billion in deficit in this province when we took over government. She may not like that.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, it is not an issue of whether I like or dislike the answer, it is a question of whether—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Filmon: I repeat, I can understand why the member for Wolseley is very, very sorry to hear about the mismanagement and incompetence of her New Democratic colleagues who left a \$10-billion deficit in this province.

We are working with the young people of this province. That is why we brought in a Partners with Youth program for new youth employment opportunities. That is why we have increased by \$2.5 million funding at the community colleges for new programming directed to target areas of opportunity for the young people of this province.

We are doing something on it, unlike Saskatchewan who are cutting the funding to their community colleges.

National Highway Program Federal Funding Commitment

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Premier with regard to the First Ministers' meeting.

I would hope that we could talk about Manitoba and not Saskatchewan, Ontario, and whatever other province, since I made the choice to run for a member of the Legislature for the Province of Manitoba and not any other province.

Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. There have been a number of stories since yesterday which indicate that the Prime Minister is not going to put any money on the table for the Highway Construction Program. There have also been some stories that say that there is going to be an expenditure of some \$38 million.

Will the Premier tell us today just how much in the way of a dollar commitment he has from the Prime Minister towards the National Highway Program?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite, who has never been in government, does not understand the fact that when agreements are being negotiated that involve tens and hundreds of millions of dollars, the agreements are not made across the table by an exchange of views at a meeting among the First Ministers. Those agreements are the product of substantial review of figures and analysis of projects that can be done and some agreement as to cost sharing, some agreement as to source of funding and all of those things. The fact is, that for the first time after certainly five years of effort, effort that I might say was spearheaded by this administration, our Deputy Minister of Highways Boris Hryhorczuk has been the chair of the deputy ministers' group who have put together the proposal. It is very complex as to potential sources of funds. It is very complex as to the cost sharing, as to the potential construction.

* (1410)

This is the first time that the federal government has agreed in principle to participate in this. That is a major step forward. We now believe, having the agreement in principle, that we will work towards the details of the program.

Like any federal-provincial cost-sharing program, I can tell her that the SDI program was negotiated for four years before it was finally signed on the dotted line. I do not believe it is going to be the case with this particular program because the Prime Minister has indicated he is interested in a short timetable so that we can have some impact in this construction season. Having said that, I will be happy to have further information as soon as the details are able to be agreed to.

Provincial Funding Commitment

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): The question was very simple. I did not want to know how much more analysis was going to be done, how many more studies were going to be done, how much more negotiations were going to be done. I wanted to know, very simply, has the federal government committed any new dollars to this program? The answer is obviously, none.

Can the Premier now tell us what commitment he and his ministers have committed beyond the \$13 million in the budget for their share of a National Highway Program to take place in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that the federal government has made no statement as to whether or not there will be dollars committed on the program. That is a matter open to negotiation as is the formula for sharing of costs between the province and the federal government.

I know that members opposite do not want to see anything done in this province because it will fit their political agenda. The fact of the matter is, this government will keep working to ensure that we get work, jobs and investment in this province as long as we are here. We will not be dismayed by the negative attitudes of people opposite who do not want to have anything happen in this province.

Mrs. Carstairs: The answer to that question is that the province has not put any new money into this National Highway initiative vis-a-vis the province of Manitoba, so let me ask the following question.

National Training Program Education Minister's Involvement

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): In the training announcement that accompanied the documentation the Premier distributed today, he said that the various initiatives highlighted in the paper referred to ministers responsible for labour market matters and for social services.

Can he tell the House today why there has been absolutely no involvement of Education ministers in planning an education initiative for our young people?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): In most provinces, the ministers responsible for labour market matters are the ministers of education and training.

Student Social Assistance Benefit Increase

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): As the recession gets worse, more and more groups in our society are being affected. The latest group is students and the proof is the opening of a food bank outlet at the University of Winnipeg this week, where all the food was distributed in five minutes on the day it opened.

There is a student social allowance program which has been described by a university official as a convoluted program wherein students must jump through numerous hoops in order to get very little assistance.

Can the minister responsible for student social allowances explain why the allocation for living expenses has not been increased so that students are forced to rely on food banks to feed themselves and their children?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, we have made quite a remarkable number of reforms in our Social Allowances Program in the last few months. I would point out that while other provinces are slashing health and school funding—as we hear today in Saskatchewan and promising to raise taxes, and there are further cuts coming—we have raised the basic social allowances by some 3.6 percent this year, far above the rate of inflation.

As well, we have created a new program for the disabled, as my honourable friend knows and, I believe, he supports. We have also flowed the tax credits in a different way so that recipients receive \$60 a month on a more timely basis, an initiative that my honourable friend has spoken quite favourably about, although I think has now changed his mind. We have also dealt with the liquid assets problem and allowed recipients to retain more of the funds that they receive through the social allowances from other forms.

I tell the member that we have made some remarkable changes in the social allowances and we have some more reforms coming. We tabled a bill just yesterday to deal with the municipal social allowances, and we will have an opportunity to take a look in some detail at that I am sure in the coming weeks.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, since the minister did not answer the question, I think university students will find his answer very disappointing.

Common Law Regulation

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Why does the Minister of Family Services condone a policy whereby male students can be designated head of household and continue on social assistance, but women cannot; and instead if a man moves in they are transferred to city social services?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, there are very complex regulations and standards that are part of the Social Allowances Program. These are constantly under review, and I have indicated some of the reforms that we have made in recent months.

I can tell the member that there are other areas that we are currently looking at to try and use the money that we have available. I indicated to the member just yesterday that this department received the largest increase in increased funding across government, and a part of that certainly is for social allowances and part of that is for the reforms that we have indicated that have already taken place.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if he will commit now to eliminating this discriminatory practice before it is challenged in court rather than after.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated to the member that there are a number of areas under review within the social allowances. We have made some remarkable changes already this year. We are looking at some new legislation on the municipal social allowances and all other ways of putting money in the hands of low-income Manitobans.

I might just remind the member that the federal minister announced with the federal budget, Minister Bouchard, that there are some very dramatic changes coming with the flowing of some \$400 million to lower income families across this country, and that the federal government is committed to a CRISP type of program that we have been encouraging them to do, and we think it may be quite similar to the program that we do have in Manitoba at this time.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Canada Pension Plan Benefit Increase

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Any influential person, who is just, would normally be expected to intercede for another person or group who suffers an insult. This Mulroney government, which itself has contributed to the prolongation of national recession, has added insult to injury by just announcing a 37-cent increase for old age pensions. Has the honourable Minister responsible for Seniors contacted his federal counterpart and told him that this would be an insult to the senior citizens of Manitoba?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): First of all, he wants to talk about insults; that particular government over there has no way of talking about insults.

Mr. Speaker, the pension plan right now is based on inflation. In '81-86, I am sure the citizens of Manitoba would have liked their pension plan based on inflation. Their 55 Plus program at the time was not increased for 60 months.

55 Plus Program Restoration

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, to partially offset this difficulty for senior citizens, is this honourable minister prepared to restore the 55 Plus program so that the senior citizens can at least buy one stamp and one cup of coffee?

* (1420)

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): For 60 months they did not allow any seniors' increases.

Also for the member across the way, maybe I can mention something for the record. February 20, 1992, the Minister responsible for Seniors, Janice MacKinnon, announced cutbacks to seniors on financial assistance. Would you speak to your cousin in Saskatchewan, please?

Manitoba Tax Assistance Office Funding Restoration

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Responsibility means to accept something for what you have done or not done. Will this honourable minister talk to his colleague in cabinet and at least persuade him to restore the cut to the tax-assistance program office,

which has helped thousands of seniors prepare their income tax returns?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, we have had consultation with the different groups. Age and Opportunity, they even have courses going for those seniors to help them next year and this year, and they will continue to do that.

I wish my friend would go and speak to these particular groups before he comes on the floor not knowing that they are being serviced by Age and Opportunity and MSOS. All these people are working with the seniors preparing their income tax.

Legal Aid Services Minister's Intention

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My question is for the Minister of Justice. In September 1987, an evaluation report on Legal Aid Manitoba was completed, Mr. Speaker. That report concluded that criminal Legal Aid clients tend to be young, single and unemployed; and family Legal Aid clients tend to be female and are also young and usually unemployed.

Mr. Speaker, the 1991 Annual Report of Legal Aid Manitoba concluded that 70 percent of legal aid cases were handled by the private bar, some 47,000 in that year. The minister now wants to reduce the contribution his government gives to those impoverished Manitobans, who find themselves unfortunate enough to be caught up in a legal system, making often the most important decisions of their young lives, and 70 percent of those cases are handled by the private bar.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister: Why is the minister doing this at this point? Will he be upfront with Manitobans and admit to members of this House what his true intentions are, and if they are not to move to a public defender system which eradicates freedom of choice for impoverished Manitobans?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, it is because of impoverished Manitobans—young, old and in between—that we are determined to carry on a Legal Aid program in this province. For whom is the honourable member speaking? We are determined to the extent of over 11 percent increase for this coming fiscal year for the Legal Aid account, \$1.3 million more going into that than last year. I am not

sure which people the honourable member is speaking for in his question today.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear who I am speaking for, the 67,000 impoverished Manitobans who have to use Legal Aid. If the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Private Bar

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. James has been recognized for your supplementary question. Kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, for the minister again: Why has he chosen to make cuts only to the private bar side of the Legal Aid plan, suggesting that his only agenda is in fact to get rid of freedom of choice for Legal Aid clients, when the 1991 Annual Report made clear that the private bar handled 70 percent of the cases, some 47,000 cases at an average of one-third of the normal cost of handling those cases?

An Honourable Member: Are you on retainer for this question?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, it is not my—

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. James, on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, a matter of privilege.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. This is a very serious matter.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, a matter of privilege has two aspects. One is timeliness and the second is that it is to be followed by a motion. At the end of my comments, I will follow this by a motion.

Mr. Speaker, I clearly heard the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), I think all members did, implicate or suggest that I was on a retainer for asking this question, clearly indicating—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. James has the floor. A spokesperson for the government will also have an opportunity to bring their case forward. Right now we will hear the honourable member for St. James.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the asking of that question by the Minister of Environment was insulting, draws an allegation toward my profession which is being a lawyer. I suggest to you quite clearly that suggests to members of this House that I am in some kind of a conflict in asking this, that I am accepting a retainer for doing it.

Mr. Speaker, let me draw to your attention that at least half the cabinet are practising farmers, including the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), who talks regularly about farming and about programs for farmers, programs that put money into the hands of farmers. The member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) is a vegetable farmer and stood up in this House last week and asked a question about vegetable farming. Why am I not allowed to stand up in this House without insult and ask about the 67,000 Manitobans who are on legal aid in this province?

I and other members of this House are regularly the subject of that type of insulting derision, which does nothing for the reputation of this House in the community, does nothing for other Manitobans in other professions who seek to come to this House. It is an insult to all of us, and I ask you to sanction this minister.

I want an apology now, and if no apology is forthcoming, I move that this matter be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections forthwith. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On the matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker, we have a very clear tradition in this House, and indeed in all Legislatures and all Parliaments, and that is that we do not reflect on members, we do not attribute unworthy motives. In fact, Beauchesne 484(3) is very clear: ". . . a Member will not be permitted by the Speaker to indulge . . . or to impute to any Member or Members unworthy motives for their actions in a particular case . . ."

Mr. Speaker, earlier I heard the Premier (Mr. Filmon) from his seat, when the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) was asking a question, asking whether this was a conflict of interest. I just heard the same comment, similar imputation, from the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) who asked if the member for St. James was on a retainer for asking this question.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite seem to make light of this, but if indeed a member was on a retainer for asking a question, that would be serious enough to lead to the resignation of a member. I have no doubt that the member for St. James is asking a question in his role strictly as a member of this Legislature. What the Minister of Environment is suggesting is akin to bribery. It has no role in this House, and the right thing for the Minister of Environment to do would be to stand right now in this House and apologize, not just to the member for St. James, but all members of this House.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the motion as presented. I imagine it is written and in your possession.

We are all honourable members in this House. I was sitting by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), and I want to assure you that certainly no unworthy motive was impugned. I also want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that a question was asked, as often is the case from individuals who sit in their place, as seems to be the custom of this House. I know members certainly on the opposition benches have asked questions just like that. I have been asked many questions over the years as to my role as a practising farmer with respect to government decisions on agriculture policy matters.

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker, usually in cases when we are asked these questions, not on the record, and on the record the question is either answered yes or no. In this case, the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) seems to, in a very sensitive fashion, take issue with the question.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how it is you rule on this type of question because certainly in my mind, even though from time to time we should be very careful of what we say, all of us, everybody from time to time asks a question of another member. Maybe from time to time we all go a little bit too far, but if all members of this House are going to rush to their feet and in an issue attempt to tattle and attempt to bring something forward, I can say members in this House could be doing it on all sides all the time, and members opposite know that.

What is at issue here, Mr. Speaker, is the intent and the reflection and the intonation of any comment. I can say every one of us can become highly indignant at a comment that comes across

from the other side of the floor, depending on the nature of that remark. I say to the member, every one of us could rise on our feet and bring forward a matter of privilege, choosing if we so wish to take out of that remark something much more serious than if we want.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, half the time in a forum, in a highly charged political forum such as this, we could be on our feet demanding apologies from the other side. So the system would never work, and I know that—

An Honourable Member: Personal attacks are not parliamentary.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Manness: Personal attacks—who among us in this House, out of the 56 of us, are pure with respect to that, how many of us? I do not know if there is one of us. So for the member, any member, to rise and say that they are something holier than thou with respect to any of these sorts of issues, in my view, Mr. Speaker, puts you in a very tenuous position.

I would say that you, Mr. Speaker, should not rule in favour of the motion, and indeed if any member feels that they should exact an apology out of some other member, then obviously a member may want to rise and do so in their own freedom. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a very serious matter. I, from my seat, heard what the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) said, and I will put it on the record. He said: Is he on retainer for asking this question?

That is what the minister had said, Mr. Speaker. I think it is imperative that the minister stand up to apologize to the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) because I will say that no other member whom I am aware of has ever stood up time after time to declare conflicts of interest wherever there has been a hint of a conflict of interest, whether it has been in our own caucus, whether it has been inside this Chamber. The member for St. James has done the honourable thing and stood up and admitted a conflict.

I would cite that the Minister of Environment is imputing motives. I would look to a couple of points. One is in terms of our own rules, where we look at rule No. 40(1): "No member shall speak disrespectfully of the reigning monarch or any other member of the Royal Family, or of the

Governor-General, or of the Lieutenant-Governor or the person administering the Government of Manitoba, or use offensive words against the House, or against any member thereof."

I would also, Mr. Speaker, cite Beauchesne's quotation 487: "(1) Threatening language is unparliamentary. (2) Words may not be used hypothetically or conditionally, if they are plainly intended to convey a direct imputation. Putting a hypothetical case is not the way to evade what would be in itself disorderly."

It was very clear what the Minister of Environment said. He had imputed motives from the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), and I would ask that the Minister of Environment do the honourable thing and apologize to the member for St. James immediately, and failing that, I would suggest as the motion has said, that it be sent to the Privileges and Elections Committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Glen Cummlings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, on the matter that has been raised, I certainly think that there has been some misrepresentation of the intent of any comments that I may have made off the record. If, per chance, the member had, and obviously has, taken some offence to what he assumed that I have said, I certainly wish to apologize to the House and make it very clear that it was not a reflection on his character.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable Minister of Environment. That does conclude this matter.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: It will give the honourable member comfort to know that I remember his question, Mr. Speaker.

In 1987, 500 private lawyers were paid a total of \$5.8 million. In 1991, 510 private lawyers were paid a total of \$8.6 million. That is almost a 50 percent increase in payments. I am here to ensure that impoverished, disadvantaged, poor people in this province continue to receive legal services.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, what the minister does not tell members is that this represents handling 47,000 cases at an average cost of \$185 per case.

