



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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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
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
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
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
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	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
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 5, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 14—The Personal Property Security and Consequential 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 14, The Personal Property Security and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant les sûretés relatives aux biens personnels et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the message from the Lieutenant-Governor.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 15—The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that Bill 15, The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Act; Loi sur la Commission de la boxe et de la lutte, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The minister has also tabled a message.

Bill 16—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 16, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), be introduced and that the same now be received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1005)

Bill 17—The Crown Lands Amendment Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 17, The Crown Lands Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les terres domaniales), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Apotex Inc.
Manitoba Plant Status**

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

Mr. Speaker, on April 27, 1992, the Premier stated that we are very happy to see Apotex moving ahead with a state-of-the-art, high-tech project. Commented Premier Filmon, while unveiling the artist's rendering of the new facilities, it will be very positive for Manitoba and western Canada.

We, too, were pleased with the announcement of the project in Manitoba and were very disappointed in the announcement of the cancellation or the delay of the plant in Manitoba. We were shocked to hear, a couple of weeks ago, and have confirmed yesterday, that Apotex is now planning a multimillion dollar expansion of its generic drug development in the province of Ontario.

Can the Premier explain to the people of Manitoba where Apotex is with the province of Manitoba? What went wrong in terms of Apotex having that

multimillion dollar plant expansion in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I, too, was surprised to hear the tenor of the news report. In checking into it this is not an announcement of a new expansion. This is one that has been constructed. In fact, what was announced was the ribbon cutting, so the investment commitment was made a couple of years ago and the official opening took place, or is taking place at the present time.

As the member knows full well, this government was very instrumental in attracting Apotex to Manitoba. They invested some \$9 million to this point in their foundation of their plant. That matter was put on hold as a result of the federal legislation on drug patents, legislation which we have consistently fought, in fact, had the ministers appear at the federal parliamentary committee on this matter. So we are as upset and continue to express that anger to the federal government on that issue, but this one was something that amounts to the announcement of a ribbon cutting and opening of a facility that has been under construction well prior to this legislation.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Premier stated that the announcement this week was the continuation of an investment announcement that was made a couple of years ago. We are dealing with a company that is dealing with generic drugs. We all agree, and certainly we have disagreed with the federal Conservative government from Day One on their generic drug policy and their patent drug legislation. We have not wavered for one moment on that, and we support the government's position at the legislative committee, the parliamentary committee on that issue.

Can the Premier indicate to the people of Manitoba, in light of the investment announcement made last year by the Premier and the company, when we can expect the delay to end for Apotex investment in Manitoba? When will the announcement that the Premier made and the company made come to fruition for the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: As the member should know, that decision is made by the company, not by this provincial government.

This provincial government obviously worked very diligently. Dr. Sherman has said publicly that they would not be here were it not for the efforts of

this provincial government and the competitive environment that we have put in place vis-à-vis business starts in this province.

The issue that they have is one of legislation preventing them from producing the particular product that was intended to be produced in this plant. That is the issue that they are still fighting with Ottawa.

If that can be resolved to their satisfaction, then presumably they will carry on with this plant, but they are, of course, becoming very, very political and intending to be involved in the next federal campaign to try, through the campaign, to convince all of the parties of Canada that this legislation is inappropriate and is discriminatory to them.

* (1010)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the Premier that the federal Conservative party intends on entrenching this legislation in the NAFTA trade agreement, in part of their continental trade agreement, which they plan on passing in the House of Commons prior to the next federal election, unfortunately.

Red River Community College Course Cancellations

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a final question to the Premier. We were quite shocked yesterday to hear the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), in her defence of cutting courses on telecommunications in terms of the province, indicate the number of jobs each student was able to obtain following the labour market demand for each of these courses—the cancellation of these courses was based on the future jobs in telecommunications.

The Speech from the Throne in 1992, the Premier states: My government has taken several steps to strengthen the information in the telecommunication industry.

Is there any co-ordinated strategy between the alleged economic strategy of this government and the alleged educational and training strategy of this government?

