



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, Clif	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 12, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), and it complies with the privileges and the 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 residents of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the principles of health care, namely the universality and comprehensiveness, should apply to the Pharmacare program; and

WHEREAS the Pharmacare program's effectiveness is being eroded; and

WHEREAS in the most recent round of delisting of pharmaceuticals, approximately 200 have been delisted by the government of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the strict submission deadline for Pharmacare receipts does not take into consideration extenuating circumstances which may have affected some people; and

WHEREAS pharmaceutical refunds often take six weeks to reach people; and

WHEREAS a health "smart card" would provide information to reduce the risk of ordering drugs which interact or are ineffective, could eliminate "double prescribing," and could also be used to purchase pharmaceuticals on the Pharmacare program, thereby easing the cash burden on purchasers.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Manitoba to consider taking the necessary steps to reform the Pharmacare system to maintain its comprehensive and universal nature, and to implement the use of a health "smart card."

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I would

like to table the report from the Manitoba Arts Council for the year 1991-1992.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): I would like to table the Annual Report of Manitoba Agriculture 1991-92.

Mr. Speaker: I am also tabling the statutory report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the conduct of the September 15, 1992, by-elections in the electoral divisions of Crescentwood and Portage la Prairie.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

North American Free Trade Agreement Government Action

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

We have been concerned on this side about the proposed and signed, initialled, Canada-U.S.-Mexico Free Trade Agreement for some time.

We know this will affect jobs in the apparel industry in Manitoba. We know it will affect jobs in the generic drugs, notwithstanding the Minister of Health's (Mr. Orchard) statement on this matter. [interjection]

If the Minister of Health wants to give us honest answers in this House, it would be better than his statement.

I withdraw my comments.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, NAFTA is a very important issue to this province. The labour standards issue has been raised and opposed by this provincial government. The lack of any environmental standards has been raised and opposed by this Conservative government, yet we see the federal Conservative government planning on passing and ratifying the NAFTA agreement. At the same time, the American trade representative, Mickey Kantor, the trade secretary, is saying they are not going to pass it in its present form. The many Congress people of the United States are saying they are not going to pass NAFTA in its present form, if they are going to pass it at all.

I would like to ask the government: What action is it going to take to stop the federal Conservative party from passing an agreement that may not even be an agreement and certainly is not an agreement in terms of the best interests of Manitoba?

* (1005)

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat strange that the Leader of the opposition party, in his questioning and concern about dealing with Mexico under the NAFTA agreement, sits with a member in his caucus who, when he was responsible for McKenzie Seeds, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) spent several days, if not weeks, trying to promote trade with McKenzie Seeds and Mexico when they were in government, somewhat contrary to the discussions and the positions that the New Democratic Party is putting forward today. I can provide additional information if the member would like that.

Until the negotiations on labour and environmental standards are dealt with and enforced and adjustment programs are put in place as far as the labour force is concerned, this province's position has been one of not agreeing to proceed until those factors are looked after, Mr. Speaker. That has been our position. We have tabled a document which clearly expresses the position of this government, and it stands.

Mr. Doer: I ask the government what action it would take to put into play the document that they tabled in this House.

Mr. Speaker, we now have a situation where the federal Conservative Party of Canada, under the guise of the federal government, is going to proceed to ratify a trade agreement on the basis of electoral considerations to try to get this issue behind them before June.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, at the same time—or fortunately, in my belief—the United States is going to renegotiate this agreement, and we in fact could be ratifying an agreement that is not even in place after the Americans and, potentially, the Mexicans change it.

Mr. Speaker, what action is this Conservative government going to take to get the federal Conservative government to stop their electoral timetable and oppose this trade agreement for Manitobans and stop them passing this agreement and ratifying it by June of 1993?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, unlike the New Democratic Party which is all over the map when it comes to trading and political posturing for their own political benefit—I want them to get sincere—this government's position is consistent. It has been put forward in a consistent, well-thought-out and planned manner. There has been ongoing communication and discussion with the federal government. They well know our position, and if there are further activities that are going to be taken, I will report them to the member.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding as well that the Industry and Trade ministers will be meeting in the near future to discuss some of the issues which are on the minds of those individuals.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the fact that the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) saved the privatization and sale of McKenzie Seeds when Sterling Lyon and that minister were part of the government in 1978.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard for us to take lectures from the Deputy Premier opposite when on the one hand he says he is opposed to the Tory federal trade agenda and on the other hand he breaks bread with the Prime Minister at Tory fundraising events.

Motor Coach Industries Job Relocation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, there is a parent company that is now holding the shares in Motor Coach Industries, that has bought a new plant in Mexico for purposes of bus manufacturing. There is investment speculation that Motor Coach Industries jobs could be relocated under this change in investment strategy, and there are close to 1,000 to 1,500 employees working in the province of Manitoba with 75 per cent of their sales in North America.

Can the government advise us of the status of that change in investment with the parent company and the status of those very, very important manufacturing jobs in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, we are in ongoing contact with Motor Coach. There is nothing to substantiate any suggestion that jobs will be transferred out of Manitoba, out of Winnipeg.

They do have an investment proceeding on urban bus manufacturing, I believe, in Mexico. We also

have an arrangement with Motor Coach here in Manitoba, a research and development agreement whereby the province is providing some funding. In fact, it goes back I think to the days of the previous government, in terms of R & D work on the development of an additional bus here in the province of Manitoba, some \$35-million research and development project.

Mr. Speaker, we have absolutely no indication that the decision of Motor Coach and the parent company to make an investment in Mexico will have any detrimental impact here in Manitoba.