My question for the minister: Why has he chosen, Mr. Speaker, to make cuts to the private bar side only, when it is clear that those 70 percent of the cases are being handled on the annual report's

evidence, the annual report of last year, at roughly one-third of the normal cost? That is a two-thirds reduction in the handling of a normal case. Why is the minister choosing the private bar and the private bar alone?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is wrong. The average cost per case to the private bar has increased from \$391 in 1987 to \$500 in 1991. Ten private lawyers were paid over \$100,000 by Legal Aid last year, and one lawyer was paid over \$200,000 last year.

Judicial System Court Transcription Services

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I would like to deal with a question raised yesterday by the honourable member. He asked three questions. I have a very brief answer which could deal with the matter.

When the court monitor program was expanded, the machines that were initially introduced were subsequently replaced by machines that were smaller, portable and less inclined to malfunction in the difficult circumstances that often face the circuit court in the North. Since the introduction of the smaller machines, they have been used on the circuit serviced out of The Pas for 79 court circuits and have malfunctioned only twice.

In Thompson, the monitors in question have been used for 133 sittings with only two failures, including the one noted by the honourable member yesterday. There is no indication of transcript delay in Thompson as a result of monitor usage, and the only significant delay experienced in the recent past was attributed to a court reporter, Mr. Speaker. In The Pas, turnaround time per transcript has been approximately 30 days with the exception of very long trials.

Wheat Prices Government Initiatives

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. In light of the asking price for wheat at Vancouver being over \$6 per bushel, and the Chicago market price is over \$4 per bushel U.S., would the Minister of Agriculture lobby the federal Minister of Agriculture and the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board to increase the initial

price of wheat which is paid to farmers by some amount which reflects the actual price which they are receiving for the export sales, which would put some cash into the hands of farmers today?

* (1440)

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Wheat Board is doing an excellent job of marketing grain, clearly into a market that has been strengthening prices. I have discussed it with both the ministers involved, and about two weeks ago I sent a letter outlining the basic economic details and the fact that the farmers need the money in their hands for that commodity in 1992, not to wait till January of 1993 for the final payment. So I assure the member that, yes, we are working on that. I hope that they will have some announcement before too long.

Apprenticeship Training Mandatory First-Aid Certificate

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Labour. Several years ago a policy was implemented in the Apprenticeship Branch which required apprenticeship trainees to produce a first-aid certificate before their credentials would be issued. This was based on the findings of a study which showed that inadequate and inappropriate responses were common at the scene of workplace accidents.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to table a memo from the Acting Director of the Apprenticeship Branch which indicates that this valuable policy is going to be dropped effective immediately as a result of a cabinet decision. My question for the minister is: Why is this policy being eliminated, and why did he not stand up to his cabinet colleagues to ensure that the safety of workers in this province is protected?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, what the member should appreciate is that the matter in question is not the elimination of first aid as part of a training or curriculum or discussion. The question is, is a first-aid certificate a requirement of the standing for that particular trade? They are two different issues. As minister responsible, I would encourage the department of Curriculum Development to carry on with first-aid training, but the question as to whether or not it should be a requirement of the qualifications for this

specific trade is another matter. That is to what I think the member is referring.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I do not see how this is going to—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please. Order, please.

Mr. Reid: My supplementary question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker, is: Given the concern that this decision has caused for the workers and the staff of the Apprenticeship Branch and the workers in the province of Manitoba, will the minister now agree to a review of that decision and once again make the production of a first-aid certificate mandatory for successful completion of the apprenticeship training program in this province?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Speaker, again, I think the member for Transcona has to appreciate the issue. Including first-aid training in apprenticeship programming is certainly a valid part of it. It is something we want to encourage, but whether or not one's qualifications to be a machinist or any other, a mechanic or any other trade in Manitoba, is dependent upon completing a first-aid course as part of the actual requirements of the trade, is a different matter. I think the two are there. It is a very small difference, I think, that one has to admit, but we will encourage in our trades training program to have the first-aid program. That is the intention of this department and this government, but the question as to whether or not it should be actually a part of the requirements of that trade is a different one.

Apprenticeship and Training Branch Staffing

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): My final supplementary to the same minister.

Given the dangerous precedent that this removal of this certificate—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Reid: —in this province indicates and the removal of Ms. Marilyn Kenny as the director of the Apprenticeship Training branch in this province, will the minister explain why he and his department have removed a person of Ms. Kenny's experience from the Apprenticeship Training division of the Department of Labour in this province? I would like to table letters of support for Ms. Kenny and the good work that she has done.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, I am actually very, very surprised at the question from the member for Transcona

because—Mr. Speaker, I am—the matter involving Ms. Kenny is a personnel matter, and decisions that were made with respect—[interjection] The member for Transcona, from his seat, says she is a leader in the field. We have never denied that, but there are matters involved in this. If I were to bring them to the floor of the House, I would be totally castigated by members opposite because they involve personnel matters within the department and personal information with respect to Ms. Kenny.

Mr. Speaker, it would be very unfair to discuss a personnel matter such as that on the floor of this House. I say very sincerely to the member, if he was aware of all the facts regarding that matter, he would not ask that question today.

North American Free Trade Agreement Labour Standards

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I have a question for the First Minister about his discussions with the Prime Minister on the North American free trade agreement. I would like to quote just an article on the negotiations on the conditions in the Maquiladoras—something like that. It says: "It is a world of child labour, terrible safety conditions in factories, and pollution whose full toll on workers' health has yet to be known."

Also in this proposed agreement from the latest round of discussions is a proposed chapter on sanitary guidelines that suggest that in setting standards, each country should try to minimize negative trade effects, suggesting a lowest-common-denominator approach. Now the Premier, in his own six conditions, rightly set forth the position that labour standards are something that should be addressed in the agreement and we should move to a common highest level of labour standards across the three countries.

My question to the First Minister is: Did he receive a commitment from the Prime Minister that they would not sign such an agreement unless it included such a provision?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The commitment of the First Minister of this country was that there would be further consultations that would involve the provinces, either Premiers or their designates, perhaps lead ministers on trade, and that those further consultations would be the appropriate forum in which concerns, criticisms, suggestions about

any potential agreement would be able to be discussed, debated and placed on the table.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is very simple.

He put forward his six conditions. He reiterated them at this meeting. Did he receive a commitment from the Prime Minister that the second of his six conditions, that of labour standards, would be met?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I think that the member for Osborne should read today's Globe and Mail editorial so that he will understand that the sole and complete prerogative under our constitutional division of powers for entering into international trade agreements is that of the national government, the federal government.

The fact of the matter is that the Prime Minister did not give any assurances on any issues with respect to this agreement to any of the First Ministers, because he reminded them that it was his sole and complete prerogative. He did give assurances of further consultations and opportunities for concerns to be aired, debated and so on.

We have put on the table that very condition that he speaks of, as one of our six serious concerns to be met by any free trade agreement. That is the basis upon which we will judge whether or not such an agreement is good for Manitoba. There is absolutely no authority vested with this Premier, or with any other Premier, to be able to prevent or to force the Prime Minister to prevent him from entering into an agreement, or to force him to do anything with respect to conditions.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Mr. Speaker: During Routine Proceedings, I inadvertently missed the honourable Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) under Introduction of Bills. I would like to revert to Introduction of Bills. Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave, it is agreed.

Bill 66—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that Bill 66, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, this will be a very minor amendment to The Child and Family Services Act. What it will do, however, is to make it possible for siblings to be able to get in touch with siblings who have also been adopted to other families.

At the present time, they can get in touch with those siblings if they are part of the birth mother, but they cannot get in touch with them if they have, in fact, also been adopted. This paves the way so that if those siblings want to be in touch with one another, and both indicate that they do wish to be in contact with one another, then it is possible for it happen.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 72—The Law Reform (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 72, The Law Reform (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act, (Loi sur la réforme du droit (modifications diverses), be introduced and the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

* (1450)

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Lamoureux: Earlier this morning, late in the morning we had a Ken McColm who is walking

across Canada to try to generate some publicity over the concern about diabetes. It is a very serious disease, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that over 54,000 Manitobans have diabetes of some sort, in fact, up to 10 percent of those individuals have a reliance on insulin.

I think that we just want to, as I am sure all members of this Chamber, commend Mr. McColm for doing the work that he is doing in crossing Canada and give him our best wishes as he is on his last leg of the trip.

* * *

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, do I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek have leave for a nonpolitical statement? Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. McAlpine: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of all Scots and all clans here in Manitoba. In 1985, 40 clans, registered under the Federation of Scottish Clans, voted to establish a date that could be recognized in appreciation of the Scots who came to this country and went on to help establish a great country and a great province, our province, Manitoba.

Tartan Day is already held in Scotland, however, the date is July 1. It was on this date that the English Parliament rolled back the death penalty or deportation carried out on Scots if they were caught playing the pipes or wearing their tartan or speaking out in their own Gaelic language. This penalty was in effect for 36 years in the English law books. The Canadian Scots did not wish to use this date. They wanted their own date, one they could point to with pride of achievement and courage.

The Scots, in many cases, came to this land against their wishes, their lands expropriated by their clan chief or English landlords. Their will to work hard in helping to establish a new life saw the building of a country and this province.

April 6 was chosen as Tartan Day by the Federation of Scottish Clans, and I am proud to say that this day has now been chosen in Manitoba.

For the record, Mr. Speaker, and the benefit of this Chamber, I will read the proclamation that was signed by our Premier (Mr. Filmon) this morning. It reads:

WHEREAS the Selkirk Settlers settled in Manitoba in the early 1800s; and

WHEREAS Scots played a significant and integral role in the establishment of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Scottish Manitobans continue to make outstanding contributions to Manitoba's social, economic and political life; and

WHEREAS April 6th has been chosen as "Tartan Day" in Canada to recognize and appreciate the accomplishments of Scots in Canada; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's own tartan was approved in 1962 and registered in Scotland as the official tartan of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Manitoba encourages its citizens to celebrate the achievements of their cultural heritage; and

WHEREAS the Scottish Canadian community supports the ideals of multiculturalism, treasures its heritage and wishes to present the most valuable elements of this culture to all Canadians;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT KNOWN THAT I, Gary Filmon, Premier of Manitoba, do hereby proclaim April 6, 1992, as Tartan Day in Manitoba, and do commend its active observance to all citizens of our province.

I congratulate and I thank our Premier in giving this matter such positive and speedy attention on behalf of all Scots and clans in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Chamber please help us to celebrate Tartan Days in Manitoba and congratulate all the clans of their achievements and future celebrations of Tartan Days this April 6, 1992.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of the matters referred, particularly Bill 67.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of the matters referred, particularly Bill 67, with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 67—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order to continue to consider Bill 67 (The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992; Loi de 1992 portant affectation anticipée de crédits).

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Madam Chairperson, I note that we are absent the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey). As you will recall from yesterday, as we closed, there were a number of questions that had been posed to the minister, and she had indicated she would be coming back to the House with some information.

I would just serve notice that I have a series of questions I would like to ask the minister, as I stated yesterday.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Chairperson, I do not know what commitments the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) made yesterday. I can tell the member that the Minister of Education is presently making a significant government announcement with respect to French governance and, I understand, will be away from the House yet for another hour, hour and a half.

If the commitment has been made by our new minister to answer certain questions, yesterday, I know those will be answered. If the member is waiting for the response to those questions in the context of today, I cannot make that commitment.

If the questions are on general funding, as the acting minister, I certainly will attempt to answer any questions that the member wishes to put.

Mr. Alcock: If I understand the House leader for the government correctly then, the minister may be available after this announcement at four o'clock or thereabouts, or later or tomorrow morning.

Madam Chairperson, I am quite prepared to continue right now in the absence of the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), and I will come back to those questions when she appears in the House so we can get the answers to the questions we discussed yesterday.

In the interim, I would like to address a few questions to the Minister of Finance.

I would also suggest, though, to the government House leader (Mr. Manness) that there are a number of other ministers whom we may wish to question, and perhaps a few of them should be here in the House as we begin this process.

To begin with, let me start with a question that we raised with the Finance minister and one I raised yesterday with the Minister of Education. It was relative to the mythical \$2.5 million for new government programs. Perhaps the minister can understand how he made such an error in his budget announcement.

* (1500)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Madam Chairperson, I did not make any error in the budgetary announcement whatsoever when I announced a \$2.5-million program; indeed there will be details in due course provided with respect to that \$2.5-million education college course programming announcement.

What I did say in the budget was that government was committing \$2.5 million to a new program. That does not mean that indeed when one goes into the Estimate booklet, they are going to be able to identify an additional \$2.5 million. That was never the intent.

As I indicated to the member before, when the decisions we made in last year's budget flow through, that would take more than just '91-92 budget; there would be some fallout of those decisions appropriated yet in 1992-93. Yet 1992-93 will also be the year when we are introducing the program of \$2.5 million which will flow, not only in 1992-93, but in some part, a smaller part, in '93-94.

The announcement did not say that all \$2.5 million in isolation was going to flow within '92-93, but neither does it address the fact that a portion of the old programming is still within the next fiscal year.

The announcement is correct; it is a \$2.5-million program in its own merit, yet there is no way that the member, in going through the Estimates number, is going to be able to reconcile the \$2.5-million program announcement with indeed a \$2.5-million increase in the line estimate. [interjection]

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I wonder if I might request the honourable members to have their private meetings either outside the Chamber or in the loge.

Mr. Alcock: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I appreciate that request also; it had become difficult to hear the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) as he was endeavouring to explain this.

In the Budget Address that the minister read in the House and in the statement included in the budget it says: Significant increases have been provided in the Education and Training budget; funding support for schools, including a new school finance program, is up 6.8 percent; grants to universities, up 3 percent; the introduction of \$2.5 million in the new training programs at the province's community colleges.

There is a total of \$1,164,000 in funding increases to the province's three colleges. That is the total increase. The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) said yesterday that there were some new costs against that for—just a minute—[interjection]

Madam Chairperson: Order, please

Mr. Alcock: Just throw the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) out of here, please.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I requested earlier the co-operation of all honourable members engaging in private conversations to please either remove themselves from the Chamber or to the loge. The honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) is experiencing great difficulty in conveying his question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), and I personally am having great difficulty hearing him as well.

Mr. Alcock: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) yesterday indicated there were some significant draws against that \$1,164,000. There were merit increases at the colleges; there is a negotiated salary increase; there is the new college governance program, and I believe she mentioned a couple of other initiatives, so presumably, of the \$1,164,000 that has been made available in the budget, not all of that is going to new programs. That is going to other costs and other initiatives.

In order for there to be \$2.5 million worth of new programs, presumably there has to be some number of old programs that are eliminated. Can the Finance minister indicate which programs are being eliminated?

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairperson, I cannot indicate that. I know that with respect to new programming in the fall of '92—and I am subject to correction, but as I recall reviewing the decisions we

made around the Treasury Board, we called upon no reduction in the fall of '92 programs from those that exist right now.

There still, though, will be, within the '92-93 fiscal year, a draw down as a result of the decisions made a year ago, programs that have not completely yet phased out and will carry into the '92-93 fiscal year, into the college fiscal year ending in the end of June, so that is reflected in those statements.

To the best of my knowledge, we have made no decisions with respect to the fall of '92 that are going to reduce programs vis-a-vis those which are in existence right now or those that are winding down now as a result of the decision made a year ago. We made the major reductions in programming in the Estimates leading into '91-92.

Mr. Alcock: Would the Finance minister agree that the statement that significant increases have been provided and including, as a follow-up to that sentence, the introduction of \$2.5 million, is essentially misleading. There is no increase of \$2.5 million in the Education budget, that there may a reallocation of funds within that budget to new programs, but it is not by way of an increase of \$2.5 million dollars.

Mr. Manness: We are arguing semantics in the sense that were the fiscal year-end of the province the end of June, you would certainly see a significant reduction in the '91-92 numbers. The base leading into '92-93 would have been reduced, and it is on that reduced base that we make the claim that we are increasing programming \$2.5 million, not all of which will flow in '92-93. I acknowledge that—not all of which will flow in '92-93.