How can the Premier allow courses to be cancelled in areas of the future for students when the Premier is saying two months earlier that that is one of the future areas of growth for the province of Manitoba? It does not fit.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): It may well be that the comments that were made were directed towards some of the other courses. The reductions in intake were on several course areas. I understand they included commercial cooking, refrigeration and air conditioning and industrial electronics, so I would have to examine the comments and see whether they were to be applied to those areas.

Red River Community College Course Cancellations

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, in response to my question again yesterday on the cancellation of telecommunications courses, the minister did argue that one of the factors was the reduction of provision by the federal government and also the absence of jobs.

Indeed, her own tabled papers in this House, Manitoba job projections from 1990 to 2000, indicate that there will be a minus three loss in telecommunications jobs in Manitoba.

Could the minister or the Premier (Mr. Filmon), on her behalf, explain to us why there is this confusion in the labour force strategy of this government.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the minister.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, could I then ask the Premier to explain why another course was cancelled, the bakery course, when the most recent, I think last month's, publication of the Minister of Education's (Mrs. Vodrey) department, published in conjunction with the federal government—which the minister also claims has reduced the payments for courses at Red River College—Prospects, a guide to training and employment, says that chef/cook is the hottest job, one of the hottest jobs of the '90s in Manitoba?

Could the Premier explain, on her behalf, where is the plan in this government?

Mr. Filmon: Given the confusion between the preamble and the punch line of the member for Wolseley, where she asks about bakery courses and then refers to chef/cooks, Mr. Speaker, I would have to take that as notice on behalf of the Minister of Education and Training to sort out the confusion that appears to be in the mind of the member for Wolseley.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps not my place to comment on how long it has been since the

Premier has been in a kitchen, but I do believe that chefs have a—[interjection]

* (1015)

Labour Force Development Government Commitment

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Could the Premier tell us then whether this lack of planning, this inability to produce a labour force strategy, the three-year delay in signing a labour force development agreement with the federal government, is a deliberate political strategy, or does it have anything to do with the loss of 1,300 jobs in the public service of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): In response to the latter part of that question, the answer is, no, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say, in response to the preamble, that we have a sign on the fridge in our kitchen, and it says: This is an equal opportunity kitchen, help yourself.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the issue of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, I think the member knows quite well that that is an issue that we are very, very concerned about. It was one of the issues that I laid before the Prime Minister at a meeting that gained a little bit of publicity back in December.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working very diligently on that. In fact, the minister and I met with a federal minister and raised the issue again about 10 days ago, and I will be speaking with yet another federal minister and raising that particular issue later today.

Francophone Schools Governance Implementation

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Monsieur le président, ma question est pour le premier ministre et ministre responsable des Services en français.

Suite à la décision de la Cour suprême rendue public hier, il n'y a plus d'équivoque possible quant au droit des Francophones du Manitoba de gérer leurs propres écoles au travers d'une division scolaire autonome. La Cour suprême va aussi loin que de souligner l'urgence pour le gouvernement du Manitoba de passer immédiatement à l'action et, Monsieur le président, permettez-moi de citer un court passage de la décision de la Cour, qui dit: ". . . les autorités manitobaines doivent, sans retard,

mettre en place un régime et un système qui permettront à la minorité francophone d'exercer pleinement ses droits"

Et la Cour suprême continue en disant, et je cite encore: "Le nombre possible d'élèves de langue française justifie l'établissement d'un conseil scolaire de langue française autonome au Manitoba, dont la gestion et le contrôle appartiendront exclusivement à la minorité linguistique francophone." Fin de citation.

Monsieur le président, ma question au premier ministre est la suivante: le premier ministre pourrait-il annoncer aujourd'hui dans cette Chambre si son gouvernement est prêt à respecter la décision de la Cour suprême en modifiant le mandat du comité présidé par l'honorable Alfred Monnin d'un mandat de consultation par un mandat de mise en oeuvre de la gestion scolaire?

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier and Minister responsible for French Language Services.