* (1010)

Consolidation of Health Services Justification

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, for some time, we on this side of the House have been critical of what the government is doing regarding children's services at hospitals. Not only are we hearing different statements from the minister, but different statements from his own department.

Today another doctor went public with his concerns about the minister's handling of children's services.

Can this minister table the studies that justify his decision to move all children's services to one hospital, and to justify his claim that it will improve the care of children and decrease costs?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, yes, I can provide my honourable friend with a number of the discussions that have taken place. First of all, my honourable friend might recall that the Urban Hospital Council, which represents all of the hospitals in Winnipeg, agreed to the pediatric consolidation at Children's Hospital in November of last year.

My honourable friend maybe plays a little quick with his allegations as to what is behind the decision making. This decision was not taken lightly. It was recommended and agreed to at the Urban Hospital Council, No. 1.

Number 2, my honourable friend might do himself very well to speak to the head of Children's Hospital, Dr. Aggie Bishop, and understand the kind of development around program to make this consolidation happen.

Furthermore, my honourable friend might try to avoid confounding his researchers who immediately start to question what he says publicly when he says

that St. Boniface Hospital will close completely to children, which is the kind of allegation that leads to phone calls in my office to understand what is going on and confusion in the general public.

Before my honourable friend makes accusations which are not accurate, which do a disservice to children and their families, maybe he should take time to talk to Dr. Agnes Bishop, head of Children's Hospital, to understand how the program can and will work.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, I guess responsibility for these decisions has been abdicated to Agnes Bishop over at Children's Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's own interim urban council recommended that the pediatrics at St. Boniface stay open. Why is the minister consolidating all children's care to Children's Hospital when Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Hamilton, London, Thunder Bay and Toronto all have children's beds in other than one consolidated hospital?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer for those cities, other than the fact that they may not have the opportunity, the size and the excellence of facility that we have in Manitoba, something that was planned since 1975, which has been part of several changes, in governments, in terms of the consolidation to the stage where today all of the pediatric inpatient services, surgical and medical, can be met at one facility, with all the ensuing excellence of program capability.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend very quickly said an interim report from the Urban Hospital Council recommended the potential for certain beds to remain at St. Boniface General Hospital. What my honourable friend did not mention to those who are listening is that the final recommendation of the Urban Hospital Council was to make a complete consolidation, and that recommendation was made at the end of November last year and duly announced.

If my honourable friend wants to talk about interim recommendations, maybe my honourable friend would have the integrity to deal with the final recommendation, which was, Sir, complete consolidation.

Mr. Chomlak: I would like to ask the minister how he can justify moving surgery beds from community hospitals which by the minister's own action health

plan cost in the neighbourhood of \$400 per day, to the Health Sciences Centre which by the minister's own action plan cost over \$700 a day. How is that justified on an economic basis, or should I phone Aggie Bishop to find that out?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend would certainly be a lot wiser on the issue than he has been if he did phone Dr. Bishop. I know that my honourable friend is fearful of change, fearful of facts and fearful of opportunity to make the system better.

Mr. Speaker, let me deal with my honourable friend's concern about costs in terms of this circumstance, because it seems as if now my honourable friend is fixed on costs. It has been he has tried to make a case on quality of care which cannot be made; now he seems to be switching to costs.

Mr. Speaker, over the 10 years that Children's Hospital has been operating, significant levels of service have moved from the community hospitals to Children's Hospital because of excellence of program. It has left the circumstance where you have children's wings in a number of our hospitals occupied at 35 percent and less. That, Sir, is not an effective use of program resource, nor the opportunity to promote program excellence. Both cases are being met in this circumstance. My honourable friend would do himself well to stop misleading the public on this and get on with the reform and change—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

*(1015)

Clinician Hiring School Division Costs

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education. In this House the minister stated that, and I quote: Through our funding formula we will provide both the operating and the administrative costs for school divisions to hire clinicians.

She has also stated in this House, and I quote: We have ongoing discussions on a regular basis with school divisions across this province.

Can the minister tell this House, has she consulted with rural and northern school divisions to determine what the actual costs are to hire these clinicians, or is she just guessing?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we provide through

our funding formula an element of fairness across this province, so through our funding formula, we have provided an enhanced grant for clinician services. The grant was enhanced one year ago when the new school funding formula came into place, and it does provide fairness across the province.

Formal Consultations

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, with another question for the Minister of Education: Her idea of fairness is \$45,000 which will not cover the cost of hiring clinicians. Antler River School Division indicates to us that there will be at least another \$10,000 in costs for other expenses incurred and they are going to be sharing clinicians with Turtle Mountain.

Can the minister tell this House, why do the school divisions indicate to us that formal consultations have not occurred with the minister or her staff?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I can say to the member, in all meetings with school divisions, agendas are prepared. School divisions are free to raise issues that are important within their school divisions, as we in government are also able to bring forward agendas to discuss with school divisions.

We do discuss issues which are of concern and are of interest. Those meetings do take place as requested, and also during visits that I make on behalf of this government to school divisions across this province.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, this minister is not taking a leadership role when in fact she is only meeting with school divisions after it is requested. She should be out there initiating the meetings.

Department of Education Reform Philosophy

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Can the minister tell us and give us an answer which is not contradictory, as we have seen in the past from this minister, what exactly is her reform philosophy? Can she let us know? Manitobans want to know, and we want to know.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I guess the honourable member has not had the time to follow me around to see the number of divisions that I have gone out to visit and have made a point of going to

visit and not wait for a request for the divisions to come in to see me. The philosophy of this government is that we do not just have to wait for people to come in here into our offices. In fact, the ministers in this government, and in Education, go out and visit with school divisions in the field.