That is why when we made the statements, like we did within the budget that percent funding to the public school system would be 6.8 percent and/or to universities 3 percent, we did not follow that and say that increased funding budget over budget was going to increase by a factor of some certain percent because that would have been inaccurate.

That is why we said we were introducing a \$2.5 million program with respect to reintroducing courses at our community colleges that were in keeping with what the market demand wanted. It would take more than several months to reintroduce all of those courses, and indeed it may take funding into the '93-94 fiscal year before all of the \$2.5 million program could be up and running.

Mr. Alcock: So, like a lot of the announcements in this budget, it is not quite a reflection of this year's reality. It is a hope for future years.

Can the minister given us an indication of what portion of the \$2.5 million in new programs we will see this year?

Mr. Manness: I am hoping over half of it; if not, three-quarters of it. In due course—and maybe the minister yesterday indicated what courses we were going to reintroduce and introduce for the first time as quickly as those course contents can be developed, and indeed as quickly as we can open entry into those courses, we will.

Our problems are not so much with instructors. I mean, we can hire instructors. Our problems are with developing the courses because some of this is new course content. I say to the member, we would just as soon have all those courses opening September '92. A significant portion of them will be, but not all of them.

Mr. Alcock: We are back to a bit of perhaps a misunderstanding here, but we have \$1,164,000 in total new funds allocated. The minister indicates that roughly half of \$2.5 million, \$1.25 million will flow this year. Where is it coming from?

Mr. Manness: It is coming from the line appropriation.

Mr. Alcock: What is being reduced in order to free up \$1.25 million?

Mr. Manness: Nothing is being reduced other than those courses that were impacted by decisions made exactly a year ago, the impact of which has flowed somewhat into the '92-93 fiscal year.

* (1510)

Mr. Alcock: Okay, turning to another matter—in the first page of the budget, there is a statement here, you reference the Conference Board's prediction that the Manitoba economy will grow at a rate in excess of the average growth rate for Canada.

Can the minister tell us what his understanding of that rate is?

Mr. Manness: As I recall, it was 2.4 percent, the Conference Board of Canada, a 2.4 percent increase, which was above their estimate of the national average which at that time I thought was 2 percent. This is subject to correction.

I wonder if the member could tell me, when he says page 1, is he meaning page 1 of the text? Yes,

he is talking on the fourth paragraph. I will sit down for a second, Madam Chairperson, and try and correlate that to some other information in the back of the document.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I am pleased that the minister is going to try and correlate that information in the back of the document because the figure 3.2 has been used, but in the back of the document, it is indeed 2.4. I believe the difference though is the average. The average is the 2.4 and the Conference Board has us somewhat above that.

Has he spoken to the Conference Board about their very optimistic prediction, and can he tell us what it is based on?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Watson, my economist, did speak with the Conference Board because we wanted to be very sure as to exactly what this, in our view, optimistic forecast was based upon.

I believe the Conference Board said they understood that there would be public investment, particularly in the area of Conawapa that would drive this. By the information that they had at their disposal, this is the way it reflected throughout the numbers. We pointed out to them in all sincerity and honesty that we did not believe that Conawapa would be proceeding as quickly as they thought maybe it would and, of course, that then may result in a change in the next forecast coming out of the Conference Board. It is hard to say.

I know there will be a lot of changes. I know, for instance, that Newfoundland will have a significant drop in rank as a result of decisions in and around Hibernia and that massive project. There are going to be significant changes, as there are from quarter to quarter. It is hard to say where Manitoba will fall.

I know I have talked to other Ministers of Finance and Treasurers yesterday when I was in Toronto, and some of them—in fairness to them, I will not indicate who—indicated that they will be doing downgrading from Conference Board, indeed, even private forecasting. They will be doing some downgrading of their forecasts of economic growth as they present them in their budgets to come down over the course of the next number of weeks.

This is not a perfect science, No. 1; No. 2, it depends at what moment in time you want to reflect what it is you hear. That is why I say to the members opposite, as they have asked me this question before in Question Period, that still the methodology that we have inherited from the former government,

who inherited it from the Lyon government, is if you try and take the private forecasters, you take a simple average. There is nothing perfect about that system either, but at least it is a system. As long as you continue to follow it, you have some basis of comparison and an accurate reflection. I think we have done both in this document.

Mr. Alcock: Yes, I think that is probably a reasonable approach, frankly. So the average that you took at the time that you put the budget together was the 2.4 which you said was following the traditional process of producing a composite. Does 2.4 represent the Manitoba Finance department's current best guess as to what the economic growth in this province will be in this year?

Mr. Manness: Yes, it does, as a minimum. I mean, we are aware of some other good news that has not at this point been factored into our numbers. There is an awful lot of interest in this province by investors from outside. I would say at this point it is a minimum vis-a-vis the national number. Now, if the national number drops significantly, and there are some larger provinces to whom I was speaking yesterday who believe that their numbers are going to drop, obviously that would have significant impact on the national number, and then obviously—you know, we are not an island unto ourselves, the province of Manitoba. Then I would say our 2.4 average would also be downgraded. But right today, given the information that we have, we would say that 2.4 would be the minimum growth, and indeed maybe 3.2 is too optimistic, but still we think we would be higher than 2.4 if everything was going to work itself forward, as we would hope, in the country.

Mr. Alcock: Then can the Finance minister explain to me the relationship between retail sales tax revenues and growth in the economy?

Mr. Manness: Well, there is a relationship. I do not know how strong the correlation would be if one were to go back and do an analysis. Certainly as a rule of thumb, when I look at my monthly estimates of revenues, I give the greatest weighting to sales tax revenue, because it is the best that I have. How good it is as a barometer of the economy is still very much in question, but I can tell you it is the best source of information that I have.

To that end, I find it kind of interesting that members a year ago, of all the opposition parties, when we had sales tax increasing in this province

as compared to '90, in other words January '91 over January '90, when Manitoba increased 1.4 percent—nothing spectacular—but 1.4, whereas all of Canada was down 4.3, not a question was asked. I mean, we stood out quite astonishingly vis-a-vis other provinces a year ago. So our base is higher relative to theirs. So all of a sudden January '92 comes along, now we compare it to January '91, and, yes, I acknowledge that we had growth of only 0.6 percent by Stats Canada numbers. Pardon me, it says 1.4 percent. I do not even know where I get—Manitoba retail sales in January are positive with 1.4 percent growth. Oh, no, this is '91 over '90. I am talking now '92 versus '91 where our growth was 0.6 percent whereas the national average was 3.8 percent.

* (1520)

So in that snapshot of period of time it looks like we are lagging, but when you look over the year before, we did not get the benefit for the significant increase. So I say to the member, they are positive, that is reflected in my revenues, my revenues are positive. I will also tell the member that the revenues over forecast were significantly positive. Does it mean we are out of the recession? I do not think I can give the member that answer at this point in time.

Mr. Alcock: Well, it is interesting. I wondered about this also. You know, it seems that the most direct indicator of people's willingness to consume is the retail sales tax. I went back to the introduction of the program, and I have tracked retail sales tax revenues from when it was introduced in the mid-'60s to the current budget and looked at the relationship between growth and the economy and retail sales tax. It is a little difficult in a couple of years, because the NDP did increase it twice and that masks what may or may not have occurred, particularly in the '81-82 recession. There was a period because of a reporting change in the mid-'70s under the Lyon government where it is hard to understand exactly what happened, because there are two different sets of Public Accounts for it.

However, the Finance minister (Mr. Manness) has said two things. He has said that he credits retail sales tax revenues as being somewhat of a reflection of what is happening in the economy. He has said in the next year he expects that the composite forecast of 2.4 percent growth is an accurate one, and may even be a little stronger than

that, and yet, in his budget, if I am reading it right, he is forecasting a 4.5 percent drop in retail sales tax revenues. That is after you take out the impact of the telecommunications credit, which was a good one. I mean, I support that, and I supported it in my speech, the change in telecommunication.

So my question is, can the Finance minister (Mr. Manness) reconcile these two things that seem to be somewhat at odds with each other?

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairperson, I ask the member not to look, in this case, at budget over budget, because the \$610 million that he wants to compare it to—I am talking now retail sales tax March ending '93 versus March ending '92—the \$610 million is the reference year, the year we are ending now is not accurate. The Third Quarter Report would tell him that that indeed \$610 million has not been met, that indeed, as I recall, and I do not have the third quarter forecast in front of me, but I think it is somewhere around \$560 million, \$550 million, somewhere in between. That is the revised actual of the year we are about to complete.

So what I am then saying is that what I expect to happen in '92-93 is roughly a \$20 million or \$30 million increase from forecasted actual '91-92. That, therefore, is growth. I do not know what the growth is; I have not done the arithmetic. Maybe it is not 2.4, but it is growth.

Mr. Alcock: If that were borne out that would indeed be growth. Are his retail sales tax revenues on-line with that prediction right now?

Mr. Manness: Yes, they are. They have been. We are one of the few provinces in Canada that had good growth in December. We had still positive growth in January, as from the budget, and also in February. I am hoping it continues in March. I guess I shall know next week. It is too soon for me to tell. I am worried about March and I am worried about April, so those numbers are going to mean a lot to me when they come in.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I appreciate the efforts that the Finance minister is making to answer these questions, and I do not want to suggest that I am not interested in going further.

But the Minister of Industry and Trade is in the House and may only be here for a short while, and I have a few questions that I would like to ask him so that he is free to go and do whatever it is he wishes to do. I do appreciate him coming into the

House, so I shall come back to the Finance minister in a minute.

I wonder if the minister can start off just by—as he was not given an opportunity to tell us what occurred in the meetings he was at, relative to the North American free trade agreement, if he can tell us what the status is of the discussions at the present time.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Chairperson, as I indicated not long ago in this House, we, back in late February, received a copy of a working document, a draft document, from the federal government, outlining the positions of Canada, the United States and Mexico in terms of North American free trade, some 400 pages long, areas where there seems to be basic agreement and several areas where there is disagreement. It was provided to all of the provinces, in confidence, by the federal government, and I do give the federal government credit for that in terms of the willingness to share information and the openness in providing us with the opportunity to do a review of that document.

Since we have received it, what we have been doing is, our officials have been going through it, working with other departments where there are direct relationships. We have been hearing about some issues like transportation, areas of concern and so on, so we are working with the ministry of Transportation in terms of some of the issues affecting that department. But we are also going, in some instances, directly to sectors, the whole garment and apparel industry. We are dealing with the Manitoba Fashion Institute in terms of some of the concerns that relate to that particular industry.

So, Madam Chairperson, what we are doing is, at the official level, an analysis of that document in terms of recognizing the concerns that we were made aware of when we went through the public consultation process back in May-June of 1991, with the opportunity to put those concerns forward. I see, at some point, there being an unbracketed agreement, I guess is the best way to put it, which still would not be a final agreement but a document that once it starts to crystallize, at that particular point in time, I would certainly hope that there would be the opportunity to go forward with much more extensive public consultation, the opportunity certainly, to share more information with other members of this Legislature.

But at this particular point in time, the document that we have been provided with is a working document provided in confidence. We do not have the authority to be releasing it to any individuals, but we do appreciate the opportunity to work with it.

I should conclude, Madam Chairperson, that the Minister of Trade, the federal minister, clearly indicated that before any agreement is reached that we would have the opportunity for full input, there would be another Trade ministers' meeting. I would anticipate, based on the discussions that took place in the last two days, that there would be discussions most likely at the First Ministers' level on this issue. So, clearly, there will be that opportunity before any conclusion is reached.

The final point is that while, through various aspects of the media, there has been an indication that an agreement might be imminent, the federal Minister of Trade indicates to me that, in his opinion, an agreement is not imminent and there will be ample opportunity for continued input from us as a government and ultimately for Manitobans on this issue, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Alcock: Some time ago, the minister stood in the House and read to the House his list of conditions for the negotiations that they were entering into, and I guess the position, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has pointed out, that this Minister of Industry and Trade does not have the authority to enter into these agreements. But that is your operating position, and that is certainly one that I think received the support of the House.

I think there are some areas that have arisen and they add to the questions and concerns that are being raised as a result of these negotiations, and I want to ask a couple of specific questions on that.

I just want to reference the six points that were made in the announcement the minister made in the House. It has been stated by this minister, and it has certainly been stated by the Premier, that those are Manitoba's bottom line. That is Manitoba's position on this agreement.

The second one, if I have my order right, was that the agreement called for Mexico to move its labour standards towards the labour standards in the U.S. and Canada, that recognizing that their standards throughout, that their child labour and workplace, health and safety and whatever, were considerably below that of the U.S. and Canada, that contingent upon agreement or one of the conditions for signing

such an agreement would be that they were to upgrade their labour standards.

Now in the draft agreement which I have seen, which is the one that comes out of the latest round—the February 21, I believe, round—there is not that assurance. There is not even that discussion, and I am wondering if the minister was able to raise that with the federal Trade minister and has an explanation for why that condition has been omitted from that document.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Chairperson, certainly I have had the opportunity at Trade ministers' meetings to put the six conditions on the record. I want to indicate that the federal government is very well aware of our six conditions. The Minister of Trade is certainly well aware.

In terms of the analysis that we are currently doing, the concerns that the honourable member raises might very well form part of our response to the draft document that has been provided. Clearly, once our analysis is done, as I have indicated, on the individual issues, we will be responding, but we certainly will be pointing to areas that our six conditions are not met, and of course, continuing to reiterate our six conditions to the federal government.

We are very firm on those six conditions. We have said that on many occasions. The federal government is very clear of our position, and as I have again indicated in this House before, in terms of the responses of the provinces, we, more so than any other province, have outlined very clearly our position. Several provinces to date have not adopted a position. To the best of my knowledge, no province has responded to these draft agreements that we have all been provided with. So I think everybody is doing the due diligence, the thorough review, that one would expect, as I have already outlined without being repetitive.

* (1530)

We are doing a review. We are consulting with various sectors and so on. Clearly that issue will be addressed as part of our response to the federal government.

Mr. Alcock: The member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) has referred to the six commandments. I would hope that there would not be only six in this particular negotiation.

I want to assure the minister at this point that I am not looking to be excessively critical of what has

gone on. I understand the complexity, and certainly, from attempting to scan 480 pages of bracketed document, one gets a feeling for just how complex this agreement is.

I was interested. Manitoba has put its position on the record in this Chamber; the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has done it with the Prime Minister; you have done it with the Minister of Trade. We have six very clear items that are being discussed there. Has the federal government—has the federal Minister of Trade accepted those six positions and are they part of the federal negotiating position?

Mr. Stefanson: I cannot speak for the federal government in terms of their acceptance of our six conditions. There has not been a clear indication one way or the other as it relates to all six conditions, but I do know that discussions are taking place relative to labour issues and labour standards and discussions are taking place relative, certainly, to environmental issues. How far those discussions go and how much they become encompassed into any future agreement are part of the ongoing negotiations.

As I have indicated, certainly the federal government is very well aware of our positions and that we will not support any North American free trade agreement unless those six conditions are in fact met. So I try not to be repetitive, but it is very important to remind all members in the Chamber that that is our position and we have made that.

Again, I am fortunate to be sitting at the table and I have had the opportunity to reiterate this on several occasions at Trade ministers' meetings. I, at least, take pride in the fact that we as a province have been much more specific and have probably done more work than many other provinces on this very important issue.

Mr. Alcock: Am I correct in my understanding that the province of Alberta is the only province to date to support or endorse this agreement?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Chairperson, to the best of my knowledge, Alberta has, and I believe Quebec has, and the remainder of the provinces have not been perfectly clear on this issue. Of course, we have had changes in governments in at least two provinces that have not, certainly at Trade ministers' meetings, put forward a position at this particular point in time.

Mr. Alcock: I do not wish to put words in the minister's mouth, but if I understood what he said on

this: that the absence of references to labour standards and environment are not necessarily indicative of the overall direction of this agreement, that those two items specifically are subject to further negotiation and are part of ongoing discussions, and that we may yet see those two issues included in a North American free trade agreement. That is what I understood the minister to say on this. Does this indicate that the federal government, the federal Minister of Trade has accepted those two, not the whole six, but those two conditions as part of their bottom line for the negotiations with the U.S., the United States and Mexico?