Following the Supreme Court decision released yesterday, there can no longer be any possible doubt as to the right of Manitoba Francophones to govern their own schools through an independent school division. The Supreme Court goes as far as to emphasize the urgency for the government of Manitoba to act immediately.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to cite a short passage from the Court's decisions, which reads: ". . . the Manitoba authorities must, without delay, put into place a regime and a system which permit the Francophone minority to exercise its rights effectively"

The Supreme Court continues: "The number of potential French-language students warrants the establishment of an independent French-language school board in Manitoba under the exclusive management and control of the French-language minority."

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is as follows: Could the Premier announce today in this Chamber whether his government is willing to respect the Supreme Court decision by amending the terms of reference of the group chaired by the Honourable Alfred Monnin from a mandate of consultation to a mandate of implementation of school governance?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I think he points out some of the frustrations that we as a government have because we accepted the decision of the Supreme Court with respect to the Mahé case when it came down and made a full commitment to implementation.

We continue to acknowledge and be determined to implement the governance of French-language schools by the Francophone minority in our province. What we are talking about and what there seems to be some disagreement about is how to implement it, because the committee that is headed by former Chief Justice Alfred Monnin is indeed an implementation committee, not a consultation committee, but in the process of implementation, they must consult the people as to how this will affect them and how it will be put in place.

The reality is that we are taking students out of a public school education system and taking buildings and facilities out of a public school education system and putting them into a separate school system under the governance of the Francophone minority. In order to do that, there must be some consultation along the way to ensure that it is done in the best possible way for all people concerned. That is what the process is all about. That is what the commitment is all about.

Nothing within the Supreme Court judgment has indicated that we ought not to proceed, and we are proceeding, Mr. Speaker. The difficulty we have is that the Francophone minority parents' association is unwilling to co-operate and unwilling to appoint their people to the committee. That is the only thing that is delaying the process.

Mr. Gaudry: Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

Monsieur le président, il est bien connu que quand un gouvernement ne veut pas agir, il consulte, il consulte. Le premier ministre pourrait-il dire à cette Chambre quand son gouvernement va établir un échéancier clair et précis afin d'indiquer aux Franco-Manitobains et aux Franco-Manitobaines si, oui ou non, leurs enfants iront à l'école de leur division scolaire de langue française, préférablement en 1993 ou au plus tard en 1994?

[Translation]

My question is for the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known that when a government does not want to act, it consults and consults. Could the Premier tell this Chamber when his government is going to establish a clear and precise time frame with a view to indicating to Franco-Manitobans whether or not their children will be going to a school in their French-language school division, preferably in 1993 or at the latest, 1994?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, as we have indicated before, because this process does take time to identify and separate out the students and the facilities from their current circumstances and put them under the aegis of a Francophone governance board, a separate board, in order to do it in a way that it can be accomplished properly, the target is that the elections will take place in September of this year and the students and facilities will be moved by September of '94. The only thing that can prevent that from happening is if we do not have the co-operation of the Francophone parents' association to accomplish that goal. We are committed to it. We have the time schedule set up, and it will be done, provided there is any degree of co-operation and willingness to act on the situation, Mr. Speaker.

We are willing to act. It is not a matter of consultation. It is a matter of implementation, and we want to go ahead with it, Mr. Speaker. We implore the member, with his influence on the Francophone minority, to get them to the table to make sure that it happens.

* (1020)

Mr. Gaudry: Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

La ministre de l'Éducation, qui apparaissait hier aux nouvelles de la télévision de Radio-Canada, a semblé indiquer qu'il n'était pas question que les Francophones monopolisent l'éducation en langue française au Manitoba.

Quelle explication le premier ministre peut-il donner à cette Chambre pour une telle contradiction qui est en conflit total avec la décision de la Cour suprême qui dit, et je cite: "... l'établissement d'un conseil scolaire de langue française autonome au Manitoba, dont la gestion et le contrôle appartiendront exclusivement à la minorité linguistique francophone." Fin de citation. Comment le premier ministre peut-il se permettre de contredire le texte même du jugement de la Cour suprême?