On those visits, one of the areas of discussion is the issue of education reform. The process of education reform for this government has been based on consultation. It has been based on discussion through those visits where school divisions raise their issues of concern, where they would like to see the reform, school divisions as trustees, teachers and parents.

* (1020)

Brandon General Hospital Breast Cancer Screening

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

Mrs. Margaret Borotsik of Brandon has collected over 800 letters, notes and signatures from women in the Westman area from one letter that she wrote to the editor of the Brandon Sun, protesting the fact—and the Minister of Energy (Mr. Downey) should listen to this, because there are a lot of people in his area who have signed this petition and have signed these letters—that women in the Westman area have to wait eight months or 10 times longer than women in the Winnipeg region for a mammogram test to detect breast cancer.

She has asked me to present these to the Minister of Health. I would ask the Page at this time if the Page would deliver this material, plus the letter to the Minister of Health from Mrs. Margaret Borotsik.

In the name of fairness, will the minister now agree to the request of these concerned women and provide what amounts to a relatively modest increase in the Brandon General Hospital budget—I think it is \$84,000—to allow the hospital to operate the existing equipment three more hours per day and deal with this backlog?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased my honourable friend has posed this question, because if we were to go back two and a half to three years ago, one would have recalled from a throne speech that we intended, as government, to bring into the province of Manitoba a province-wide mammography screening program.

Let me differentiate between screening program as a method of early detection versus diagnostic mammography, which is an investigative test where a physician makes the assessment that a woman may be at risk or may need to have a mammography to determine whether in fact there is the presence or the risk of breast cancer.

Mr. Speaker, the issue was turned over to an expert committee in Manitoba of the best people we could put together in the province to show us how we might implement province-wide screening for mammography.

That committee came back recommending to the province—and it was accepted by my honourable friends in the New Democratic Party—that we should proceed with caution and not implement province-wide screening because of conflicting national and international investigation and researches to the benefit and to the potential risk of screening mammography.

That caution we have taken, but I want to reinforce to my honourable friend and to those women in Brandon that the diagnostic mammography is available within days in Brandon should a physician believe there is a risk to health of a woman.

What we are talking about here is routine screening which originally we were recommending once every two years, Sir, not once every seven months as my honourable friend alleges the waiting list to be.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, this routine screening that the minister talks about is still done at the request and on the basis of a doctor's recommendation for the woman to have an elective mammography test.

So, my question is to the minister. In all fairness, why is the minister denying women in the Westman area of this province a level of service that is available now to the women in the Winnipeg area? I know there are differences of opinion, but they are waiting 10 times longer than the three-week waiting period in Winnipeg, causing a great deal of anxiety and a great deal of worry.

Mr. Orchard: With all due respect to my honourable friend, any woman under a physician's care in the Westman region can receive a mammography if the physician considers her health to be at risk, within days, not the waiting period of time.

What my honourable friend is referring to is women who are put on an elective list for a routine screening, a substantial difference from trying to determine whether a woman has a problem which may involve cancer of the breast. There is a significant difference, and, Sir, the waiting list that exists in Brandon is in the stage of being analyzed to see what is driving the waiting list, and what is creating the waiting list, and whether in fact women who need, according to professional recommendation, a diagnostic mammography are put at risk.

To date we have absolutely no evidence that there is any risk to women who need a diagnostic mammography as recommended by a physician. It does not exist, Sir—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Well, I would refer the honourable minister to Dr. Kindle who has evidence to the contrary. I admit that this is a very—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), this is not a time for debate. The honourable member for Brandon East with his question.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Let the minister answer this: What criteria is the minister using to maintain the level—you are maintaining this service that you think is not necessary. It is being maintained in the Winnipeg area for women who go to the clinics and the hospitals here and yet you are denying the same service to the women in the Westman area.

What criteria are you—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend is touching upon an issue which causes a great amount of concern and fear to women. Women hear television ads from the United States that if you are 30 years old, you ought to have a mammography. Sir, that is not accurate.

National study after national study has cautioned governments about no benefit on screening mammography, and in fact some studies have demonstrated a risk. Now my honourable friend should surely read those studies before he now makes the case that we are putting women at risk in western Manitoba. We are not. Dr. Kindle, when asked the direct question, "Has anybody's health

been compromised?", the last interview I heard him give said, no, he could not say that as a professional, and that is the case, Sir.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell another side of this story—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1025)

Unlicensed Wheat Varieties Coverage Policy

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, we have a Minister of Agriculture who is not taking a stand for farmers. He will not make his position known on the western grain transportation assistance. He held a Crop Insurance report for months and has not given any indication of what changes he is going to make, and he has not made a decision on unlicensed wheat varieties.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture to tell us whether he is going to change the coverage on unlicensed wheat varieties or whether he is going to cancel the coverages on these varieties of wheat that are not licensed.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Well, I have to assume what the member is talking about. She is talking about unlicensed wheat variety coverage under what?

An Honourable Member: GRIP.

Mr. Findlay: Okay, okay. I would ask the member to be careful when she writes her question that she puts the whole facts out.