Mr. Stefanson: In terms of the preamble of the honourable member, yes, that is a correct interpretation.

In terms of the federal government, I cannot necessarily indicate that they have accepted them, but they have clearly recognized them as important issues that need to be addressed. So discussions are taking place as it relates to those two issues, labour standards and environmental issues.

Mr. Alcock: In Question Period I would not be allowed a hypothetical question, so I am going to serve notice that this question is hypothetical. The minister can choose to answer it or not. But these six conditions were put forward as Manitoba's bottom line. If those two conditions, labour standards and environment, are not met, will Manitoba withdraw its support for this agreement? [interjection] It is hypothetical, absolutely.

Mr. Stefanson: I will put it in my own words, we have said in this House on many occasions that we do not support a North American free trade agreement unless these six conditions are met.

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that. Now, I want to add a seventh area, and it is one that comes out of an examination of this draft document, and that is this discussion about standards. It is a general discussion, but it does raise the question, for example, on sanitary standards, that in order to, quote, facilitate maximum freedom of trade, that the standards of the country of origin would be the ones that would be accepted.

The lowest common denominator would be accepted. The implication that has been drawn from that, for example, is that food stuffs packaged and processed in Mexico, subject to Mexican

inspection standards would be admitted into Canada.

Now, is this an area that, perhaps, was omitted when the Minister of Trade (Mr. Stefanson) first looked at this agreement? Does not this constitute a significant lowering of Canada's standards of inspection?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Chairperson, as I indicated, besides reviewing the document with the view of how the document either meets or does not meet our six conditions, we are also viewing it as it relates to any concerns that we would have relative to Manitoba, Manitoba businesses and obviously Canadians, as well.

Certainly our position on other issues, as the honourable member well knows, on the environmental issues, on the labour issues, has been quite the opposite—that they should not be driven to the lowest common denominator. Quite the opposite, that they should rise to the higher common denominators, in those particular instances, of Canada and United States.

I would suggest that the same principle will apply in the area that the honourable member refers to, and certainly if it is part of our final review that that is recognized as a definite concern, it will form part of our response to the federal government.

The six conditions, while they are very important—as I have already said—we are not only looking at the agreement with the six conditions in mind, we are looking at it as we think each and every item affects Manitoba, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Alcock: I grant the minister that it is not possible to anticipate every possible problem prior to going into discussions, and some things arise during the midst of discussions and certain conditions that they have sought to impose on this, or may now seek to impose on this, may simply not have been recognized at the time.

But there is a suggestion here that the proposed chapter on sanitary guidelines is attempting to set standards in such a way that each country should try to minimize negative trade effects, and this is suggesting a lowest-common-denominator approach. Was that concern raised with the minister at the discussions in Ottawa?

Mr. Stefanson: Just for clarification, Madam Chairperson, you are requesting whether that was raised at the Tourism ministers' meeting?

Mr. Alcock: No, I am sorry, with the Trade ministers' meeting. In the discussion with other Ministers of Trade, you were looking at the NAFTA and with the federal Trade minister. The minister has referenced several discussions with the federal Trade minister. There is a new element that has arisen as a result of the leak of the draft agreement, and that is this question on lowest common denominator in the setting of standards. I am wondering if that issue was the subject of discussion in the meetings the minister was at. The minister's reference means with the Trade minister.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Chairperson, that specific issue was not raised at ministerial meetings.

Mr. Alcock: Has the minister been made aware of this particular concern?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Chairperson, I have a draft report in my office now upon my return that flags a series of concerns that I, at this particular point in time, have not had an opportunity to review.

Mr. Alcock: I wonder though, has the minister had discussions on this agreement with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh)?

* (1540)

Mr. Stefanson: As I have indicated, Madam Chairperson, initially, appreciating the six conditions that we have suggested and the consultation that we had with citizens of Manitoba, the business sector, the labour sector, academic and so on, my officials were in attendance at all of those meetings and had an opportunity to recognize the many concerns. At this particular stage, the review that I refer to that is being done is being done at the official's level.

I cited the one example in transportation. Clearly in agricultural issues we work very closely with the Department of Agriculture, as would be the case with any issues that affect any other department within government.

At this particular time, as part of the overall analysis, the review is being done at the official's level as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) indicated in the House today. Based on the overall review that is being done, and I have also touched on in some sectors discussions taking place with the private sector, a report will be brought forward for the review of cabinet that I can be obviously sharing and working with all of my colleagues.

Mr. Alcock: I would just encourage the minister to bring forward information on that particular provision and to state as clearly as he has Manitoba's position on other areas, to state Manitoba's position on that particular area, because it would seem to be one that would be of considerable concern to people in this province.

I am going to leave the NAFTA with that. I would congratulate the minister on his new responsibilities as chairman, if I understand, of the Ministers of Trade, or chairman of a working group. Perhaps the minister can clarify for us what responsibilities they are taking on.

Mr. Stefanson: I will be co-chairing the Committee of Ministers of Internal Trade for Canada with the federal Minister Michael Wilson. I look forward to the challenges. We have long been a proponent of the breaking down of interprovincial barriers, I think as everybody in this House knows, so that was one of the eight issues dealt with over the last two days by the First Ministers, the whole issue of interprovincial trade barriers.

I am also pleased to see that besides being given the mandate to pursue that entire issue, it has been expanded to address issues as it relates to a code of conduct in terms of investment in various provinces across Canada to try to minimize the investment bidding wars that occasionally take place across Canada and certainly are not to the benefit of governments within Canada or the citizens of Canada.

I very much look forward to the challenges of that committee. We will be meeting, I believe, in Winnipeg on April 30 and May 1 to begin the great deal of work that has to be done on those very important issues.

Mr. Alcock: In the statement that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) tabled in the House, it talks about interprovincial trade barriers and what they call competition for investment. It sounds like a very positive announcement. I assume that this is the part of the working plan for this particular committee that the minister is chairing, and I note here, if it is starting on May 1 of '93, it has a completion date of March 31, 1995. I am wondering why it is going to take us two full years to reach agreement on this particular issue when there seems to be broad support for it across the country.

Mr. Stefanson: Good question, Madam Chairperson, and in fact I am actually quite pleased

to have the March 31, 1995, deadline as some provinces were suggesting even a later deadline. At one point there was a suggestion of 1997. While there seems to be general acceptance of the principle, one has to appreciate that there is a great deal of work to be done, because it goes beyond the procurement practices of governments and Crown corporations and municipalities and school divisions, so the whole procurement practices of all of those bodies have to be reviewed and adjusted to incorporate opportunities across Canada.

It also then goes into the regulatory side, that any jurisdictions that have any regulations that in any way put barriers to other provinces in doing business in that particular province, so while on the surface it might seem like a fairly simplistic principle to adopt, if you think of it in terms of the many aspects, it is a very detailed degree of work that has to be done, Madam Chairperson. So while the three-year time frame standing here might seem a long ways away, I would suggest that to do the job that is required and to get the support of every province in Canada with what finally we come forward with, that kind of time frame is definitely required, plus with the added responsibility now of the code of conduct on investment opportunities.

We have seen recent examples of at least one company going across Canada trying to, entice might be too strong a word but, influence governments to investment in a particular operation and clearly that is a whole other issue that we will be addressing. There are concerns of provinces in terms of regional disparities that come into play and those kinds of decisions as well. So it is a very complicated issue in many respects, so while there has been the endorsement in principle there is a lot of work that remains to be done, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I think it is a very positive initiative, frankly, and I think that the minister was very polite in his comments about companies going across the country trying to entice, negotiate or develop some differential treatment. I think there are other terms for that, such as to play one off against each other or one off against another in kind of a negative sum game that ultimately leads us into a form of, if one follows game theories, of a prisoner's dilemma, that you are always negotiating down. The problem in this case, of course, is that you are negotiating away the various support programs that form the foundation for our social

support system in this country. So it is a very dangerous practice and one that we have allowed to go on for too long.

I was party to a lengthy discussion about a similar negotiation among a series of states on the eastern seaboard where they are attempting to do exactly the same thing to prevent companies from playing states off against each other. I wish the minister well in that initiative, and hope that he can move that one along.

I would like to know how the federal government defines its role in those discussions.

Mr. Stefanson: That, to a certain extent, will flow from our meetings, Madam Chairperson. Clearly, there is very much of a role for the federal government to play in this entire issue, not necessarily so much because of their own procurement practices, but because as well on the investment promotion side they too have various programs in place across Canada. I think, from all governments' perspective, while it is a difficult issue to quantify—the suggestion was made that the cost of interprovincial trade barriers approximates anywhere between \$6 billion and \$8 billion, so it certainly has a very significant financial impact to all governments, all provinces and ultimately affects the federal government. As I say, Michael Wilson will be the co-chair with me of this committee, and I look forward to working with the federal government. I think, clearly, they have very much of a role to play.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, certainly they have a role to play. They also are the major link when we are talking about international trade and creating opportunities in this country and bringing companies into this country, and they are caught in the same kind of game, if you like, between this country and the U.S. and Mexico and other countries that are offering incentives to lure trade in various directions. We see that with the people just south of the border here, coming up here and offering businesses very significant incentives to move a few miles south.

The federal government has another role to play, and it is a role that we have recognized in our Constitution relative to equalization, and it is a role the federal government has recognized in a number of its institutions as it looks at attempting to address regional disparities. So that rather than simply negotiate agreement that creates a level playing field across Canada, which, in fact, is not a level

playing field because of the influences of distance and infrastructure and other sorts of considerations, the federal government has had a role to push back against that and to facilitate the development in certain regions of the country that are not perhaps as—

* (1550)

So in a sense they have a role that sort of hangs over all 10 provinces and works against the free flow of resources and companies and investment, intentionally so. We have decided that as a country that we would attempt to do that. Is that a position that has been taken by the federal Trade minister, and is that a role we will see them playing in these discussions?

Mr. Stefanson: A good question. I do not have the communiqué in front of me, but clearly one of the aspects of it was as part of the overall review that we will be doing as internal Trade ministers is to recognize and address, as part of our review, the issue of the various needs of provinces and regions within provinces across Canada and the regional disparities.

So the honourable member is correct that it is not as simple as saying that you equalize the playing field completely across our country and everything is fine for all regions. There are important considerations as they relate to various regions within many of our provinces.

I guess the short answer is clearly that it is going to form a very important part of the work and review being done by this committee.

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for taking the time to answer those questions. I will close on that with this particular minister, and let him get on to the business of reading the 480 pages of bracketed text, which is no joy, I can assure him.

Perhaps I could move to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), and just ask him a few brief questions on the situation that confronts us relative to the town, the rural municipality, the about-to-become independent area of Headingley.

Can the minister review for us the current state and the preparation for the separation of Headingley from the city of Winnipeg?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): All is in readiness for the creation of a new rural municipality in Headingley; however, one obstacle

stands in the way, and that, of course, is the passage of Bill 45 presently before the House.

The government requires the passage of Bill 45 in order to formalize the creation of the Rural Municipality of Headingley, giving authority then to proceed with an election for the people there to create their new municipal council.

As I indicated in my opening remarks on the introduction of second reading of Bill 45, in order to accomplish that election in Headingley, to create the municipal structure that is required in order for them to prepare for a January 1 takeover for operation purposes, as much time as possible is required to give them that opportunity.

The longer we delay the question of the bill, the longer that it takes to formalize the creation of the municipality, the less time the people of Headingley will have to prepare for the operation of their own municipality, and that is unfortunate for the people of Headingley.

Some suggest that it is unfortunate for the government. Let me tell you, the government is not going to have to carry out those efforts in Headingley; it is the people of Headingley. Their new municipal council will have to carry out all of those functions and prepare to operate as a new municipality, and it is they who need the time. It is they who need as much time as possible to prepare for the time that they will assume responsibility. Unfortunately, the matter has been somewhat delayed.

As I understand the concern that is coming across in speeches that have been indicated—I have indicated on a number of occasions—I am prepared to introduce amendments to accommodate many of the concerns that have been raised by honourable members opposite, no matter how inaccurate they may be.

Nonetheless, the basic principle of the creation of the municipality by regulation, which has been chastised in this House by a number of speakers, is the way every other municipality in western Canada is created. Every other province, and every other municipality in this province is created the same way—by regulation.

The boundaries are adjusted by regulation, the municipalities are created by regulation. The suggestion from members opposite that there is some deep, dark plot afoot here is wrong. We are simply following what has been the norm in western

Canada for—I have not calculated how many years, but certainly a good, long time.

Much longer, certainly, than I have been in this Legislature, probably longer than I have been in public life. Nonetheless, that is what we propose. Now, if members opposite choose not to pass this bill and wish to delay it for whatever reason, that is their prerogative. They are members of the Legislature and they have the right to do that.

I ask them, though, to consider the ramifications for the people of Headingley. It is not the ramifications for me; it is not the ramifications for the government; it is not the ramifications for anyone except those residents in Headingley who have for five years patiently waited for this day to come.

They are patiently waiting still, but I do not know for how much longer. I suspect that if this matter is delayed very much longer there will be a number of rumblings of discontent.

Mr. Alcock: Yes. What the minister is hearing today is one of those rumblings. I have many good friends in Headingley, and they are very concerned. They have made their decision about wanting to separate. They wish to get on with the business of separating and now, as I understand—and I would like the minister to clarify this for me.

I spoke on Bill 45, and I believe my party has spoken on Bill 45, and we raised some concerns. The minister has, to the best of my knowledge to date, addressed those concerns, and has indicated he is prepared to bring forward some amendments that specifically address those concerns.

I believe it is the position of my party that we will pass this bill, and get it into committee so that we can get on with the business of allowing Headingley to elect its council and to separate. So I would like to understand a little more clearly, why we are not proceeding with that process.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, I am a little surprised that the member is not familiar with the rules of the House. The bill is in second reading before the House, members are speaking. Each time the bill has been called, members have spoken, as is their right.

Mr. Alcock: Well, could the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) explain to us then, at what point do we begin to get into serious trouble in the preparations? I mean, we have heard at some length the variety and the number of steps that have to be taken in order to complete this transition. It is

now coming to the end of March, we are hoping to have a council in place by the end of December. What is the time frame that Headingley needs to do this in a responsible manner?

Mr. Ernst: I assume the member wants a date, following which it would be too late to hold a municipal election in the community of Headingley, prior to the fall.

I cannot give him an exact date, but it is somewhere between the 9th and 12th of April. If we do not have an opportunity then to have this matter concluded, in that little window of opportunity, then it will be too late to hold an election in June, and it will force a postponement of that election until likely September, perhaps even October.

It would be inappropriate, I think, at this point, to suggest that an election in July or August would be in the best interests of the community because of the fact that many people are absent on vacation and other activities and therefore would not be available to participate.

Particularly this time, it is the first time. I think almost everyone in the community, certainly whom I have spoken to, because it is the first time, it is an historic occasion, it is one that has never happened before, to my knowledge, would like to have that opportunity.

Madam Chairperson, I would say, in that time frame, early April, within a week or so of when we return to the House.

* (1600)

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that answer, and I hope that we will have that bill passed in the appropriate period of time.

There was a question that came up at one of the meetings I was at just recently about the division of assets between the City of Winnipeg and the municipality of Headingley. The question was whether or not the municipality would have to pay for such assets as would remain within its boundaries. Has that question been resolved?

Mr. Ernst: No, it has not, Madam Chairperson.

There will be a division of assets undertaken, assets and liabilities. That, under the normal process, under The Municipal Act, is taken place by the municipal board, and they have absolute jurisdiction. Whatever the municipal board decides, happens. There is no appeal.

In this case, because of the potential ill-feeling, shall we say, because of the relative size of the two bodies as well—under The Municipal Act, normally, it is two smaller rural municipalities which decide that one piece should belong to one as opposed to the other and they get together and they sort it out and that is done. It is two relatively equal partners.