[Translation]

My question is for the Premier.

The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), who appeared on CBC television news yesterday, seemed to be indicating that there was no question of Francophones monopolizing French-language education in Manitoba.

What explanation can the Premier give to this Chamber for such a contradiction, which is in total conflict with the Supreme Court decision which says: "... the establishment of an independent French-language school board in Manitoba under the exclusive management and control of the French-language minority." How can the Premier allow himself to contradict the very text of the Supreme Court judgment?

Mr. Filmon: I in no way contradict the text of the Supreme Court, Mr. Speaker. We have many, many lawyers who work on the constitutional issues on behalf of this government. We have their assessment and interpretation of what is a complex judgment but make some very, very basic points, and that is that the principles of the province's proposal respect both the Mahé decision and The Public Schools Act reference in this particular case, that the decision reinforces that Section 23, parents are the ultimate decision-makers as to which system is best for their children. It did not endorse a top-down approach being advocated by the FPCP, Mr. Speaker.

FPCP had argued for monopoly of a Francophone school board over all French-language instruction and facilities. The reference at the Supreme Court clearly contemplates the possibility of parental choice between systems, the Francophone board and the non-Francophone board. The only exclusive power is that the Francophone school board will be under the exclusive control of the minority Francophone community. That is precisely what is provided for under our proposal, Mr. Speaker. We just want the Francophone minority to get to the table to work with former Chief Justice Monnin to implement that process.

* (1025)

Health Care System Reform Impact on Employment

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

If the minister's multimillion-dollar consultant is going to save \$65 million from the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital, as she proposes in her proposal, and since 70 to 80 percent of the costs of those institutions relate to personnel, will this not result in the loss of hundreds of jobs?

Can this minister advise the House what his million-dollar consultant has told him regarding the potential loss of jobs at the Health Sciences and St. Boniface centres?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I realize my honourable friend is desperately trying to create an issue here.

As I have said to my honourable friend, despite the fact that he has not had his information correct when he came to Question Period yesterday and before—I accept that, because that seems to be the modus operandi.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to my honourable friend that several things are in process. Approvals will follow if certain conditions and satisfactions are realized between the government, and very important to this equation, the two hospitals in question, namely St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre, that, I indicated to my honourable friend yesterday, should he phone them, he would find that they are encouraging government to retain this individual's service. In that regard, they have had substantial discussions internally to their organizations with their respective employee representatives.

Mr. Speaker, if my honourable friend could switch to some real issues in health care reform instead of trying to grab the glib headline, we would have a meaningful discussion, and we could then maybe discuss some of the suggestions he might want to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Community-Based Services

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, will the minister make a commitment and a guarantee today that he will have in place community jobs, jobs in the community, to help those patients who are going to be out there, I might add, by his own associate deputy minister, medically unstable patients on occasion, who will be removed and put into the community as a result of the loss of jobs and the cutbacks. Will he guarantee today that those jobs will be in place, those personnel will be in place prior to the massive cuts that he is contemplating?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend's preamble and question, of course is designed not to inform accurately but to raise fears, because my honourable friend is talking about medically fragile patients, hypothetical, third-party repeats of statements that are made.

I have to tell you that from time to time, I get somewhat slightly annoyed at the political opportunism of the New Democrats in this province, because I looked forward to a refreshing new approach with the change of critic. I looked forward to my honourable friend the member for Kildonan sharing with us some of the ideas from New Democrat-governed provinces like B.C., Saskatchewan and Ontario—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, I suggest the minister talk to his own associate deputy minister, Betty Havens, who said on February 18—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Chomlak: —that medically unstable people, as a result of reform, will be put in the community.

My final supplementary to the minister, who has not talked to his own associate deputy minister, who is negotiating a contract with U.S. consultants: Will he guarantee that community services, jobs, caregivers will be in place prior to Connie Curran's multimillion-dollar shift that he is contemplating?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend might care to understand that one of the advantages of the restructuring proposal that Dr. Curran has discussed with St. Boniface and with Health Sciences Centre is that the level of patient care, the amount of time that nurses can spend with patients delivering care within the facility, goes up by a minimum in most cases, of 50 percent, which translates into better patient care within the facility.