I would like to tell the member that because of the openness of this government and the openness of this minister, a meeting was held at Portage a few weeks ago to talk to producers on how to deal with unlicensed wheat varieties in the future, and you will find in the information going to farmers last night and today that it has been dealt with in a manner that the farmers support.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister whether these varieties, which are illegal varieties, they are not licensed, are going to be covered under GRIP. These are the varieties that are lowering our standards around the world, a reputation that Canada has worked very hard to build. I want to know whether these varieties are going to be covered, yes or no.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, for years and years, Manitoba Crop Insurance board, by board order,

determined what varieties will be covered year in and year out, and that process has not changed one iota. All the appropriate decisions have been made, and yes, unlicensed varieties, certain varieties, will be covered as they have been for years by board order. They are designated feed wheat varieties that play a very important role in terms of supplying feed wheat to the people who are in the livestock business in this province. I wish she would wake up and understand what is really going on.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the minister is not concerned about our reputation around the world on milling wheat.

Saskatchewan Government Meeting Confirmation

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): With respect to the western grain transportation assistance, the minister has not taken a position on this, or at least he appears not to, but I want to ask the minister: Will he confirm that he is attending a meeting this Monday to try to put pressure on the Saskatchewan government, the only government that has stood up for grain farmers to keep the method of payment the way it is? Will the minister—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it will take half an hour to answer all the ambiguities and misinformation that member has put on the record. She totally disregards the livestock industry in this province, which is the major element of income for farmers in this province. She totally disregards them. She says we should not grow grain to supply that market. The biggest market for people who grow feed grains in this province is the livestock industry; she wants to throw them out.

She names Saskatchewan as supporting the grain farmers of western Canada. I would like to remind her that Saskatchewan totally destroyed the principles of the GRIP program, caused 13,000 farmers to show up at Saskatoon, mad as whatever. I guess, the Saskatchewan government, the federal government—and in Manitoba, we held a forum in Portage, where people showed up with tremendous optimism and enthusiasm about the future because we have the right kind of stabilization program for the farm community of Manitoba.

Personal Care Homes Quality of Health Care

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I took a question from the member for The Maples regarding some layoff notices at Central Park Lodge. I would like to provide my honourable friend in the House with information that I have received on the issue.

I am informed that the administration of Central Park Lodge issued layoff notices to 25 registered nurses, three full time, 14 part time and eight casual, and have indicated that there will be a new staffing mix instituted at Central Park Lodge which will involve three full-time registered nurses, three part-time registered nurses, four full-time licensed practical nurses, four part-time licensed practical nurses and three part- or full-time nursing aide positions with the opportunity that they meet the staffing mix criteria of the Ministry of Health.

The advantage to patient care of this change in mix at Central Park Lodge is that, in fact, residents of that facility will receive 2,600 hours more hands-on care per year, seven hours per day, for greater, not lesser, involvement with the patients by staff, Sir.

* (1030)

Centralization of Health Services Government Policy

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

Part of this minister's health reform package has been the decentralization of services, and we believe that decentralization of services is a necessity to improve the efficiency in the system and spend our health care dollar more effectively. Can the Minister of Health tell this House whether decentralization of services is still the policy of this administration?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, decentralization of services is, yes, a part of the restructuring and reform process in the health care system. There are several agendas which, of course, are as well part of the reform and restructuring process, such as the concept of centres of excellence in terms of our Winnipeg hospital environment, where we hope over the next number of months to establish, by individual hospital program excellence, similar to the initiative that the Urban Hospital Council agreed was an appropriate

change in service provision, for instance, with pediatric services with the consolidation to Children's Hospital.

A third area, Sir, that my honourable friend I know was interested in, that we hoped to see some progress on this year is, of course, the movement of services from, say, the urban environment of Winnipeg and Brandon to appropriate care delivery localities in rural and northern Manitoba so that individuals can be cared for closer to home with the appropriate support by staff, facility, et cetera.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the cytology work from the Manitoba Clinic is being sent to a private lab instead of the Health Sciences Centre. Can the Minister of Health explain how this fits with this policy of centralization of services?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I have to take that question as notice because I am not aware of the details of the program. I will provide him with those kinds of details.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, the Health Sciences Centre has been providing these cytology and Pap smear services in their centre of excellence. Can the minister tell this House, once he has inquired about this situation, will he reverse that decision to make sure that the policy is consistent with the health care package?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I cannot give my honourable friend either a yes or no answer to that until I know the details of this particular test shift as indicated by my honourable friend and the rationale behind it. I will say to my honourable friend that I hope to be able to provide him with that kind of detail on Monday.

Lockport Bridge Closure Tourism Promotion

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): As members of the Legislature are aware, the Lockport Bridge has been closed for over two months, despite the promise by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism that the bridge would probably not even close at all.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Tourism. Has he reconsidered his position on tourism promotion in the Lockport area to take advantage of the increased hours of Lower Fort Garry and to combat the serious loss of business in that area?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, at the outset there was no reconsideration of any position by this minister or this government. We have a request from the community to support some tourism initiatives in the Lockport area, as currently under review by my department. We are in contact with citizens of Lockport, and we will be responding to that very shortly.

We met with them on the issue. We are looking at the kinds of things we can do and most likely will end up jointly supporting an initiative in the tourism area to promote that aspect of their economy.

Mr. Dewar: I would thank the minister for responding positively to my request for tourism promotion.

Lockport Bridge Closure Ferry Proposal

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): My next question is to the Minister of Highways.

Since the deadline for tenders of reconstruction of the bridge is the end of this month, and there is a possibility that the winter road will close at any time, is the minister prepared to assist with putting a temporary ferry to link east Lockport and west Lockport?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what kind of contact the member has with his constituents out there, but I had the privilege of meeting with a group from Lockport yesterday, where they presented a request to me to give consideration for a temporary ferry service. There are many complications and issues that have to be dealt with. I undertook with them to get more information, and once we have that information, we will relay it to them and see whether we can probably accommodate them.