In the case of the City of Winnipeg on the one hand, with its high-priced lawyers and so on, as we saw at an earlier municipal board meeting, and the poor little Rural Municipality of Headingley on the other side, it was decided, in the process, that the division of assets and liabilities, the final decision, would be taken by cabinet, to ensure that the municipality is not unduly burdened by a huge debt that will make it virtually impossible to operate.

Ultimately, the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council will decide what the division of assets and liabilities will be. The municipal board will be asked for an opinion. They will be asked to conduct a hearing and carry on the things they would normally do except that they will not have the final decision.

I might say, Madam Chairperson, that in addition to that it was anticipated that this division of assets and liabilities would be undertaken by the new council of the R.M. of Headingley as opposed to the provincial government on their behalf or some other group. It seemed appropriate to us that the new council should be the one to decide. They will be the elected representatives of the community. They will be the democratically elected people who will have to answer to the community and, therefore, they are the logical ones in order to carry out this division of assets and liabilities negotiation, but they have to be elected before they can do that, and before they can become elected we have to pass Bill 45.

Mr. Alcock: I must confess, I am not often comforted when I hear that certain decisions are going to be moved into the hands of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, but I will make an exception in this particular circumstance. I think there is a great deal of concern. I was somewhat younger at the time of the amalgamation of all the various cities and towns under Unicity. I was somewhat younger. I was hoping the minister would point that out, but the minister was not as young as I was.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Perhaps the minister could just refresh my memory. At the time at which the various townships and cities, whatever, were brought together, all those assets were simply acquired by the new corporation. There was no payment. Charleswood did not get pieced off in some way because it had a newer arena versus somebody else having an older piece of property or somebody had a new fire engine and somebody had an old fire engine. Simply, everybody got what was there to serve the people. Is my memory of that correct?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what happened was that all municipalities were merged into one so what happened was, all of the parts became the whole. There were no divisions taking place so there was nobody to divide it up with. Everybody was put into one pot and so there was no division of assets necessary.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I understand it, though, there also was no consideration given for the age or quality of the assets in various regions. It just all came together and everybody got it.

The question is, how serious is the concern about the division in this case, that there are assets that are obviously built and maintained for the use by the people in Headingley? Is it in the minister's opinion possible to simply separate the two and give them at no cost the assets to which they have come to rely on over the past number of years?

Mr. Ernst: Yes.

Mr. Alcock: Thank you very much. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I thank the minister for taking the time to speak to me on this matter.

I think it is an important one, and I can assure him of my support and co-operation and that of my party in getting this bill moved as quickly as possible through the House so that we can get on with the process of allowing the people of Headingley to do what they have voted to do. I think any delay is simply irresponsible on the part of this Chamber and I hope it will not continue.

I would like to move to the Minister of Government Services. I note a reference in the budget to some changes in the purchase and operation of automobiles. I am wondering if the minister can explain to me what is indicated there, what is meant by that.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Just to get a little bit of information, what

we have decided to do is—as the member knows throughout Canada different provinces are now becoming special operating agencies in those types of services which provide say a particular source, and one particular source like automobiles.

What you will do is you will form a company which will be run with a little bit more flexibility. What they will do is they will be allotted X number of dollars for a program to set up the saleable automobiles to the different departments. Their answer will be bottom-line statements. As they see fit, they will have to produce a statement each year answering to the government. However, the idea of it is to have a more flexible type of operation.

What happens now in government services, especially with automobiles, is that there seem to be a lot of expenses and a lot of charges which seem to fall between the cracks, where now a specific department will say we are now leasing automobiles from this company. I call it a company because it will be operating like a company. It is on a trial basis. We hope to have it in structure, fully occupied, going, within about three years.

The staff will be the same complement of staff we have. The unions have supported our concept. The employees are very, very excited about it because it will be perceived as, for instance, say a body shop working in there that is working now. They will actually be able to charge like a body shop and work like a little company within another company.

The whole idea is to form a—and we call it a special operating agency.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am interested in the concept. I believe it was under the Lyon government that there was an attempt to change the relationship between Government Services and the other departments into a process where the Department of Government Services would function as a contractor to other departments and would, as the minister seems to be suggesting with this, provide a service on a fee-for-service basis.

The department which was accessing that service would pay the fee and would moderate its own use of the particular commodity being supplied. However, there was always a problem in determining two things: the quality of the product provided and the pricing.

I will digress for a moment just to tell the Minister of Government Services a story that I have always wanted to tell the Minister of Government Services.

In 1981 I believe it was, I became the Superintendent of Seven Oaks Centre for Youth. It was a mess, to say the least. The place had been destroyed.

An Honourable Member: What year was that?

Mr. Alcock: In 1981. In fact, it was under the Lyon government. I was hired, interestingly enough, under the Lyon government. There is a story there.

At the Seven Oaks Centre for Youth, we needed beds because the kids were sleeping on mattresses on the floor and on blankets and pillows on the floor. As a newcomer to management in government, I asked what the process was. I was told that there was an arrangement like this, that you went to Government Services as a supplier, that you identified for them what it was that you wanted, and that you requested it, and they would supply it at some sort of price.

* (1610)

I went out dutifully downtown, and I priced bunk beds because that was what I wanted. I wanted steel-piped bunk beds. I priced them at various locations, found that a good, sturdy quality bunk bed would cost \$600. I wanted 16 of them. I was told there might be some processing and transaction costs associated with Government Services, so I made a request for 16 bunk beds and made a budget application for \$16,000. When I got the bill from Government Services, it was \$91,000 for 16 bunk beds that I had priced at \$600 a piece.

The problem was that between the request and the fulfillment were a whole series of design steps of processing by various organs of government, with the result that the cost that the item was being supplied at was just completely different from the cost that I could purchase the goods on the street. I would like to know, when I hear the minister talking about a department of government, once again, operating as a supplier of services on some sort of fee basis, what is going to be done to ensure that the rates that are being charged departments are competitive?

Mr. Ducharme: That is the whole idea of the SOA in regard to vehicles. Once we quote on a department, if we are not in the ballpark, they do not have to buy from us. We have to be competitive. The whole idea is that this fleet of vehicles would

administrate their own budget and manage it like an outside business. They have to be competitive.

I guess also that it gives them the flexibility of—as you would probably appreciate when you are dealing with automobiles, when a government comes in and they have a fleet of about 2,400 automobiles, all of a sudden Treasury Boards come in and say, well, we can get another 40,000 more kilometres out of an automobile and stretch it. They were not realizing that, when you do that, sometimes a mechanical breakdown in cost adds to it. It probably would have been more worthwhile at the time to maybe have sold or traded these automobiles in. There are certain automobiles that it probably is beneficial to trade in earlier because of the type of automobile, et cetera.

I think the whole intention of this initiative is not to privatize the particular fleet that we have. The whole idea is to provide them a better method of managing their costs. The whole idea is that if they do have a plan, say the plan was over five or six years, and Treasury Board has decided that here is the money allotted to you for those five or six years, you operate it, the only thing is you must operate it and not have any losses.

On the bottom line, you must show a profit, but at least they have the availability to figure out for five or six years and say, here is where we are going. Then no one comes at the middle term of that five years and says, I am sorry, but we have now changed course. You now have this company that said, hey, you have given us authorization to get going, we have not lost any money on our statement, so why would you interfere in the process. That is basically the idea behind the SOA.

Mr. Alcock: The organization must show a profit, if I understand the minister correctly. Are government departments doing annual leasing of equipment and services from them?

Mr. Ducharme: Right now, under the new concept, that is what they would be doing. Under the concept now, you could have a department that turns around—they might have 20 automobiles; then, all of a sudden, you get into a budget year and someone might give the instructions, you have to give back 10. This sometimes reflects in Government Services' operating, because all of a sudden they have 10 automobiles back. The capital that they get back might not be the right time to do that.

If you get into more of a specific, the member from his area comes to the SOA and says, I am going to be leasing a vehicle for five years, we set up that cost, and it is directly resolved to him. That is what we do with the different departments.

It does not say that it could not probably get involved in other leasing agreements, with maybe other Crown corporations, et cetera, like the Manitoba Telephones or the Hydro, which are operating on their own. Now, maybe because they have smaller fleets, they might be able to appreciate and benefit from our type of purchasing and our type of repairs that we have set up.

Mr. Alcock: Do I understand the minister correctly that a department that has a desire to have a vehicle—I will be simple about it at this point—can lease the vehicle through this organization and access a service contract of some sort through this organization? Are they free to lease the vehicle some place else?

Mr. Ducharme: Under the present program, they must get them from Government Services. However, what we are saying is that, under this particular system, they have to be competitive or else there will be nothing preventing someone from going out and leasing from somebody else.

Remember, though, you have an advantage in this particular system. They will be able to borrow at whatever the government borrows at, so there are different advantages to this particular SOA. Also, there are advantages to the amount of purchasing that this department or that this SOA does.

To give you an example, we just bought an automobile recently, a Crown Vic that was under \$18,000, fully loaded. Apparently, we can buy them cheaper than some companies, U-drive companies, can buy. There is that power of purchasing that is very, very good.

Mr. Alcock: Let me clarify this. There are a couple of possibilities here. If the department can go to this particular organization, and they can ask for a bid on the supply of a certain vehicle or a certain number of vehicles, then they could presumably go to a private-sector company of some sort and ask for a bid. They would be free to choose whichever bid best met their budgetary and service requirements and everything else.

If I understand the minister correctly, he believes, because of the competitive position of this particular service, given that it can access money at a lower

cost and has lower borrowing costs, and presumably some capital costs that have already been underwritten or written off, that it will be able to provide those vehicles at a lower average cost and provide the services at a lower average cost, and at a competitive cost, shall we say, on a competitive basis, and we will be able to compete directly with other such suppliers in the community.

Mr. Ducharme: Our fleet division has compared costs of automobiles to leasing from private. We have even noticed that Alberta and B.C.—some provinces they do lease some of their products now. Our indications show that we can operate an automobile cheaper than by their leasing from somebody else.

Mr. Alcock: This division, or the service that it is replacing, does it currently service Hydro, the Telephone System and others?

Mr. Ducharme: No, not at the present time. I just used it as an example of another market. The City of Winnipeg uses vehicles six months out of a year, there might be another possibility. I am just using that as an example.

Mr. Alcock: So, in addition to providing a competitive service to government departments that are no longer required to go to it but would be attracted to it because of lower operating costs, that this entity could then compete for contracts from the City of Winnipeg, presumably some municipalities, Hydro, MTS and the like?

Mr. Ducharme: That is not the position now because we feel it will take us at least three years to get into the SOA to make sure that our program has started and our costs are started and get rid of a lot of the existing vehicles, and it is going to take a while to do that. If the member thinks we are going to compete with the other sector at this present time, that is not the idea. It is not to go into the business and compete with the other sector. I used the Hydro and Telephones because if they happen to come forward, maybe we could look at that.

Mr. Alcock: Presumably if you are freeing up what has been a captive market to date in allowing people to go out and access other services, then you may be competing to attract other business. Would you also be envisioning attracting business from, say, a private corporation that wanted to lease its vehicles through you as opposed to leasing them in some other manner?

Mr. Ducharme: We are not contemplating that right now simply because we feel that the first—the SOA that we are going into is a three-year pilot project to get going, and we feel that we will have our hands full just on servicing and looking after the present vehicles that we have got and getting it on stream. We are not looking at going in and competing with those other private companies at this present time.

* (1620)

Mr. Alcock: Is it the minister's intention to have this facility on line April 1 of this year in its start-up phase beginning to operate in this manner?

Mr. Ducharme: The intent is to get the program starting April 1, '92. It is our same staff. We are using the same person who has been managing it. His name is Dennis Ducharme, no relation. He has the expertise, and the only thing that would probably stall some of that would be we hope to get a—we have had the use of an old, old computer. I know my friend across the way was asking the question and likes computers.

We have got an old, old, old computer there that has to be replaced that runs our operation now, and we are hoping to get that on line as quickly as possible. The idea is now to start our pilot project as of April 1, '92. There will not be any visible changes that he would see at the present time.

Mr. Alcock: Now as we look at this new operation again, at some point the minister is going to say, go. He is going to say, it now starts here. That is April 1, and after April 1 presumably the various departments of government which up to now have not been free to enter into their own agreements but have always been directed to Government Services to access vehicles, as of April 1 those departments where they can identify or acquire a more competitive position with some other supplier are then free to do that.

Mr. Ducharme: There has not been a directive. I guess that will be during the process of our next Estimates.

However, with the costs we have seen right now, and I cannot answer what type of directive we will get from Treasury Board when we are doing our Estimates on who they can go to purchasing or leasing these vehicles from. However, I can look at the directive of SOA that we are going to continue to operate these vehicles, have them run their course, and I am sure that we can be competitive,

that if someone is coming forward, we have already priced some of the competitors out now, and we have had no problems competing with them. I do not see any directive from us or anything that I see in the near distant future, at least during our three-year pilot project, that anyone would want to go anywhere else and lease their vehicles.

Mr. Alcock: If I understood the minister correctly, then maybe I misunderstood his earlier statement. Is he saying that during this first three years that there—I mean, I understand his confidence, and he has outlined reasons why he is confident that this entity can offer a competitive service. It would seem to have some competitive advantages with its infrastructure and its financing. However, he did say or at least led me to believe that the intention here was to put some competitive pressure on the supplier, and to do that, that meant organizations that were currently leasing vehicles would have a choice to make. If this entity could prove itself to be competitive then they could go there. If they were not able to prove themselves competitive, then they were free to go someplace else.

Now, has he now said that during the first three years they will not be able to do that?

Mr. Ducharme: I am not saying that. I am saying that I do not know what the different departments will choose. If they were to come to Treasury or someone saying, hey, your SOA is not competitive, we would like to go somewhere else, then I guess at that time that decision will have to be made. I guess, like the whole budget process, if someone can show that we are not being competitive, I guess that option is there.

Mr. Alcock: I guess that is what I am trying to ascertain, because right now it is not there. Right now, in order to even understand whether or not it was a competitive bid, that department does not have the opportunity to go and access such a bid. They access their vehicles through the Department of Government Services.

Now, the minister is proposing something that I think is revolutionary and may be an effective way of demonstrating an ability to deliver a cost-effective service. That only would seem to apply if departments are free to access the competitive services some other way. Otherwise, you know, they can get all the bids they want if they are still forced to go to the same shop.

So the question is, at what point, will it be April 1, will it be, you know, September 1, will it be at the end of the first three years, will departments then be free to seek and enter into agreements with other suppliers?

Mr. Ducharme: The only thing I can answer to that, I guess, after when the SOA starts on April 1, and someone comes to us or goes to Treasury and said, we need X number of automobiles to operate for the next four years or for the next so many kilometres, and they go to Treasury and say, listen we can rent from someone else cheaper. Well, then I guess Treasury Board at that time will have to decide to what extent they can lease them.

However, right now there seem to be some gaps in getting the true cost in different departments with automobiles, and there seems to be a little overflow on where those costs are going. Now, this is a much better way to figure out the costs and be a little more flexible in running it like it should be. If it makes money, then where does the money go? Should the money go back into the government as a whole or should it go back into the different departments who are actually making use of this SOA?

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think I will pass the microphone to the member for Inkster who has some questions for the Minister of Finance, I believe.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): As the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) pointed out, I have a couple of questions that I would like to ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would ask the Minister of Finance first: When an allocated amount is allotted in the budget, does the Minister of Finance have the authority to exceed that amount that has been allocated?

Mr. Manness: The government, the Minister of Finance unilaterally does not have the power to exceed anything. The government of the day has the power to exceed only when the House is not sitting by a vehicle called Special Warrant. At that time, if there is a request to surpass a vote attained through the ordeal of 240 Estimate hours and all those resolutions, if a department comes forward and requests to spend beyond that, that can only occur by way of Special Warrants of the Executive Council. That can only occur when the House is not sitting.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have been sitting inside the Chamber for a while now, and I have always heard the Minister of Finance and some of his colleagues from their seats, and in fact on the record, when they talk about monies that have been allocated. They say that, in fact, once you allocate a dollar figure, that is all it is, it is just an allocation. It is a projection in terms of how much is going to be spent, that you cannot in fact spend right up to the dollar. Even though a certain amount of money might have been allocated out for a particular line, and the department goes, as it gets closer and closer to that figure, the Minister of Finance would have argued that in fact they will never spend right to the dollar, but they have to at least give the impression, have to spend somewhere below that line.