Mr. Speaker, the management process and structural reform that has been tested in other jurisdictions leads to not a decrease in the level of activity in any of these hospitals, despite significant budgetary savings, it increases the amount of time that caregivers get to spend with their patients, something that I think nurses have wanted, patients have wanted and we want. The obvious missing ingredient is the NDP do not want to care for people—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

School Divisions Property Tax Cap

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, two and a half weeks ago, the Minister of Education announced a massive intrusion into the decision making of school boards by saying that she would limit the increase in the special requirement to 2 percent that could be raised by school divisions. In the case of the St. Vital School Division and many other divisions that undertook large reductions and downsizing in their school division in 1992, this would mean an actual reduction in the special levy, or the amount raised per homeowner, in the case of St. Vital, by \$43 per homeowner. In other words, the school division that made large cuts last year would be punished for making those cuts this year as a result of the moves that are being announced by this minister.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance this question because the Minister of Education will not be able to answer it. Will the minister indicate to this House whether it is the policy of his government to cap the special requirement which results in these inequities at 2 percent?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, certainly, as the acting Minister of Education, I am well aware the minister could answer this question much better than I, but let me say that the bill that gives effect to this capping has just been distributed in the House. When the member takes time to digest the material contained within, I am sure it will be abundantly clear to him how the government is preparing to handle this issue.

Mr. Plohman: It sounds like this minister does not know what his policy is.

Is this minister, and I ask the Minister of Finance, if it is his policy and if he persists in capping the special requirement at 2 percent, is he aware that his policy will result in huge inequities, additional inequities, because some school divisions will be able to increase their special levy by as much as \$60 per homeowner, others by 10 percent, 8 percent, and in the case of St. Vital and other school divisions which made cuts last year, they would have massive reductions? Is this kind of inequity the policy of this government?

* (1030)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, there is no inequity being practised with respect to the announcement of the 2 percent cap on special requirement.

Let me say, when the member reads the bill he will see that there is a section in there that deals with an error provision. Indeed, at this point in time, government is determining whether or not that section would provide some element of relief to the circumstances that he has just brought forward.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this epitomizes the confusion and chaos in the department. They do not seem to know what is going on.

I would ask the minister, will the Minister of Finance declare today clearly, insofar as his policy is concerned, that if he insists on intruding in the local autonomy of school divisions in this way, that he will allow this cap to apply to the special requirement or the special levy, whichever is the greater for school divisions?

Mr. Manness: What is obvious, Mr. Speaker, is the NDP cannot stand the thought of the property taxpayers in this province receiving any type of a break. That is what is obvious.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, and I will reiterate again. If the member would talk to his long-standing colleague the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) when he was the Minister of Education and has an understanding of how the financial formulas work within education, that at times there are fallouts and results that are not anticipated. There are times when some school divisions are impacted differently than one would expect. That has happened, and I say that there is an opportunity within the bill, giving discretion to the minister, to deal with the St. Vital situation.

Health Care System Reform Status Report

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

Mr. Speaker, we have had an extensive consultation with health care professionals, consumers and patients, and our approach has been widely approved. There is a common concern throughout our discussion, and that is the lack of information from the minister's office. The patients are very much concerned.

We have asked for a health care monitor report. The information even put by British Columbia on the health care reform package is almost the same as

in Manitoba. They are also asking for a specific report card per year.

We ask the Minister of Health when he is going to have public information on the health care reform package. So far, we have not received that.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my honourable friend's question.

Mr. Speaker, I thought I had it in my briefing notes here. I fully understand the concern my honourable friend expresses because, after certain events are reported in the media, for instance, that all children's services would be curtailed at St. Boniface Hospital, a statement made by someone who was viewed to have knowledge that was totally false caused a whole flurry of calls to the office. It is a confounding process in which we then have to go back and explain, the emergency services will be available at St. Boniface Hospital for your children. Do not listen to the inappropriate statements made by people who are either ill-informed or wishing to cause misinformation to be the trend in the system.