Government Action

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): The residents of the Lockport area have been waiting now for six months for this government to act. Why has this minister not acted before?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I do not know whether it is proper to call a member in this House naive, but I would suggest that this member acquaint himself with the fact that this is a federal responsibility. We, as a

province, have been working very closely together with my colleagues in terms of trying to alleviate the hardship that is being created by the closing of the bridge, but ultimately it is a federal responsibility. We have been bending over backwards to try and help whichever way we can and will continue to do that. He should try and acquaint himself with the facts before he makes statements about six months of inaction by this government.

Private/Independent Schools Funding Levels

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): The Minister of Education says that she is broke. She has no more money for the public education system. Well, the public education system, which she says is a priority—there is just no more money in this government.

We want to ask the Minister of Education: Will the minister acknowledge today that the government of which she is a part has increased the spending to the private, independent and elite schools in this province by more than \$60 million above the formula which was in place when they came to the government, part of the time that she was in government, a cumulative amount over those five years of an additional \$60 million to those private and independent schools? Will she acknowledge that today?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Let me clarify any misunderstanding which my friend may be attempting to stir up. The independent schools of this province in the funding announcement that was made this year received the same 2 percent reduction as all other schools. In addition, through the letter of comfort, though they were to receive an incremental phased-in increase, they did not receive it.

Mr. Plohman: It certainly was a letter of comfort for a number of years. Will the minister—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this minister has not disputed the \$60-million figure, additional increase of funding. Will the minister acknowledge that that same \$60 million, if this government had chosen different priorities, could have been used at the current rate of inflation to fund at inflation, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) promised, the public schools

for the next five years? Will she acknowledge that as well?

Mrs. Vodrey: I cannot accept the preamble that the member has attempted to put into this question by any means. I will tell you that this government has continued its commitment to education in this province. We have continued to fund it in a way that has been fair and equitable.

This year, we have now asked the educational system to look very carefully at its own budget on behalf of all Manitobans. In examining their budgets, we have asked them also to consider first and foremost the students and the integrity of the classroom.

* (1040)

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of priorities. You had a choice, and you chose to put it into the private and elite schools.

Special Needs Children

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Will this minister also tell this House how many children requiring the special services of the Diagnostic Centre, which she cut this last week, and of the speech pathologist and psychologists who help special needs kids in this province, attend these private, elite schools such as St. John's-Ravenscourt and Balmoral Hall?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Well, let us speak about the areas of priorities and a bridge that my honourable friend felt was important and a priority for his government that did not go into educational funding of that government. The Diagnostic Centre has provided support for school divisions, particularly school divisions outside of Winnipeg, rural school divisions. Now there is certainly expertise built up within the home school divisions so that those young people will not have to leave their families. They can remain in their own homes and receive the support.

In addition, through our Diagnostic Centre, however, we have maintained two positions, one position that will assist across this province for the emotionally behaviourally disordered children and another for the severely learning disabled young person.

Northern Communities—Compensation Manitoba Hydro/Saskatchewan Power

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Northern Affairs and the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro.

The government of Manitoba, and I think quite rightly, has joined as an intervener in an action on the part of two bands in northern Manitoba, the Mathias Colomb Band in Pukatawagan and the Barren Lands Band in Brochet, in an action against Saskatchewan Power, which has been regulating the water regimes in Reindeer Lake and the Churchill River for a number of years and causing compensable damage downstream.

There are two Metis communities, one in Granville Lake and the other in Brochet, which because of their direct support from the Department of Northern Affairs, have not been a party to this action.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: Will the government of Manitoba now, on behalf of the communities of Granville Lake and Brochet, involve those communities in the question of compensation that may be due them, both from Manitoba Hydro and from SaskPower?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the issue which the member raises is not a new one for the communities that fall along the Reindeer river system, of which is the joint water system between Saskatchewan and Manitoba and Saskatchewan hydro and the flows of water which come into Manitoba. There have been discussions taking place between Saskatchewan Power and the province and the bands. We are, hopefully, trying to resolve those through consultation with the communities, and as far as we are concerned, the communities should be treated in the same manner as the bands.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, tonight at the Winnipeg Arena, a young man will be honoured for

his magnificent achievements as a member of the Winnipeg Jets.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to deal with that young man from a bit of a different perspective. Teemu Selanne—my wife always corrects me on the pronunciation of his name—is going to be honoured tonight. This young man comes from a country which is very similar to ours. Finland is a northern country with many of the same characteristics as ours, a friendly and industrious population, same reliance on natural resources, a country with a terrain very similar to ours and a country next to a political and economic giant.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of the accomplishments of this young man, people in Finland from Turku to Ilomantsi, from Helsinki to Lapland, all the people of Finland will be focused on Winnipeg and on Canada. This young man has accomplished marvels on the ice. He has done so with humility and courage, for this young man is the kind of person who at the age of 22 years has a ward in a children's hospital named after him. He is the kind of young man who resisted the lures of the big league and the big money to serve his country in its compulsory military service. He is the kind of young man who injured himself quite seriously with a very severe leg break and came back to become one of the greatest hockey players, actually, in the world today.

In short, our country and our city should be proud this young man is working and living here, and I think the measure of what he has done on and off the ice is something that serves as an example both to the children of Canada and to the children of Finland. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister of Education and Training have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great sense of pride to rise today to extend my sincere congratulations and best wishes to three students from école Viscount Alexander. On Thursday, March 11, 1993, Lise Brown, Morag Crawford and Jennifer Oakes received the 1992 Kids are Authors Award for their book, *The Stars' Trip to Earth*.