I will ask the Minister of Finance to comment on that.

Mr. Manness: The member for Inkster, if he thinks everybody that sees well is blind, does not know where he is headed in his question. I mean, he is foolish. He is going to try to play Philadelphia lawyer in a courtroom setting here; he is failing abysmally. The short answer to his question is that governments, if they care at all about the financial administration, if they care about democracy at all, do not necessarily like to pass Special Warrants. That is an affront to this Legislature. That is an affront to democracy.

* (1630)

I can say to the member that this government, if one wants to look either provincially vis-a-vis other provinces, or if they want to look at the historical record over the last 12 years, as to how much we have spent in Special Warrants as compared to other governments, they would be, hopefully, happy to find out that we are at a level roughly 40 percent or 50 percent in real terms as compared to our predecessors. Now, this year for instance, in terms of '91-92, I believe, we have warrants up in the area of \$90 million, \$40 million or \$50 million of it as a result of welfare and the appropriation directed toward agriculture.

I personally take some satisfaction, I think all ministers do, that we were within \$40 million or \$50 million of a \$5-billion budget.

An Honourable Member: That is not bad.

Mr. Manness: That is not bad when you consider 80 percent of it is basically in three or four

departments. So, if the member is saying that we, therefore, do not need to be governed by the resolution or the vote in this House, and that we, therefore, can unceremoniously continue to pass warrants so that we can basically spend anything we want, I say to him, he is wrong. We take those votes in this House with respect to those resolutions very seriously, and departments are under tremendous pressure in the last two months of the year to make sure they do not overspend their salary accounts or indeed their other expenditures with respect to the votes—intense pressure.

Those departments that are seen in the last month or two wantonly trying to spend, so that they can get closer to that number, just for the sake of spending—I am talking now about the incidentals and the other. I am not talking about the program expenditures in Health and/or Education which we do not have control of. by the way, other than in home care. I say to the member, he is wrong if he thinks that we can spend beyond it.

Obviously, with every government, if they believe in the democratic principle that you come here and you represent your constituents, and that the power of taxation which is so powerful to take away from one to give to another should not be violated, then I say to him there always will be some element of lapse. Traditionally, it has been \$50 million. It has then grown to \$60 million, and I believe in this year's budget we put it up to \$70 million—one and a quarter percent of the total budget of \$5.4 billion. Not a large amount.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I find that I would concur with the Minister of Finance in many of the comments that he said on the record, when he talks about the democratic principle, but what the Minister of Finance does is he is very selective when it comes to his Orders-in-Council or Special Warrants for budgetary expenditures. He talks about how important it is that, as we pass these lines, we adhere to those lines, that we should not have to go and request Special Warrants for everything. This is really what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is saying.

Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will suggest to you that the Minister of Finance is very selective on the Special Warrants that he will allow for. I will suggest to you that the Minister of Finance in fact does not mind Special Warrants coming from ministerial support staff. What I will do is, I will suggest to the Minister of Finance, if he looks at his

previous year budget, let us take a look at the Executive Council, where there was allocated out \$1.581 million actual spent.

Mr. Manness: Where were you in Public Accounts?

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Finance says where was I for Public Accounts. Well, let us deal with the issue before us, and that is, the allocated amount in the previous budget for Executive Council is \$1.581 million. Actual spent was \$1.594 million.

Now the Minister of Finance will stand up and he will say, well, it is not that much. It is not that much money. So we underestimated a bit, but let us put it in the proper context. This is a support salary for the Premier of the province in essence for the salaries. This was how much of an increase? Well, last year at the same time when he brought in this particular line, he froze the civil servants at zero percent. Did the Civil Service line exceed what was allocated out? I wonder if the Minister of Finance could actually answer that question.

We take a look, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at the Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat's office—\$292,100 was allocated out and in fact \$295,100 was spent.—[interjection] The Minister of Finance is very sensitive to this, and this is well in order during Interim Supply. If he does not understand that, well, I encourage him to stand up on a point of order and say that it is in fact out of order that I should not be asking questions like this. In fact, these lines of questioning deal strictly with this bill, because you are requesting advance on the monies. I am asking you questions dealing strictly with the budget.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I hope that the Minister of Finance will answer the question, why, if he is against these Special Warrants, does he allow a Special Warrant for this particular office?

Mr. Manness: Of course, the member there, he does not even know it, but the factual information he uses is correct. His argument is wrong, because you see that is the year end. That is the adjusted.

When we asked Executive Council for additional spending in a certain line, it does not mean that the whole department ultimately does not come in for less. It means in that special line and every department, many of the larger departments have several votes, but in that one vote, for instance, in Natural Resources, in Parks line, we are short of money. The department runs out of money. They

cannot just take the transfer, take it out of the Water Drainage there and move it over to the Parks. They cannot do it.

So in that one vote, they have to come to Executive Council by the laws of The Financial Administration Act and seek support to spend beyond that.

Now the whole department, once the books are closed, still may have a surplus lapse of \$2 million to \$3 million. So the member does not even know of what he speaks, except he has the final year-end numbers there. I say to him, as I have said many times in Public Accounts, and that is where this question should be addressed, this is a Public Accounts.

* (1640)

What Bill 67 is attempting to do is seek the support of the Legislature for four months' spending out of the next 12—nothing to do. I can tell the member, during the next four months we are not going to be going to cabinet for Special Warrants. That is why we are bringing the interim supply bill here. So he is completely off-base, completely off-base.

An Honourable Member: In 10 months—

Mr. Manness: But I am not talking about 10 months. Bill 67, Committee of the Whole, is directed towards four months, at which time there will not be a requirement for any Special Warrants.

Now, to make his point for him because he has done such a miserable job of making his own point, what I have said often, that, once the Public Accounts have reported, '90-91 in that case, indeed, if a department has been over its global expenditure—like Executive Council, to use his number—the minister responsible and/or, more importantly maybe, the deputy, should come before Public Accounts and explain the overage.

An Honourable Member: You do not understand.

Mr. Manness: That member, over there, for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is saying that I do not understand, but he understands, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, he understands everything. Go ahead.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Finance, I think he is missing out on a few points here. I am comparing budget to budget. I do not know how the Minister of Finance can try to explain to this House that these questions might be more appropriate in Public Accounts, but I am not even going to try to

speculate as to why he can possibly even think of something of that nature.

But what I want to talk about, Mr. Deputy Chairperson—

An Honourable Member: Because he does not want to answer the question.

Mr. Lamoureux: —because he does not want to answer the question, as one member has suggested, and that could be the case.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to suggest to you that the Minister of Finance is being somewhat deceptive. Really and truly, what the Minister of Finance has done, on several cases, is—where it would be sensitive, where it is politically sensitive to say, well, we are not going to be allocating out that much this year, and then the following, on the actual, after the budget has been passed through Order-in-Council and Special Warrant, increase that amount.

Where it is politically sensitive to do the reverse, they in fact do it, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. When we look at the Department of Labour, we see in the Department of Labour—and this is budget over budget, the allocated amount, this is support staff for Labour—allocated amount was 383 from last year's budget for the minister. This year, in the actual, it was 394, another increase.

Now he will go into his rant and rave and he will say that, well, this is the department, it is a resolution, and we can do this and that and this, and the member for Inkster does not understand. Well, let us go a bit further down, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. Then you go to labour programming, and what happens there? You find that the allocated amount was \$15.149 million. The actual amount spent was \$14.812 million.

What the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) are doing is, the areas in which they want to say, and stand up in the Chamber and say, we are giving an increase to this particular line by such and such a percent, is not necessarily true, because the actual amount that is spent far too often is a lot less than what has been allocated. The minister, when that is pointed out to him, stands up and he says, well, we cannot spend to the dollar.

Well, we know he cannot spend to the dollar, but he can actually exceed a line. Where it is convenient for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and his ministers to say, we are allocating this amount of money out—the programs, the things

that actually have the impact on the individuals—the Minister of Finance and his colleagues are in fact overestimating in order to say that they are giving the big substantial increases, when year over year, it is not happening that way.

What I would do to the Minister of Finance is refer him to the Department of Health. Something that comes up all of the time is the hospital allocation, and last year we allocated out, it was \$915.926 million. That was last year's allocation. This year, the actual amount spent was \$892.463 million. That is a substantial difference. This is a program that has an impact and is in the government's best interest, because the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) will stand up every time someone asks the question in this Chamber and say, well, look how much of an increase we are giving to the Department of Health. Look how much of an increase.

Year after year, they stand up and they say, we are giving such and such an increase to the Department of Health, such and such an increase to Family Services, and they say those are our priority areas, but they consistently underspend in those areas. Then they say, well, we consistently underspend because we cannot spend to the dollar. Well, that applies where the government wants it to apply.

Where they do not want it to apply, they issue out the Special Warrants. As I pointed out in the Premier's Office, while at the same time they told the civil servants in the province of Manitoba, you get zero, and because we want to show as a government that we are being responsible, we are taking a cut. When you compare it to the actual amount spent, it still is a cut, I understand, but it is an increase in terms of what was actually allocated out.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not believe that the government, when it stands up in Question Period and talks about its commitment to Family Services, to health care is really as sincere as they try to make it out to be, because they consistently underspend. When they consistently underspend, they criticize the opposition parties for saying, well, why do you not spend? If they consistently underspend, why do they not allocate what they really and truly believe is going to be spent? Why can they not say that this how much money we are going to be spending, and then, if necessary, they can do like they do for the

ministerial offices and issue a Special Warrant requesting additional monies?

Ideally, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) himself has pointed out with his first response, we would not like to see any Special Warrants. We do not want to see any Special Warrants, ideally. The Minister of Finance, from his seat says, hah. Well, the Minister of Finance is the one that has been issuing these Special Warrants, and he should be reviewing the Special Warrants that he has been issuing out and compare them to the support staff and so forth.

The Minister of Finance, I see he wants to comment on it. I will wait with bated breath, and see what he has to say this time to try to justify his budget.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is a fool. He is a fool, and I will tell you why. Members opposite in the Liberal Party must wonder why the NDP do not take their argument, the principle of their argument, and use it against us.

The reason they do not is because the NDP have been in government, and they know when you come down to asking the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) when he comes before us with a GRIP program, when you ask him the question: What is the enrollment going to be? How many farmers are going to take advantage of it? He will say, geez, I do not know for sure.

Is it going to be 70, is it going to be 80? I said, you have to tell us, because we have to print a number, and he will say, well, gee. This puts a tremendous amount of pressure on that minister. He does not want to be too low, and he does not want to be too high. If it is too high, he knows I am going to have something to say. So the Minister of Agriculture says, well, 75 percent enrollment in GRIP, and we print that, 75 percent.

The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) comes in before Estimates, and we say, okay, what is the volume take-up going to be in the area of social assistance? The prices are fine; we fixed the price side; and the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) knows this. We can fix the price side because we are the ones that set the price. But what about the volume increase? We will say to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), and he will say: Well, geez, you know, what is the economy going to do?

Is the increase on the volume up-take—is it 10 percent, is it 20 percent in this context, or is it 30 percent? I will tell the member if he wants to listen—he probably does not. If he wants to listen, the variation is between a 10 percent volume and a 30 percent volume—is how many millions of dollars? Many, \$5 million, \$10 million.

We come to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). We know what we are going to do with the fee schedule of the MMA. We say, well what about the volume increase? The population is stable, what is the volume turnover going to be, all of us going to see doctors? Is it 1 percent, is it 2 percent, or is it 3 percent, or is it 4 percent? He says, I do not know. What are the doctors going to do?

Yet, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in all of these volume decisions, in all of them, what the difference can be is \$200 million-plus. Yet that member has got the gall for criticizing us because we are out 1.25 percent. We build it into the lapse number, and we call it \$70 million.

We are not perfect. I guess he would be perfect if he were in our role, and he could budget right to the dollar. I cannot do it, but I guess he could. Now, if he wants to criticize us, and say, well, then do not say your programs are going to go up by 6.8 percent, that already say that they are going to go up 1 percent less, to already take into account the lapse.

Well, that is fair criticism. What he is saying is, do not sell all of your programming in government as a 4 percent increase if indeed you think you are going to be lapsing 1 percent. Sell it as a 3 percent increase. That is a fair statement. But do not let him stand there and criticize us for, within a \$5.4 billion budget, being out 1.25 percent.

* (1650)

Only an idiot who has never been in government would say that, because the NDP will not. They know you cannot budget within 1.25 percent. Maybe the member opposite in his household can, and I can tell the member, he does not have to take my word for it, ask the Auditor.

Ask the Auditor if we are fooling around with numbers, and ask him whether or not we are deliberately in one area overbudgeting and others underbudgeting. He will see consistency year after year after year in all the departments, because that is one area you do not fool around with, because if you do the credit-rating agents, who know a heck of a lot more than that member about the books, all of

a sudden would frown on your accounting practices. I do not care who you are, you do not screw around with the numbers as you are preparing your budget. If you do, you ultimately get trapped, and you get caught and you pay a tremendous price.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before I give the floor up to members, I would like to suggest that the committee temporarily interrupt its proceedings so that Mr. Speaker may resume the Chair, so that we can determine whether there is unanimous consent of the House to waive private members' hour. If there is, the Committee of the Whole can immediately resume sitting to continue considering the matter now before it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to suggest that the committee temporarily interrupt its proceedings so that Mr. Speaker may resume the Chair, so that we can determine whether there is unanimous consent of the House to waive private members' hour. If there is, the Committee of the Whole can immediately resume sitting to continue considering the matter before us. Agreed? Agreed.

IN SESSION

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 67—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, let me start off, because the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) said some very strong words, and it is a good thing I have such thick skin, I must say. I hope the Minister of Finance has thick skin too. I would ask the Minister of Finance, because only an idiot, if I can quote the Minister of Finance, only an idiot would believe that you need to have Special Warrants all the time for the number of times that this Minister of Finance has issued for Special Warrants to increase ministerial support staff. The ministerial support staff is something that is fixed through each minister. You should have an idea. You should know in terms of how many people you have and how many people you are going to have—

An Honourable Member: Now you are talking history.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is not talking two things. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would like to take it on the one side. He is being selective, and I will choose to be selective too. The Minister of Finance used a Special Warrant in order to increase ministerial support staff, but tries to say that the government only uses Special Warrants when it is an absolute must.

You know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think that the Minister of Finance is doing a disservice by saying that the different programs, the different initiatives, the different offices, all of which at some point in time might require a Special Warrant. He made reference to the program with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). Well there are things that you just cannot call, and there is a need to have a Special Warrant. One does not question that. What I question is in terms of the selectiveness of this government in issuing Special Warrants for some of its departments.

I will ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), just in case he might have the information offhand, but if he does not, if he could return to the House and give a direct answer as to how many Special Warrants were issued for ministerial staff and their Executive Support staff. How many Special Warrants were given for the number of the departments in Executive Support staff?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I cannot answer the question. Again, that is a Public Accounts. That is post-history. He is asking us to comment in respect to a completed fiscal year, '90-91 and/or '91-92.

I do tell him that it does happen from time to time, and it usually happens as a result of smaller departments that have limited salary accounts within their administration, within their executive branches and indeed where a special consulting contract is done or there is reason to bring in somebody for a short period of time to undertake a special project. That is well known.

I mean, if you had loosey-goosey rules where you could now go into the salary account all the way down the branch or somewhere within the department, the member would never see it, but we do not allow for that. Thank goodness we do not. I tell him, it happens very, very infrequently, but there is always a good reason for the odd time it does happen.

Mr. Lamoureux: Will the Minister of Finance make a commitment to the House to bring back the number of Special Warrants issued for the Executive Support staff of the government's ministers?

Mr. Manness: All departments? Well, sure, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I have no problem with that, and I will undertake to try and have it. I certainly will not have it tomorrow.