Mr. Speaker, to try to countervail that, I will make available for my honourable friend a list of the number of meetings that members of my senior staff and myself have had in terms of explaining the health care reform process to boards, to administration, to staff, physician groups, professional groups across the length and breadth of Manitoba in an attempt to allay some of the concerns that have come forward because of direct misinformation from time to time, unfortunately, that is part of the process of information that goes public.

Community-Based Services

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us exactly what new community services are put in place today that were not available nine months ago?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the new community services that are in place today that were not in place nine months ago are \$6.5 million of additional home care services, for instance. [interjection] Now, my honourable friends the New Democrats say, oh, as if to say, that is not enough or that is too much, I do not know. But that is additional services that are in place. I realize that my honourable friends the New Democrats do not necessarily believe budget increases, et cetera.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I simply indicate to my honourable friend that there are a number of processes, for instance, in community services dealing with mental health reform which will be in place prior to some of the reduction from services of mental health beds here and in Brandon.

Mental Health Care System Community-Based Services

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health tell us, because of the impending closure of psych beds at the Misericordia and Grace Hospital, what are the alternative community services that have been put in place?

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health tell us how he is going to communicate with the patients who are very much concerned about these changes?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that was in part the issue that I attempted to answer last question.

There is a perception, and I had to deal with that earlier on this week, that psychiatric service beds are closed in fact at Misericordia, Grace and St. Boniface as we speak now. That is not accurate, Sir. Plans were anticipated that some of those closures would happen this month, but we are delayed in those closures because we have not got in place the community-based services.

However, there will be an array of services in the mental health community from crisis stabilization beds and expansion of those, mobile crisis teams, case managers and a number of other initiatives to support community-based care. Those, Sir, will be developed over the next two to three months in advance of the closure of those beds.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the important question my honourable friend asked is: How do we communicate with the patients? In that regard, we are relying very, very extensively on the professional caregivers, the psychiatrists who deal with those patients to indicate what supports are available in the reformed mental health system.

Grain Transportation Agreement Method of Payment

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) for his government's position on the method of payment, he said, and I quote: We are going to want to keep an open mind and look at all

opportunities to increase the value of the individual producers.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture what studies he has done that show that there will be an increased opportunity, an increased revenue for grain farmers? Has he looked at the results of deregulation in North Dakota, and will he admit that this has resulted in higher transportation costs, reduced services for farmers? The same thing is going to happen in Manitoba if we have a change in the method of payment.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like the member to know that things are changing in the agricultural world. She attended the Agri-Forum in Portage about three weeks ago, and she heard the optimism in the minds of many people in the agriculture industry about adapting to change. There is more and more grain and livestock going south than east and west, and that is logical. There is more and more processed product when we ship south, and therefore, in those situations, we do not use WGTA benefit.

We keep an open mind, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said, in terms of maximizing our opportunities to export value-added agricultural food commodities through the markets that can pay the best price. The United States is a developing market. I have told the member that now a third of our total exports go there. As I said earlier, more processed goes there as opposed to unprocessed that goes east and west. The WGTA benefit was set up to promote agricultural development in western Canada, and we keep an open mind as to how we promote the right kind of agricultural development that is good for Manitoba, Manitoba farmers and the economy of Manitoba.

* (1040)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, since farmers voted overwhelmingly against the change of the method of payment last winter at a series of meetings, the minister does not appear to be listening to them. He is not giving farmers a clear answer.

Will the minister tell this House today and will he tell farmers his position? Are you in favour of changing the method of payment or do you want it to stay the same?

Mr. Findlay: This is rather phenomenal. This sounds like the member lives in Saskatchewan, where we argue and we fight over issues that have little or no bearing on the realities of today. The

realities of today are that we need more livestock production in this province. She is arguing in favour of restricting and preventing that. She has listened to people talk about optimism at the Agri-Forum in Portage, and now she comes here with the old Saskatchewan ideology. Out there where they have rallies to talk about gloom and doom, here we have meetings to talk about opportunity and development.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, this minister is not listening to grain farmers. They went to a series of meetings, they asked for a clear answer from the minister.