The winning authors were Grade 8 students at école Viscount Alexander when they wrote and

illustrated their book. As Manitobans, we should be extremely proud of these three young and talented students. Not only will their book be published in Canada, but it will also be published in the United States and Great Britain.

I would like to commend the two teachers from école Viscount Alexander, Madam Mona-Lynne Howden and Miss Leslie Mesman, for their dedication to this project.

On behalf of all members of this Assembly, my sincere congratulations to Lise, Morag and Jennifer.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that notwithstanding Rules 65.(6.1) and (6.2) and the established practices of this House respecting the introduction and referral of the government's expenditure Estimates, the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation shall be tabled, referred to the Committee of Supply and considered by the section of that committee meeting in the Assembly Chamber; and that the Estimates of the Department of Family Services shall be tabled, referred to the Committee of Supply and considered by the section of that committee meeting outside the Assembly Chamber prior to the tabling, and referral to the Committee of Supply of the Main Estimates book containing expenditure Estimates of all government departments.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I would like to rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster does have the right, indeed any member does, to rise on a matter of privilege at any given time, so I will give the floor to the honourable member for Inkster.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe that what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), with some co-operation with the official opposition, is doing is very unparliamentary. What the government is suggesting by moving that motion is that we as a Legislature condone this government in not being prepared for this session.

Let me expand upon it, Mr. Speaker. What the government is asking us to do is to go into the

Estimates of specific departments with not having in our hands the Main Estimates. This has not been done before in terms of recorded history inside this Legislature as long as Hansard has been here, from what I understand. We have had Estimates debated prior to the budget speech, from what I understand, but we have not had Estimates and the line-by-line prior to the Main Estimates being tabled.

As legislators, how can we possibly enter into any legitimate debate or questioning not knowing what other areas of expenditures, what the government is doing scattered through all the other departments and agencies. That is irresponsible.

What this reminds me of is what the Minister of Finance did a number of years ago when he walked out of a committee room. The Liberal Party did not condone it then, we do not condone it now, and we do not condone what this government is trying to do. What this government is trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is undemocratic, as far as it is unparliamentary. We have not done that previously. What we have done, on the odd occasion since 1983, from what I understand, is we have allowed the Estimates to enter into debate and questions as long as the Main Estimates were tabled, but that is not, in fact, what the minister or the government House leader has been asking us, as an opposition, or myself as the House leader to do.

* (1050)

It is wrong, Mr. Speaker. I believe that, as the Speaker of this Chamber you have to review this very seriously, to look at the tradition, not only of the Manitoba Chamber, but also what has been happening in Ottawa, because this particular motion will have an impact on the rights of each and every one of us. Because this government is not prepared to enter into this session, at least have the common decency to have a recess. There is no need—if you do not have an agenda and you are not prepared to debate. You do not want to send bills to committee. As a caucus, we are prepared to allow bills to go into committee, Mr. Speaker.

At the very least, have the common decency and stop wasting taxpayers' dollars and adjourn this House until you are prepared to be able to address the needs—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

The honourable member for Inkster, continue on, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has put up speakers on bills. We are prepared to pass bills.

By the motion, we have two departments, Family Services and Highways. What that tells me is the fact because the government chooses one, the official opposition chooses the other, that the government House leader (Mr. Manness) has been successful in conning the official opposition.

The Liberal Party will not tolerate any deviation from the rules in this Chamber and calls upon you to act and to not allow this to occur.

As a group of seven individuals in this Chamber, and I speak on behalf of the group of the seven of us, the minister is denying us the ability to perform in a responsible fashion dealing with the Estimates.

The onus, Mr. Speaker, is on you.

So at this time I would like to move a motion and suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this matter should be dealt with prior to our even considering doing what this government and the official opposition are suggesting.

Having established a prima facie case for a breach of privilege and having raised the opportunity at the earliest possible opportunity, I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), that this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for examination.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Opposition, on the same matter of privilege.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Yes, rising on the matter of privilege and not taking the bait of some of the emotive language used by the Liberal House leader (Mr. Lamoureux), I, Sir, would advise you to look at the precedence in terms of Estimates and the point raised by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

I am not a parliamentarian in the sense of knowing all the precedents from all times, but I would certainly suggest that you look at the legislative point raised by the member for Inkster.

To me, this is not a one-dimensional debate. We have been called back on March 1. We have, by all estimations, a light legislative agenda at this point before us. We have been critical of the government for that and they are accountable in the public arena.

They will disagree with that point. That is a public dispute, a dispute over the facts, perhaps, a dispute over our own beliefs, but that is fair enough.

Mr. Speaker, we would prefer to have the budget and all the Estimates. That is the way the government has proceeded in past years. That is the way we have proceeded in past years, and we would prefer that. There is no question about that.

Secondly, if we cannot have a budget in all the Estimates, we would prefer the Estimates, period, for all departments. Now, we have some idea of where those Estimates are going. The government has announced major spending decisions in probably two-thirds of government, with Education and health care, not all of the capital decisions in Education, not all of the capital considerations and other decisions in health care, but we are getting a bit of a range of what the government spending decisions are.

We do not have all the revenue items, but we know now that the government is about 33 percent over budget from last year, and their deficit is accordingly going to show for this fiscal year and the government is acting accordingly. So we would prefer, yes, to have all the Estimates. No question.