Mr. Lamoureux: Another thing that I had made reference to the Minister of Finance in my response to the budget was in regard to what we felt was an excellent initiative, and it was an initiative that was first used by Sterling Lyon.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) no doubt will support this initiative now as he did back then, no doubt, but the then Premier Sterling Lyon, in order to try and get the economy going, what he did was, he reduced the provincial sales tax for a short period of time.

I am wondering if the Minister of Finance can make some sort of a commitment or explain to the Chamber why he would oppose reducing the provincial sales tax, as is being suggested from the Liberal Party, from 7 percent to 4 percent for a period of three months in order to try to get individual Manitobans buying in Manitoba, hopefully creating more jobs for Manitobans?

Mr. Manness: I have been with Liberal Finance ministers from across Canada the last two days. Not one of them saw the wisdom of doing something akin to what the member says. I can tell you why. This recession—consumers are not going to bring this recession out of its present difficulty on their own. As I said in my budget speech, it is going to take a combination of, first of all, the export markets that take our goods and services, they are going to have to come out of their recession, and then our consumers kicking in.

* (1700)

The member seems to suggest that we can do it the other way around. Our consumers kicking in will in itself provide the stimulus, the spark, needed to get out of this recession. I say to him, that is foolhardy, you might have an uptake for a short period of time, but then you could have a sudden call that will destroy the fragility of whatever you have been able to build over two or three months.

It is too risky in the shortfall. I mean the situation now is ever so much different than it was in the Lyon years of '77-81.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Deputy Chairperson of Committees): The Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 67, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992 (Loi de 1992 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), and directs me to report the 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.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 16—The Health Care Directives Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) Bill 16, The Health Care Directives Act; Loi sur les directives en matière de soins de santé, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 18—The Franchises Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill 18, The Franchises Act; Loi sur les concessions, standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 25—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), Bill 25, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 27—The Business Practices Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), Bill 27, The Business Practices Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques commerciales, standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 31—The Municipal Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), Bill 31, The Municipal Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 50—The Beverage Container Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition Party

(Mrs. Carstairs), Bill 50, The Beverage Container Act; Loi sur les contenants de boisson, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I would like to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 50. It is a very important bill; at least, Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal Party believe it is a very important bill in that it warrants to have individuals stand up and speak to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that is long overdue. The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) has stood up in Question Period and has asked questions regarding what the government is doing in terms of trying to get bottles collected so that we are not seeing them lying in our ditches and all over the province.

It is not the first time that I have had an opportunity to speak on this bill. In fact, it is a bill that has been introduced previously by the Liberal Party, and, as right now, the government decided to ignore the bill.

Well, I am concerned because I believe that the private members' bills are important. There is a lot of work that is put into private members' bills. This bill is something that, as I said, has come up before. The government chose not to do anything with it. It has been on the Order Paper now for a while, Mr. Speaker, as a number of the bills that you previously called.

I know full well what the Liberal Party's position is on this bill, but, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the government's position is on this bill. What the government—

An Honourable Member: Sit down and we will tell you.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) says, sit down and I will tell you. Mr. Speaker, I am going to be expecting, as the government expects us to comment on their bills, the government to start standing up and speaking on our bills, because the Deputy Premier himself has said, sit down, allow us to comment, and we will comment. So—

An Honourable Member: I did not say that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Okay, not necessarily like that—he did imply, the Deputy Premier implied that I should sit down and then he might stand up and speak to it. That might be a bit fairer an assessment of it.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will go a long way in terms of recycling. I think it is imperative upon the government to start getting on the record as to what they think about this bill, to tell us, in particular the sponsor, the Leader of the Liberal Party, as to why they support or why they do not support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the bill does a lot of good things, and Manitoba will be a lot cleaner province if this bill was in fact adopted, a lot cleaner province. I think there will be many indirect benefits. I am sure that if the MLAs of this Chamber canvassed their constituents, they would find that there is a lot of support for this bill. People want to recycle. They want bottles to be collected and returned so they do not see them in the parks, they do not see them, as I say, in the ditches, on the highways, they do not see them throughout the province of Manitoba.

This bill came up through a tour that we had in northern Manitoba where we had heard, or at least I had heard, some presentations from an interested group of individuals who felt that this is the type of bill that they would like to see. So this bill actually comes from the people of the province of Manitoba, or some members of the public of Manitoba at the very least, and warrants some attention from the government.

This bill will encourage environmentally sound management of beverage containers throughout the province. It is really an antilitter measure that will reduce the recent proliferation of beverage containers, particularly in rural areas. Although steps have been taken in recent years to manage waste better, a great deal of work remains. **Mr. Speaker,** this bill will go a long way in advancing that cause, and I would like to see the government express what they feel on this particular bill, as I do for other bills.

I had the opportunity to discuss some of the bills, or make reference to the bills to the deputy government House leader (**Mr. Praznik**), and had made reference to him just a couple of days ago that we would like to see the government start standing up and speaking to our bills, much in the same fashion as we speak to the government bills.

So, having said that, I am going to sit down in hopes that the government will start standing and speaking on bills, as we give them that courtesy, because we feel the government legislation is important, that we are obligated to comment on, and put our position on the record for those bills.

But equally important is the effort that is put in from opposition members—and in fact, some backbenchers—into the bills that they bring forward to this House. Such is the bill that we now have before us, and I would ask the government to give us the same courtesy, and to speak on the bills.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (**Mr. Helwer**).

Bill 51—The Health Services Insurance Amendment

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (**Mr. Cheema**), Bill 51, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (**Mr. Helwer**).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter may remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Leave is denied.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I appreciate the opportunity to take a few minutes and speak on this bill. I really think our Minister of Health (**Mr. Orchard**) has done an excellent job in Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Helwer: That is right.

I am really pleased that in the Interlake area, or the area that I serve of Manitoba, the portion of the Interlake area, the Gimli constituency, we have an excellent health care system. As a matter of fact, we will be turning the sod this coming summer for a new hospital in Stonewall. I am glad the former—

An Honourable Member: Tell us a little about Stonewall and the surrounding area.

Mr. Helwer: Well, I am just telling you a little about the new hospital they are going to build there.

Actually, the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) got it going there, you see. So you should give him a little—[interjection] Oh, yes. Actually, the old hospital there in Stonewall, it is in such poor shape that the windows are almost ready to fall out. The casings around the window are rotten in the old facility so it is—

An Honourable Member: Well, they did not do anything.

Mr. Helwer: No, the former government just let the thing go to ruin, actually. They did not even give the hospital district there enough money to keep it in decent repair. I think they spent it all in Dauphin and some of the other districts. But the health care system under our present minister is in good condition. We have a good system in Manitoba.

I think we can honestly say that we have one of the best systems in Canada.

An Honourable Member: What about Saskatchewan?

Mr. Helwer: Oh, I do not know much about Saskatchewan, really. But in Manitoba, just getting back to the Stonewall situation again, there we will be building a new 15-bed hospital to replace the old one, plus building a new 20-bed personal care home to replace the other facility there, also, then remodeling the present 20-bed personal care home.

* (1710)

I should also talk a little bit about the hospital and the health care system in Gimli. There is an area where, because of the population growth of the community from probably 3,000 residents to about 20,000 residents in the summer, that hospital is taxed to the limit when we have all the tourists and all the campers and the cottagers when they come to Gimli. So it puts unfair pressure onto the health care system there.

They also should be commended for the job they do with their ambulance at Gimli, because they are setting an example for the rest of Manitoba as to how an ambulance service should be run actually. They have two ambulances with three full-time staff who man the ambulance. During the winter they are not very busy, of course, but in the summer when the population of the area grows by seven times, it puts unfair pressure on the ambulances. It is very difficult for them to handle with their present staff, but they do have an excellent training program for their ambulance drivers. They are going to be setting an example for the rest of Manitoba.

We have also recommended to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Department of Health that we use Gimli as a training centre for ambulance drivers from all over Manitoba because of the expertise that the ambulance attendants have and the supervisor of the ambulance has, and because they have an area out at the industrial park where they can train drivers. The area is being used for that already, so there is an area there that is an excellent place for training drivers.

I also want to talk about the centralization that has taken place in the health care system itself in the Interlake area. As an example, Stonewall, Selkirk, Gimli, Teulon and Arborg, these are the main centres in the Interlake area, and each one is really specializing in a certain area. This will give a better coverage for all the people in the Interlake area and also will save some money for the government of Manitoba, in that we do not have to provide those kinds of services and we can operate more efficiently throughout the whole district.

Mr. Speaker, I served for about 10 years on a hospital board and realize the problems of hospital boards and the difficulty they have in balancing their budgets, especially when their budgets are based on an occupancy rate of the former year. They have a difficult time in balancing their budgets.

I know that the Manitoba hospital services commission works very hard to try to satisfy these rural facilities and make sure that they do have proper staff on at different times of the day and night so that they can serve the people of the area properly.

Also, the boards of these facilities work very hard. They have to deal with staff and finances of a facility, and sometimes it is difficult for the people on these hospital boards who are ordinary citizens just like everyone else around you, you and I. They have to bring in some expertise sometimes to be able to deal with these different groups such as the Nurses' Union, the MGEA, or the CUPE and the different unions that are usually involved in the staff of a facility.

An Honourable Member: Keep it up, Ed.

Mr. Helwer: No problem. [interjection] That is good if we have got enough.

An Honourable Member: Tell us about the last time you were in the hospital.

Mr. Helwer: I have never been in the hospital. I am healthy and there is no need for hospitals really, because I do not smoke or do not—[interjection]

No, but I just want to say that I think our health care system is now doing a better job on working on the prevention of illnesses, and I think that is the proper place to work on, that is the proper thing to do, to spend our money on the prevention rather than the cure. Certainly we have done an excellent job on this.

Mr. Speaker, so with that, I will conclude my remarks on this bill at this time.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 54—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill 54, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi sur la protection du consommateur, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Are we proceeding with Bill 36? No, okay.

Bill 55—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Are we proceeding with Bill 55? Okay. Bill 55, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that Bill 55, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of the House.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Reid: This is a very important bill, I believe, because it will afford protection for those members of our society that currently provide us with firefighting protection. It is something that is not currently allowed under the legislation that is in place in this province right now, The Workers Compensation Act.

We did have that particular legislation that was in place. It was actually a regulation, itself, that afforded firefighters that protection, the firefighters throughout our province. We have seen since that time, of course, the challenging of that regulation through the court systems, where the honourable Justice Lyon struck down that regulation and said that it should be part of the legislation of The Workers Compensation Act itself, if there was to be specific referral to protection for the firefighters of our province.

* (1720)

Since that time, there have been several bills introduced by the previous critic for Workers Compensation, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), on this topic. We have seen time after time after time that this government refuses to act on this particular piece of legislation. I know in my discussions with the firefighters of this province—and we have had many discussions with them—that they realize and recognize the importance of this legislation and what it means to their members throughout the province, not only those that are employed full time in the firefighting forces in communities like Brandon, and Winnipeg, and Thompson, and other communities, but those that are in volunteer firefighting forces throughout the province as well.

They all play a very important role in protecting the safety, the lives and the health of the residents, and the property of the residents, and the property of Manitoba. When that regulation was struck down, I believe it was in 1989, it put firefighters in this province at a distinct disadvantage. I refer specifically to the piece of legislation that we had going through this House in the last session, specifically Bill 59. In Bill 59, it very clearly states in that bill that the ordinary diseases of life are noncompensable.

We find, Mr. Speaker, that the diseases quite often and most often affecting the firefighters in our various communities are those ordinary diseases of

life. I am talking about cancer of the liver, and cancer of the lungs, brain dysfunction, kidney and liver dysfunctions, and other diseases. These are specifically excluded from compensation; therefore, we find those that put their own lives or health and safety at risk in defense of other members of our society are not being protected by what would be considered to be fair and reasonable means of protection.

This bill will go a long way toward ensuring that firefighters receive the protection to which they are entitled. We see quite often, and I will use examples, these blazing infernos on our television sets when we watch our news in the evening after a long day at the Legislature.

An Honourable Member: I thought I saw one when you were on last night.

Mr. Reid: That was quite a fire storm, I must admit.

An Honourable Member: That was Albert, who was on fire.

Mr. Reid: It was the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) who was on fire, there is no doubt about that.

Mr. Speaker, I refer specifically to a fire that I am sure we will all remember and that is the fire in Quebec, where the warehouse went up in flames, the St. Basile le Grand fire, I believe it was, where PCBs were stored in that site. There was also the tire fire in southern Ontario that created a lot of difficulties. We had the solvent plant explosion in St. Boniface, and I remember very clearly driving by that area and seeing the huge fireball and the cloud of smoke that was travelling over the surrounding community, of the chemicals that were being burned and the by-products that were being deposited upon the communities.

I think about those firefighters going into those situations to look after the interests of society, to suppress that fire, to control and retain as much property as possible that would be left over after the fire. These firefighters do it day in and day out as part of their normal duties. I think the least we can do for them, Mr. Speaker, is to take the necessary steps to protect their lives and their safety, not only themselves, because it is their families, as well, who are going to be impacted by any diseases that they might incur as a result of their occupation.

I am quite fortunate, I admit, that in my neighbourhood I have three firefighters as neighbours, so we have regular discussions on the

type of lives that firefighters lead and the circumstances that they must encounter as part of their normal job and duties. I am quite concerned. Even in my own neighbourhood last summer we had a grass fire that was attended to by the firefighting forces of the City of Winnipeg—[interjection]

For the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) information, it was the Domtar site that I unfortunately happened to live close to, and that all the neighbours in that surrounding area are very worried about.

I remember very clearly the firefighters going to fight that particular fire and noticing very clearly that there were unusual coloured flames coming out of that particular fire, and I am talking green and blues, not the normal grass fire colour that you would see in a yellow-type flame. So it is very obvious that there were chemicals involved here, and yet I see firefighters going into that particular fire situation without utilizing the necessary proper respiratory equipment and protection equipment that they would normally have and use in situations like that.

I had to question the decision of those who are in charge of situations like that, where they do not enforce the proper procedures of the members that are fighting those fires, so that they do utilize the proper equipment. In my discussions with firefighters throughout my community, that reside in my community, it used to be a standard macho image that firefighters had that if you cannot go into a fire and take a little bit of smoke you are not a true firefighter. Well, that image is slowly changing, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing the changeover in generations of the firefighters in our province who are slowly realizing, as are many other members of our society, that it is necessary for them to wear the proper respiratory equipment, whether it be the 30-minute or the one-hour self-contained breathing apparatus, so that when they go into burning buildings they are not putting themselves at risk.

Studies have shown, Mr. Speaker, that it is not only the firefighters themselves that are being placed at risk, but it is also their families that are being placed at risk by failure to utilize proper protection and to give firefighters that necessary support. It has been clearly shown in studies of animals and of those who are employed in the firefighting forces that birth defects can result from either maternal or paternal exposure to toxins. Exposure of the male of the species to even small

doses of toxins can produce defects in offspring without affecting the fertility of the male.

Firefighters as a regular course of their job ingest these toxins, Mr. Speaker, whether it be through the lungs or chemicals on their skin or in some other fashion, Mr. Speaker.

These can be deposited in the different organs of the body and can, over a period of time, create difficulties by way of the normal diseases of life, the things that we think would occur in natural cases, but since the firefighters are exposed to that, their risk is greatly increased.

I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that one of the main opponents to this particular piece of legislation when it was in regulation form, and I suspect would still be in opposition to this type of legislation, would be the City of Winnipeg. I note, and I quote from a particular document on the City of Winnipeg stationery. It states that since 1966, the last full year Manitoba Regulation 24/7 was in operation, the city has experienced a decrease in cost equal to \$2 million each year.

Now, it is unfortunate that a government would see only the dollar value on how it is going to impact upon the bottom line, and they do not realize the human consequences that are involved in the decisions that they are making. They are only worried about the dollars here and they are not concerned about the health, the safety and the well-being of those that are defending our lives and our property in our communities around the province. For the information of the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), the document is here for him to view if he wishes to come over and read it.