Will the minister tell us today, is he supporting the change of method of payment or is he going the other way? He is just sitting on the fence.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, we have an Agri-Food Advisory Council to me, the minister, with broadly based representation from agribusiness and farmers. We have done a number of studies, and all those studies and everything in industry shows that there is more and more development occurring in this industry. We ought to get on with the development and the opportunities that are created.

All the member wants to do is talk about a political issue that will divide and conquer the agricultural community. Her ideology is, make the farmer pay more and more and not promote efficiency in the system and market access that gives us higher value. She does not want to talk about getting on with the future. She wants to argue about issues that really are going to divide and conquer the agricultural industry. I would like that member to stand up and talk about the optimism, the opportunity and what is going on in the agricultural community in the province of Manitoba.

Crown Corporations Reduced Workweek

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago, the Minister of Finance announced the reduced work program to deal with the spiralling deficit that this government is facing in Manitoba. There is a great deal of confusion about how the minister is going to implement that, what is the definition of essential services within the Civil Service and, in particular, how it is going to apply to Crown corporations.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he could clarify what the status is of Crown

corporations such as Manitoba Hydro and MTS. Will they be forced by this government to comply with this reduced workweek program?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have asked the Crown corporations within the province, within the spirit of the announcement made with respect to MGEU members, that their employees also be requested to reduce the total salary line by an amount equivalent. We have not forced the hard model on Crowns, although we suggest that they consider the model that the government is imposing upon itself.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, there appears to be some confusion then, because employees are being told by the presidency, for example, of MTS that they are being directed essentially by government.

I would like to ask the minister, because there is a great deal of concern in the Crown corporations on how they can maintain service to Manitobans and particularly with MTS how they can compete with Unitel, if they have to comply with this, I would like to ask the minister: Do the Crown corporations have any option in complying with this or are they being forced to go ahead with a reduced workweek program?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate what I said before. The government has made it known to the Crowns that we will expect the Crowns to adopt a model that does not necessarily have to be ours. It can be a variation of ours, but nevertheless there will be a bottom-line, salary-line savings equivalent to what the government is imposing upon itself.

Crown Corporations Reduced Workweek

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final question then, Mr. Speaker: If the intent was to be consistent with the Civil Service, why then is the Minister of Finance with the Civil Service creating the difficulty with many departments which have to provide essential services during this period? Why is it the Civil Service has no option and departments are being told they have to cut 10 or 12 days worth of service to Manitobans in essential services, when in fact with Crown corporations he is now saying something quite different?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, again, from the New Democratic Party we get the accusations or we get the comments that are

just I think designed to create more confusion. We have plenty of time, as I have indicated on many occasions, before the first Friday on which this will be operative. We have asked each department to develop plans to deal with their operations and that is underway. In fact, this has probably given us an opportunity to do it in a way that applies common sense, but one has to appreciate that if you are going to be reducing the workweek, we want to try to keep as close to the model so that the public is aware that services are not available on those particular days.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, yesterday we agreed that after Question Period the House would now adjourn. I understand now, it appears that the honourable Minister of Finance is standing on his feet. I also understand the honourable Leader of the Opposition wants to make a nonpolitical statement. I am asking, what is the will of the House right now?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, mine is House Business and, certainly, short nonpolitical statements I think we can—

Mr. Speaker: That is agreed then. We will do this. Okay, there is leave to allow for nonpolitical statements.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I thank you for leave of the House. I just want to pay tribute to the outgoing Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba George Johnson. Today, we will witness the swearing in of the new Lieutenant-Governor Yvon Dumont whom we wish very well. I think it is important to pay tribute to the tremendous contributions that George Johnson has made to the province of Manitoba as a long-time citizen, born and raised in our beautiful province. Dr. Johnson has served as a doctor to our community. He has served in cabinet under the Roblin years; he has served as a deputy minister; he has served in medical services; he has now served as Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Manitoba.

