



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
WASYLCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 15, 1993

The House met at 8 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (continued)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): In accordance with the provisions of Rule 65.(6.1) the sequence for consideration of the Estimates of the various government departments by each section of the Committee of Supply has been established as follows, and I will table that listing, Mr. Speaker. It is duly signed by the opposition House leader and by myself.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Agreed? Order, please.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I would like to—I do not know how—withdraw that motion and move the proper motion.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that this House at this sitting resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Government House leader (Mr. Manness), seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that this House, at this sitting, will resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. Agreed? No?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that debate be adjourned.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that debate be adjourned. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Okay. The question before the House is—

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if the government is unwilling to allow me to adjourn debate, I will be more than happy to start the debate at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There was a question already before the House: Should debate be adjourned? We will deal with that matter first. Then I will recognize the honourable member for Inkster.

The question before the House is: Shall debate be adjourned?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? All those in favour, 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 Nays have it.

* (2005)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, just to indicate that it was on division, but I would like to take this opportunity—[interjection] It does not mean that the bells are going to ring. Do not worry, Mr. Manness. Boy, oh boy. I am going to take—[interjection] I hope the government does not get overly excited. I am not saying that the bells should ring and we are asking for a recorded vote—a very, very sensitive government, I tell you, recently.

Mr. Speaker, what the government has done is, they have brought in something in which they really had not consulted with at least the third opposition, and that should not surprise me, because this

particular House leader does not have any sense of fairness or genuine concern about co-operating and ensuring that the House business is in fact being dealt with. [interjection]

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says that the clock is running and we might want to ask questions of the minister. Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe that what is most important at this stage in the game is that members are given the opportunity to be able to debate this motion because in fact it is a debatable motion.

Earlier today, I was not really given the opportunity to debate something which the government was trying to put on to us, something that I felt was most unfortunate, and I thought that I might take this opportunity to talk about a few of the concerns that I have with respect to this government and some of the actions that this government has taken.

I wanted to talk about a grant that was cut back, the grant that the government—[interjection] I appreciate the opportunity to be able to digest some of those off-the-record comments that have been going around. I can assure everyone that is concerned, legitimately concerned, not to be overworried, that even though I am here there is a hard-working campaign committee ensuring that my interests are, in fact, being taken care of. They have nothing to fear that, even though my competition might not necessarily be here at this present moment, my campaign is still in full swing and things will unfold as they will.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me talk specifically about something that occurred today that I believe the minister responsible intentionally did or something that she has been planning on doing ever since she took the responsibility of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. I want to go over it in good detail because this particular budget says very, very clearly what it is that they think about the multicultural community.

You will recall that, when this government was first elected, Mr. Speaker, the first thing that the minister did was to take away—or actually she had attended a meeting with the Manitoba Intercultural Council. When the minister met with the Manitoba Intercultural Council, what happened there, you will see, is that the minister was disappointed with what the Manitoba Intercultural Council had to say. At that point in time, the minister then made the

decision that she could not support the Manitoba Intercultural Council. She decided that what she would do is to take away its power, first the money, the granting authority, and then the policy aspect of it.

* (2010)

Now, Mr. Speaker, according to the press release that was issued today, they have now indicated with this particular budget that the Manitoba Intercultural Council will not receive any monies. Well, what that does, for all intents and purposes, is it kills MIC, the Manitoba Intercultural Council. Now I find that is somewhat unfortunate, that this is something that we believe that the government has in fact done a disservice. [interjection] Well, to the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, there is an incumbency that there should be some relevancy with respect to the member's remarks. The purpose of the motion is to set up a committee dealing with supply. That is what we are debating right now. The member now is into debate associated with some aspect of a decision that was made today. The member, if he would let committee set up and then move into that committee, would have incredible opportunity to ask questions and make reference to that, but, indeed, the motion before us is whether or not there is a willingness to set up the committee to set to deal with Supply, the 240 hours, over all the departments of government.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yes, on the same point of order, indeed, this is not a grievance, as perhaps some people are under the misapprehension that it is. While the House leader does have a point that perhaps the member's remarks are not specifically relevant to this, I do not think there is the same kind of requirement on Supply motions. Relevance can be broadly viewed by the member that is speaking.