Having said that, we would prefer then to have something to debate rather than recess, because we believe it is important under these crucial periods of time for the government ministers to be accountable in this Chamber and to answer questions in the House. So we do not see this as a one-dimensional debate.

We disagree, with the greatest of respect, with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). We prefer to be in this Chamber. We do not want to go home at this point, in terms of recessing. We want to work; we want to be in this Chamber. We want to be debating the important public issues, and yes, we are frustrated we do not have all the information. I agree with the member for Inkster on that point.

I also believe that the people of Manitoba, in this recession, in these tough times, when these tough decisions are being made with government, I believe the people of Manitoba are better served with this Chamber being in session and the ministers of the day being accountable in the Question Period time. So I disagree with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) on a recess option.

Having said that, the government has indicated to us and this is—you know, we make our decisions based on what we have available to us. The government has said to us that they can make the Estimates available for the Department of Highways. We will have complete information by early next week, and they will make available for us, initially the Department of Family Services, with information available on Monday and complete information available by Wednesday.

Do we like that compared to having a budget in all the Estimates? No. Do we like that compared to having all the Estimates in front of us? No. But is that better than not having the decisions? We would say we would prefer to have them.

The reason for that is there are some decisions in Family Services that have not been communicated to the external agencies. We believe that moving the Family Services' Estimates forward will allow those agencies that may or may not be cut back to get earlier notice—and so that we can debate those issues in this Chamber. Now, that is not perfect, and I do not know how it fits in terms of all the parliamentary traditions.

It is not perfect but this is not a one-dimensional debate. It is not, either everything or either not, because I think it is important for the people of Manitoba to have ministers before us, to have partial debates before us, rather than recess. We do not want to recess. We want to continue in this Chamber and continue to debate the government of the day. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this is a very unprecedented move on behalf of the government of this province. They ask us to act in responsible manners, as members of the opposition. Well, I would suggest that we cannot act in a responsible manner if we have no basis of comparison with this government's overall economic strategy.

We are going to be presented with two Estimates. We are not being presented with the overall Education Estimates, which are 18 percent of the budget or the Health budget Estimates, which are 34 percent of the budget. We are going to be presented with one item which represents about 11 percent of the budget and then with another item which represents less than 5 percent of the budget. We are supposed to make rational, reasonable decisions as to whether the government has made

good judgment or bad judgment on the basis of that information.

* (1100)

I would suggest that information is woefully inadequate, and that is exactly the reason why in previous years when it has not been possible, for whatever reason, to present the overall budget the government has been prepared to present the Main Estimates book, so that while we do not have revenue, as the budget would indicate, we would not have increases in taxes, as the budget would indicate. We would know what this department's Estimates are in relationship to the other departmental Estimates.

We are being asked to go into Estimates on Monday without any information at that moment of time. I do not know what other members of this House do with their Main Estimates budget, but I do not just look at the ones that I am to critique.

I look at every single budgetary line of this government, so that when I am looking at a cut in a particular social program or service, I am looking at other departments that I think perhaps would deserve a cut more or would be more rational than the one that they have chosen to make.

I cannot do that if I do not have the information available, so I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that I cannot act in a rational and responsible manner, do the job that my constituents have elected me to do, if I do not have that information available to me.

As to the suggestion that we should adjourn until the Main Estimates book is available, we are not asking that the session be overall shorter, we are suggesting that until we can do our job as legislators effectively that we should not be sitting in this Chamber. If we are going to go into a line-by-line debate of Estimates then it is essential that we have the Main Estimates book.

Since the government is not prepared to give us that then we have no business going into the Estimates process until that happens. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that in our phone calls across this country, including to the House of Commons, this is unprecedented. I would ask you to review that legislation, because I think this is a legitimate matter of privilege and one which impacts in the future, not only on this Chamber but every other Chamber in this nation.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the matter of privilege. Let me say, a lot of good commentary has been provided by all speakers to this point in time, particularly the Leaders of the opposition parties.

The Leader of the Liberal Party says that this is unprecedented. I acknowledge that in many respects. I can also indicate the reason that it is unprecedented is that I had a budget date in my mind of March 18, next week, but also unprecedented, Mr. Speaker, was the knowledge of significant revenue reductions that I received and which caused the whole budgetary process to be thrown off track.

Now I can be held accountable for that, and I am and I will be. I will take the blame for that, but there was no way that I was going to hold to a March 18 day, and that was the date I had in my mind with respect to having to make decisions, pressed with the knowledge of new revenue information.

I can care less what the House leader of the Liberal Party wants to make because these are decisions that are impacting significantly on all elements of society in our community. I was not going to be pushed to make them with that type of knowledge and that short a period of time.

The best plans that we laid out last fall, when indeed we agreed that we would come back to this Chamber March 1 or March 8 by joint agreement, were made with the best intentions of all of us. So we are here. We came back March 1 with the full intention to bring down a budget March 18.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I will now acknowledge when we are bringing the budget down, and this will be unprecedented too, where a Minister of Finance—and you can do all your checking—has made an announcement of a budget day when he is dealing with a motion of privilege, that is unprecedented, and maybe the members opposite would want to say because that has never happened in the past, it should never happen now.

Mr. Speaker, the budget date will be April 6, Tuesday. I acknowledge there are some unprecedented actions that are happening that have never happened before, and I am troubled with that. Nevertheless, we are assembled here and there is work to do.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP party says that we have a light legislative calendar, and I make

no apology for that. Yes, we do. We are not bringing in 90 bills this session. That is our philosophical makeup. I do not know if we will bring in 50 bills this session, and I look at the co-chair of our legislative review committee within the government caucus. So we will not be bringing in that heavy legislative load. We are assembled and for the first two weeks—and I have sort of a commitment that the opposition will debate the bills that are on the paper and with due respect to the NDP, that has happened.