I have known Dr. Johnson personally, particularly through Special Olympics as a volunteer, and I found him to be a person of dedication to our

province, an optimist about all of our futures and a very, very kind and considerate person.

Mr. Speaker, I know we have a time limitation, but I just want to say that we wish him well. He has served his function as Lieutenant-Governor with dignity and grace, and we wish him and his family all the best.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable First Minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave. [agreed]

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of all my colleagues in the government, I want to join enthusiastically with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) in paying tribute to a gentleman who has served in so many ways the people of Manitoba with great dignity and with great devotion.

The roles that he played in the cabinet of the province of Manitoba or as a local community doctor, having delivered many, many of the babies in the Interlake district of Manitoba, have left him with a legacy of friends, admirers and supporters who cross all political lines and all economic circumstances. He is a man who is admired and supported by all people who have known him. I know that as one who cherishes the opportunity to call him a friend, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say that Dr. Johnson's legacy is not only in his personal contributions to Manitoba but indeed in the family that he has raised and been a part of to serve the province of Manitoba. His wife, a very distinguished woman, Doris Johnson, has been at his side and has been a very, very equal partner in all of his endeavours, not only in his service in the government in the province of Manitoba, but as the spouse of a rural physician looking after, in many cases, the urgent calls that come into a doctor's office, then latterly, of course, as Her Honour, the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. She has indeed served in a very distinguished and dedicated manner as well.

* (1050)

They have, of course, raised a family that has thrown itself into public service in so many ways. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) refers to Special Olympics. That is led in Manitoba by one of Dr. Johnson's offspring. We know of the accomplishments of his other children in their own professional fields, one of them being currently a senator in the Government of Canada.

So on all those counts we offer, not only our gratitude for the service that Dr. Johnson has given, but our respect and our best wishes for the future that we hope will be one of health and continued service to the people of Manitoba.

In that transition that takes place in just a very short while in this Chamber, I, too, want to express my very good wishes towards the new Lieutenant-Governor, Yvon Dumont.

I had the special privilege of working with Yvon around the constitutional table for much of the past year. During that period of time, I gained a tremendous respect for Yvon as a representative of the Metis people of Canada. He was a person who served with tremendous compassion, understanding and dignity the Metis people of Canada, but also with a tremendous determination to achieve better things, in a constitutional sense, on behalf of the Metis people.

In taking on his new role, I know that he will be a great credit to the people of Manitoba, all the people of Manitoba, and a very dedicated public servant, as well, in that new role.

I am certainly looking forward to the ceremony and to the welcoming to the position of our new Lieutenant-Governor, Yvon Dumont. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. James have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our party, we want to join with the comments made by our colleagues in the other parties about Dr. Johnson and share with them in thanking him for his years of dedication, and that of his family, to the public good in this province.

In addition to the sharing with the comments that they have made, I want to add one further personal note, and the one I think is shared by the members of our party, about the integrity of Dr. Johnson and what he has done for politicians and politics in this province.

As we live in this age of cynicism about politicians and about our elected officials generally, we have beacons of light to look to. Dr. Johnson has been one of those for me personally and, I think, for many in this House. He has sacrificed greatly in his career. He chose public service. He went to public service at the expense of his professional goals as a physician in our province.

He served his term in office with integrity and honesty and dedication, which is renowned from corner to corner in this province, Mr. Speaker, so he shows us surely the way of public service as elected officials.

In this age of cynicism, to many who look and think that they might aspire to public office, I recommend him as a guide, as a person to look to who truly served the public good and at great cost to himself personally and his family.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank then both he and his wife, Doris, for their many, many years of hard work, for the gentility with which they have served their roles in Government House.

I also want to share with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and, I know, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer)

in wishing our new Lieutenant-Governor and his family well in their term in office, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet on Tuesday, March 9, 1993, at 7:30 p.m. to continue to consider the 1992 Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board.

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Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Friday, March 5, 1993

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