The City of Winnipeg goes so far as to say that the introduction of the proposed amendment at that time to the Workers Compensation Act, they would allow firefighters this protection, is a regressive step, as the City of Winnipeg calls it, which will complicate the issue of fair treatment for all workers concerning the compensability of occupational diseases.

Now, studies have shown, and the documentation is readily available on City of Winnipeg records for the members opposite that wish to have a copy of this, that when I talked a few moments ago about Bill 59 eliminating the opportunities for any of the normal diseases of life to be included for compensation for these firefighters and their families, this excludes them because they have a

higher risk or a higher incident rate of heart disease, lung difficulties, lung cancer. That, I think, should be included in The Compensation Act as special considerations for those that are involved in firefighting in our province.

* (1730)

I will read you an example of an individual in firefighting, and it was quite a large blaze that involved quite a number of firefighters attending the scene of this blaze, and this particular firefighter was the fourth person to die of cancer after battling this chemical blaze three years before. So the effects of going into hazardous situations while fighting fires do not rear their ugly head during that particular firefighting activity or even in the few months that follow, but it is in time down the road that these diseases start to occur.

This particular individual, a 57-year-old veteran of the force was among several firefighters and police officers who responded to the fire, to that chemical fire at that particular plant. It goes on to say that in addition to the four men who died as a result of fighting that fire, 13 others who responded to the fire have been afflicted with various ailments including one case of skin cancer, and one of Parkinson's disease. Other problems reported include kidney and liver dysfunctions, all as a result of one fire.

So I think there are enough examples, and there have been enough studies to show that firefighters put themselves in harm's way to protect our interests in society. I think it is the least we can do is to defend their interests and to afford them and their families the protection that they should be entitled to.

That is why we have brought forward this Bill 55 that will hopefully have the support of the government members opposite, and then we can see it go forward and have it included in The Workers Compensation Act.

This government, I believe, only views this legislation from the bottom line. They only talk and are only worried about the bottom line consequences for the budget applications of the particular jurisdictions involved. I do not think that it should be considered solely on that aspect.

One other article that I have, Mr. Speaker, spells out quite clearly studies that have been done. When we used to keep much more involved records on the occupations of the parents of children who are born in our various facilities throughout the

province, the children of firefighters seemed to be more susceptible to congenital heart anomalies, especially septal defects. These are probably due to their father's exposure to inhaled or absorbed toxins, reports a team from the University of British Columbia.

There was a study that was done of some 22,000 B.C. children who were born with defects. It was broken down into two categories when they used to keep records on the occupations of the parents who were involved. Of the two categories, Mr. Speaker, there were 33 defects of the infants who were born with difficulties at birth. The first examined the ratio of firefighters to all other paternal occupations and the second identified the offspring of police officers. Both are similar in their education, their physical build, their fitness and their socioeconomic status and both attend fire scenes. Yet we see a higher incidence of the normal or ordinary diseases of life in these two particular occupations than we would normally see through the other areas of our community, and how these diseases would impact other members of our society.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I hope that I can have the support of other members of this Legislature for this very, very important piece of legislation. It is very important to the members of our community, because it provides us with the protection that these firefighters so unselfishly go forward into burning buildings that so many of us leave in such a hurry and put their lives at risk, and yet we do not afford them the protection to which I think they are entitled. Therefore, I ask the members of this House to support this particular piece of legislation to give those firefighters that protection.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): I welcome this opportunity to be able to speak on Bill 55, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act. This will only restore what the court had nullified in 1989 when the firefighters were protected by means of regulation which was passed by the NDP government in 1977.

Right now the firefighters are left without any protection in a very risky and dangerous job that involves the protection not only of property, but most importantly of the lives of people in the community. In a sense the services of a firefighter is a kind of public goods. Public goods are those goods that are not divisible into discrete units that can be

consumed individually by one person to the exclusion of all other persons. It is not that way as in the case of private goods or services. The nature of public goods is such that a consumption by one member of society does not necessarily exclude the other members of the society from using the same service or the same output without any extra cost, because it involves what the economists call externalities, that is to say side effects that could either be beneficial to third parties, to people who are not involved in the transaction itself.

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

If I sell a private good or service, then I impart some value to him and he pays me a value and he can exclude all the other members of the world in enjoying what he had bought from me, because it is a private good or service, but firefighting is a public good, it is like national defence, it is like justice. You cannot give it to one and deny it to any others. It must be given to everybody, and it cannot be excludable in the sense that you can exclude other people from consuming it. It does not cost anymore by letting the other people enjoy it. In a sense, the firefighters in our society are public servants in the sense that they are rendering public service to the rest of the members of the community, and in doing so they are doing it at the risk of their life and limb. Therefore the kind of service that they are doing to society is a very important type of service because the cost of it involves their very lives.

Any kind of hazardous occupation like that of miners or firefighters or policemen and the like, which involves the risk of death or the risk of being disabled for life, is a very dangerous kind of job that calls for some kind of extra protection, and yet the paradoxical thing is that, instead of us giving special protection to these people, we are denying the protection that we grant to a normal worker, to an ordinary worker.

What does it profit a man even if he gains the whole world and he loses his life? What valuation shall we place upon the life of a human being if he loses his life in defending and protecting our property and our lives against the risk of fire? What is it worth to us? There are many attempts in quantifying the value of human life. What does it cost to give up one's life?

Opposed to this is what they call the theory of human capital. What they do in order to quantify the monetary value of human life is that they look at your

earnings, your capacity to earn, and they project it to your lifetime, and they capitalize whatever it is that you can earn throughout all your lifetime and that capitalization is the value of your life. The only problem about this kind of quantification is that people who have no ability to earn, by definition, will have no value in their lives. So that is not exactly a perfect way of quantifying the monetary value of human life, but that is one approach: to measure your earning capacity, year after year, project it to your lifetime and then capitalize it as a single amount and that is the value of your life. That is the human capital approach to valuation of human life.

* (1740)

Another way is what they call the willingness-to-pay approach. How much are you going to pay, if you have so many resources at your command in order to protect your life, to reduce the risk of danger to your life? That is the rationale behind insurance protection. You pay a certain amount of premium in order to reduce the risk of your life, and whatever it is, you are willing to pay.

If you are a millionaire or a billionaire, maybe you will pay everything that is within your command in order to protect your life. Again, it varies from person to person. This kind of measurement is too subjective to be applied in a normal kind of valuation of how much it costs to pay for the life of a person.

Another way to do this, of course, is by looking at the behavior and actual facts in the industry, what they call behavior of the labour market data, in relation to the cost of the salary they pay with respect to the risk involved in the occupation of the job. For example, you notice that there are certain pay scales that are appropriate to certain types of occupations that are too hazardous or too risky. Maybe spies who risk their lives every day are paid so much. Miners who go underground, deep into the bowels of the Earth to dig resources, probably deserve some kind of extra pay. People who go out in the North on the DEW line, in the cold area in Siberia, wherever, probably deserve some kind of extra compensation for the extra hazard and risk of their occupation.

Firemen, without leaving the place of the community, had, of course, to incur in the exercise of their occupation extra risk that could leave them deformed, could leave them disabled, could even kill them in the course of their employment. Yet, when it comes to the compensating of these unfortunate

accidents in the course of their occupation, lawyers will have to debate the issue of whether or not the death or accident took place in the course of doing one's own occupation or not.

Indeed, if we have to adopt any kind of rule or any kind of standard in order to compensate people who suffer, to assure that people who are victims of accidents in the performance of their tasks, they should be compensated, regardless of assumption whatsoever, by conclusively assuming that the accident had taken place in the course of their work employment. By permitting this nice legal distinction of whether or not the accidents take place while doing one's job or not, then they delay the compensating of those unfortunate victims of accidents.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Even some of the allocated money intended for the victim had to go to those lawyers, who have to argue the issue and to appeal the issue and to prolong the issue. In the ultimate analysis, the victim will get less and less the longer the issue is dragged on in the court system.

In other societies, for example, in New Zealand, if you happen to get into an unavoidable accident, there is a general, overall insurance protection, and you do not have to argue the legal issue of whether the accident happened in the course of employment or not. They only have an administrative remedy. All you need to do is present to an administrative official the facts of the case, and they will compensate you right then and there without any legal issue of whether it took place in the course of employment or not. This is a simpler system that works for the betterment of all the members of our community.

On the other hand, because of the influence of the legal profession in our society, they argue a case from the very lowest court up to the highest court. In the course of all these arguments, thousands and thousands of dollars may be involved, and in the long run who gets the money? Those who are defending and arguing the niceties in legal issues of whether the accident happened in the course of employment or not.

The fact of the matter is that the accident happened. The fact of the matter is that somebody was harmed. The fact of the matter is that somebody got injured. The fact of the matter is, that

person, the victim, must be compensated by society if it is not due to his fault.

I think this is a good way to broaden the base in order to compensate victims of unfortunate accidents, particularly people whose occupation requires that they keep their security of home, they keep the security of their job, risk their life for the sake of the protection of the life and property of the other members of the community.

Mr. Speaker, there are many ways of serving humanity, but by doing an occupation where the risk is highest for the sake of the security of the property and lives of others, that is the highest form of service anyone can render. What rationalization then can we conjure in order to justify excluding these people from the protection of The Workers Compensation Act?

What logic or illogic can we invoke in order to deny these people the protection that they deserve? None that I can see, unless of course we would like to make life so difficult for people whose only occupation is the protection of our lives and property.

Mr. Speaker, if we love ourselves, if we love our community, if we love the rest of our members in our society, then we must not hesitate to give the necessary recognition for the dignity of the service that they are rendering to our society and to ourselves and by extending to them the protection that they need in the performance of their task, in the performance of their job.

It has been stated, and I quote, and I end with this quotation: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man may lay down his life for his friends."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on the proposed amendment by my colleague the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Mr. Speaker, this amendment, unfortunately, is before the House because of a sad sequence of events which I guess underscore the lack of commitment of the government in particular to a fair and equitable Workers Compensation Act that does as was originally intended, and that is protect the financial integrity of injured workers in this province, that recognizes that injured workers contribute willingly, make sacrifices willingly, with the understanding that the Workers Compensation system is going to recompense them and their

families in a fair way should they be injured on the job.

I think, unfortunately, we have seen this government renege on that promise. I remind members of the Chamber that when the Workers Compensation system was established, it was established with, I guess, a compromise on both sides. The compromise was this: Workers gave up the right to sue employers for negligence, for criminal negligence, for failing in some respects to protect the interests of the worker at the job site.

At the time that was deemed a fair trade, and the trade would be that when a worker was injured on the job he could apply through the Workers Compensation system for benefits which would be paid to him until such time as he was able to go back to work.

The companies, the industry at the time believed that it was compromising because it had the right, of course, to deny responsibility for accidents. In some cases, no doubt using the legal system, justice was not served and companies could reduce their costs, at least have no ongoing operating costs, by attempting to deal with every civil case brought against them because of negligence and injury in the workplace, fight it out in court, hoping perhaps in many cases that injured workers would simply not have the financial resources to challenge the company's position.

* (1750)

So, Mr. Speaker, there was some sense that when the Workers Compensation system was introduced there was giving on both sides.

What has happened over the last number of years is, I believe, an undermining of that principle, and it is being done in many ways, and this is only one of them.

My colleague the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) I think outlined the scope of the problem. The fact of the matter is that we now know much more about the nature of job-related injuries and illness than we did 10 years ago and 20 years ago and so forth. Today we understand that injury on the job is not simply a broken leg or a broken arm or a broken eardrum or a damaged eardrum. Mr. Speaker, we now understand that work-related illness is much broader than that.

Part, of course, of that recognition is due to the fact that workplaces have introduced much more

subtle agents in the workplace that have caused damage, sometimes over a very long period of time.

Mr. Speaker, firefighters are a group who are exposed to a hazard that is both obvious on the one hand and subtle on the other. Everyone can recognize that when a fireman gets injured on the job, when he is attempting to chop a hole in the roof and falls off the roof, or when he is burnt by fire in a physical way trying to rescue someone from a burning building, those are obvious injuries. The Workers Compensation Board deals with firefighters in the normal course of events, handles those compensation claims the same way it would handle the compensation claim of any worker on any industrial site in the province of Manitoba.

We get into a more complicated area when we start to deal with the hazards of working in a workplace where there are unknown chemical agents being released into the air, when there are unknown effects of heat and smoke and agents in the air, and toxic chemicals, that do not have an immediate effect on an individual's health, but have a long-term degenerative effect on a person's health. That is what we are dealing with here, a recognition that firefighters are not like other workers. They do not work in workplaces that are like other workers.

I, in considering this bill, talked about, well, should firefighters be treated any different than short-order cooks? Short-order cooks stand over a hot grill, are exposed to gases and oil and grease and chemicals, no doubt, of one kind and another, but there are also rules that govern the health and safety of those workplaces. The stoves have to be hooded, there has to be air exchange, there is a recognition that short-order cooks are exposed to hazardous materials—smoke. They are protected by regulation.

Mr. Speaker, many other workers are exposed to hazardous chemicals. In the smelter in Flin Flon, for example, workers are exposed to particulate matter that may contain cadmium. Well, in workplaces where that is possible there are vented hoods to prevent or limit the exposure of workers to those chemicals.

Firefighters are different. Their workplace can have, by the nature of their work, no such safety systems in place. They charge into places where most of us would fear or dread to tread, so to speak.

Their workplace is by its very nature different from the workplace that other people are exposed to.

What does the scientific community say about the effects of firefighters in the course of their duty being exposed to these chemicals and these agents and these particular circumstances? Does the scientific community agree that this workplace is different? Does the scientific community agree that the impact of working in these kinds of situations have a long-term effect on the health and the safety and the security of these individuals?

Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. There are many, many, many studies which have identified the risk that firefighters face. I will just quote from one, The British Journal of Industrial Medicine, this is 1990, notes that respiratory mortality among firefighters is higher than would be expected in normal population, accounting for age and sex and so forth. It notes that the firefighters suffer chronic respiratory morbidity from their occupational exposures. It also goes on to say that this particular study has shown that firefighters are probably at increased risks for dying from nonmalignant respiratory diseases.

This increased risk may have been missed in previous studies because of the limitations of using general reference population. So it is not only malignant respiratory problems, but also nonmalignant respiratory diseases are shown to have a higher incidence in firefighters. A major study that was conducted in the early 1980s in Massachusetts came to the same conclusion.

I want to begin by reading the first paragraph of the summary of that study, and it said: Firefighting is a strenuous and often dangerous occupation. In addition to the obvious safety hazards, firefighters are exposed to a wide variety of toxic substances, some of which are known or suspected cancer-causing agents. There is some evidence from previous epidemiological studies that firefighters may be at increased risk of developing certain cancers.

Mr. Speaker, the big "c" word, something that everyone in this Chamber has had touch their lives in one way or another. I would expect that there is not a person in the Chamber who has not known someone, a friend or a relative or a family member who has contracted cancer, but for firefighters, as this study points out, this is an increased risk.

We are talking about a broad range of types of cancer. Melanomas—this particular study said that

firefighters had a statistically significant threefold excess of melanoma of skin cancer compared to a state-wide reference group, to a control group, three times the likelihood of contracting melanoma of the skin.

Bladder cancer—firefighters again had a statistically significant excess of bladder cancers compared to state-wide control groups. This excess is about twice what the control group would normally have expected to contract over their lifetime. So, we are talking about twice as many bladder cancers in firefighters.

Lymphoma—threefold increase over what might be expected from a control group. Other cancers—pancreatic and leukemia were also at increased levels. Although there was not the same statically significant relationship, the fact of the matter is that there were increased numbers of those kinds of cancers in firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, the studies could be read into the record ad nauseam. There is ample evidence for this Chamber to accept the fact that firefighters are at increased risk because of the nature of their work. The risk goes beyond cancer. The risk also goes to other kinds of illness, including heart attack, heart failure and heart disease.

The government, I believe, the members of the government certainly have at their disposal enough information to assure themselves that the amendment that is being proposed here—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) will have four minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Thursday, March 26, 1992

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