Mr. Speaker, the party now that wants, of course, to see this House rise, they put up virtually no speakers and indeed, when we accede to the emergency debate, the mover does not—I cannot say this—there was a dearth of Liberal members in the House on a motion that they brought forward. That is fine. The government sits back and watches this unfold.

We come to this point in time, Mr. Speaker—and I served notice some time ago to the opposition parties as to what I was contemplating, not particularly happy about it. That was to allow the consideration of certain departments, and as the Leader of the official opposition has said, we have made significant announcements around funding to public schools, to municipalities and to universities. I would say next week there will be another significant level of announcements made with respect to those recipient groups who are waiting for announcements. That will be coming next week.

Mr. Speaker, I am mindful also of the public commentary that has been written by one of our more enlightened media who said, make sure that there is something to do. I do not think the members of this House want to necessarily recess and wait to come in after mid-term break and start in April—at the same time that will take a Budget Debate and then not moving into Estimates until basically the end of April, beginning of May.

There still are 240 hours that this House uses, devotes towards that process, the only House in the land that does that. We have talked amongst ourselves. We have talked to the opposition and asked whether or not—yes, unprecedented—they would allow us to bring forward this motion that would let us debate the Estimates of Highways and Transportation and a portion—starting off next week—of Family Services, to be followed immediately, as soon as we can, fully expecting by

the middle of the week to have the full Estimates of that department forward.

Mr. Speaker, what are we talking about? We are talking about one week and a third, because the second week after that, not next week but the week after that, I have to bring in Interim Supply.

I know the members opposite are going to want at least two days to debate Interim Supply, because without passing Interim Supply the cheques cannot be cut in the new fiscal year, so I am asking for a week and a day or two.

Yes, unprecedented. Let us underline that four times. It is unprecedented. That is what I am asking for, and yet what the community is asking for is greater understanding and co-operation in working together in this Chamber. That is what the community is looking for, and the member can shoot across responsible government. Fair enough. I have thick skin, but what does society want, and what does the community want?

I tell you the community want us to be in this House, and they want us to consider meaningful work. I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, the most meaningful work that we can move into in the next week and two days is beginning to review the Estimates of a couple of our departments.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that the member does not have a prima facie case. He says never before, but I say to you never before has a Minister of Finance in this province had to deal with the unprecedented lack of knowledge with respect to income and revenue change over the course of the last month and a half. I ask you to take that into account because that is important, very, very important.

*(1110)

You know, there is a little humour in this because the House leader of the Liberal Party says that I conned the NDP. I have been the House leader for four years. I have never conned the NDP once. The only one we have ever conned is the House leader from the Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, this is an unparliamentary move. I bring forward a motion sincerely developed, and I ask for the support of the House to allow us to do the people's business. Yes, in a fashion which is different than in the past, but bearing in mind the announcements I have made today with respect to the budget date, with respect to the Interim Supply that has to come before—and I think we are agreed

that we are going to take the mid-term break off. I think we have agreed to that. Giving that, I am asking the indulgence of the House to spend next week in the most productive fashion. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all honourable members for their advice on this matter, a matter of privilege which has been raised by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). Indeed, this is a very, very serious matter which has been raised.

The hour being 11:13, right now, I am going to recess the House until 11:30, at which time, the buzzers will not even ring. I will just take my Chair at 11:30, and I will have a ruling on this matter.

* * *

The House took recess at 11:13 a.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 11:40 a.m.

*(1140)

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has raised a matter of privilege concerning the motion before the House. The points he has raised are appropriate points to be raised in debate on the motion moved by the government House leader.

As I understand it, the government, by this motion, which is a debatable and amendable motion, is seeking the approval of the House for a special course of action on this occasion.

To be a matter of privilege, it must be shown that there is an act which obstructs members in their parliamentary work. I am not convinced that there is a prima facie case that demonstrates that members' parliamentary work is being obstructed because the members will be able to do their work within a short period of time when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) tables the entire Estimates.

I should also point out to the House that this is a matter concerning the methods by which the House proceeds in the conduct of its business and, therefore, is a matter of order, not privilege.

As Maingot points out, on page 190: "A breach of the Standing Orders or a failure to follow an established practice would invoke a 'point of order' rather than a 'question of privilege'."

Furthermore, there are several, several precedents of similar occurrences in the Canadian

House, found in the Journals for March 16, 1883, June 1, 1898, April 8, 1948, April 24, 1961, and May 14, 1964. Clearly, then, both the authorities and our practices allow for standing orders to be suspended or amended by motion on notice.

Consequently, I must rule the member's motion out of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I have to challenge the ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair having been challenged, all those in favour of sustaining the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

The question before the House is, shall the rule of the Chair be sustained?

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Doer, Downey, Driedger, Enns, Ernst, Evans (Brandon East), Friesen, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Hickes, Laurendeau, Maloway, Manness, Martindale, McAlpine, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Pallister, Penner, Pichman, Praznik, Reid, Reimer, Render, Rose, Santos, Stefanson, Storie, Sveinson, Vodrey, Wasylycia-Leis, Wowchuk

Nays

Alcock, Carstairs, Cheema, Gaudry, Gray, Lamoureux

Mr. Clerk (William Remriant): Yeas 40, Nays 6.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Friday, March 12, 1993

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