I must admit that I wonder if the Liberal member is being relevant to anything in particular speaking on this, but that is his right. I would suggest we let him continue on this particular motion.

Mr. Lamoureux: On that same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat disappointed in the remarks from the opposition House leader and somewhat surprised with the remarks from the

government House leader. He himself, in his answer, said that if I allow this to go into committee, then I will have the opportunity to ask the questions that I am suggesting within the debate.

What we are talking about is the debate in principle of going into committee and there is absolutely nothing wrong. It is completely relevant. The government has taken away funding from an organization, funding in which I would be able to ask the minister if we went into the committee—[interjection]—and to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger), we will get into it when members have been given the opportunity to be able to debate it.

Had the government House leader, in co-operation with the opposition House leaders—and there is a plural when I say opposition House leaders—maybe we might have been into it, but government has to realize that they do not have the ultimate control of this Chamber. This Chamber is for each and every one of these individuals, and it should not be taken advantage of the rules of this—

* (2015)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please: On the point of order raised, I would like to remind the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that we are indeed debating—or, indeed, the motion is, at this sitting, that the House will resolve itself into Committee of Supply. I would ask the honourable member to keep his remarks fairly relevant to said question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would pose the question to you just to seek your guidance. Well, for clarification on the rules in terms of relevancy, I would argue that we can in fact, and I will continue to talk about—and if someone feels that I am being irrelevant, I would suggest that they stand up—but I would suggest to you that we can talk about the budget.

Mr. Lamoureux: Anyway, I am going to continue. The government brought forward a press release earlier today that had a number of grants that were being taken away. We had today a number of questions that came from the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) to the Leader of the third party (Mrs. Carstairs) dealing with the impact of the decisions that were made from this government.

These are the types of things that we believe that the government has not necessarily been straightforward, that the government has an opportunity and has a responsibility to come to this Chamber better prepared in order to tell us what the overall picture is, that we do not feel that this government is telling us specifically, I say, generally, what its plan is with respect to the overall Estimates of this government.

I wanted to comment on one particular grant, because that is the grant which I am very familiar with. That is, of course—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I find it offensive to this Chamber that a member, on a motion of whether or not this House should set up a committee to deal with Supply, takes a press release today that announces certain grants, and now is going to focus in on one of those grant areas where withdrawal of funding was made to a specific agency and attempt to make a 40-minute speech on that.

The member has complete licence on Budget Debate to touch any and every issue that is associated with the fiscal decisions of this government. Interim Supply next week, he has that same opportunity. A grievance, he has that same opportunity.

The member has unlimited areas and times on motions when he can have a far-reaching debate on any issue under the sun, but not on this motion. This motion deals with whether or not this House wants to set up a committee to deal with Supply.

Mr. Speaker, I expect you to call him to that motion. This is not a freewheeling debate. The freewheeling debate can come on many, many motions, but not on this one.

Mr. Ashton: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think our rules are quite clear in terms of relevance and repetition. On Beauchesne Citation 459, it does indicate: "Relevance is not easy to define. In borderline cases the Member should be given the benefit of the doubt, although the Speaker has frequently admonished Members who have strayed in debate."

I think, Mr. Speaker, you had admonished the member previously.

I think the point that should be raised here is that the member will have the opportunity to get into wide-ranging debate on various other sections of the Supply procedure, most particularly Interim Supply and in terms of grievance motions.

I would suggest perhaps again that you rule on the relevancy, but perhaps we might just remind members there are other opportunities to get into freewheeling debate and not on this particular portion of the motion.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would like to remind all honourable members of our Rule 30: "Speeches shall be direct to the question under consideration."

Again, I will remind the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that we will be considering at this time, at this sitting, that we would resolve ourselves into Committee of Supply. Therefore, we are attempting to set up the Committee of Supply.

I would ask the honourable member for Inkster to keep his remarks relevant to said question.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe that what we see is a government House leader and a somewhat frustrated opposition House leader not wanting to lose any sort of composure over an issue which both are very sensitive to. They feel, Mr. Speaker, that in fact if they stand up and try to intimidate that they will be successful.

* (2020)

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I rose twice, both on points of order. On both occasions the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) had the opportunity to rise on a point of order. I did not consider it particularly intimidating when he spoke on the point of order, and I would say that the member should withdraw that comment. When I speak on a point of order, it is not to intimidate, it is to ensure the proper following of the rules.

Mr. Speaker: Although I do not believe the word "intimidate" does show up under unparliamentary language, I would like to caution the honourable member that in view of the fact that we have the watching public here this evening, a bunch of young Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, I would ask the honourable member to pick and choose his words very carefully.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: I would continue by saying that we should not be going into Committee of Supply for a number of reasons. Mr. Speaker, the primary reason—I will give the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) a number of reasons as to why we should not be going into this.

Earlier today and in fact on Friday we saw a government try to bring into this Legislature an unprecedented step, something which the current government House leader himself (Mr. Manness) said was unprecedented. Completely unparliamentary is what I believe the government House leader had said. The government has felt, for whatever reason, that it does not need to sit down and to negotiate. This is something that we had no advance warning of.

Mr. Manness: I told you three weeks ago.

Mr. Lamoureux: No, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) did not say to me three weeks ago that he was going to be bringing in Committee of Supply at eight o'clock this evening. He had no indication whatsoever so that if members of the caucus—[interjection]

Well, you know, if the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) feels that what I am saying is wrong, I would challenge him to put it onto the record when he did tell me, because he did not tell me we would be going into the Committee of Supply on Monday evening.

Mr. Manness: No. I said I would be going there before the budget. That is what I told you.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, he says, before we go into the budget, anytime by April 6. That is great. I wonder, you know, Mr. Speaker, in fairness to my caucus colleagues, at least my caucus colleagues, as a courtesy it might have been good to know that we were going into Committee of Supply this evening so that if they had some questions when we went into the committee they could pose those questions, but the government has not been forthright with what their intentions are in dealing with the agenda of this Chamber, because they do not necessarily have an agenda.

The Committee of Supply does provide individuals the opportunity to be able to ask questions of any of the ministers dealing with budgetary lines or things that are happening within.

This is the reason why I would even argue and continue to argue, and I might even get into it a bit later, that what I was referring to at the beginning of the speech is in fact relevant to this particular debate.

It just depends on how sensitive one is in the time of the year or the time of negotiations. Obviously this particular government House leader is very sensitive because he feels somewhat frustrated no doubt that things are not going the way in which he had planned them to go, maybe feeling that we as a third party in this Chamber have not been as co-operative as he would have liked to have thought we would have been.

* (2025)

We want to be co-operative. We have indicated on many occasions certain things that we would be willing to do to ensure that government is able to achieve what it is that they want to do. That has occurred not only in this session but in previous sessions. I could go back to shortly after the last provincial election, where the three House leaders sat down and they decided we would have what was the shortest session, Mr. Speaker, from what I understand the shortest session of the history here in the province of Manitoba in order to get this government back on financial track. From that we went in terms of co-operating getting us onto a schedule that saw us ending by or at least gave us an opportunity to end by the end of June. The opposition parties, in particular the Liberal Party in this Chamber, have been most co-operative in trying to get things done in this House. That is why I personally feel very offended.

What the government is doing is trying to put opposition members, and I cannot say all of the opposition members because I do not know if in fact the NDP were consulted—did they know that this was going to be happening?

I can speak on behalf of our caucus. We did not know and by the government taking the actions that it did at eight o'clock or at ten after eight, because I know that we got off to a bit of a rocky start because of his sensitivity, Mr. Speaker, but because of the action of the minister, what has happened is that caucus colleagues of mine that might have questions that they want to ask of the different ministers are not going to be able to ask those if in fact they were wanting to ask them this evening or quite possibly a bit later. I do not know in terms of

what the NDP were going to do as an opposition, had they planned on asking questions throughout the evening, or what intentions are of others.

That is why I would argue that there should be a common courtesy. The courtesy has been there somewhat in the past from the government House leader, and I would have anticipated that we would have been given some sort of forewarning. For the government House leader to say, well, at one LAMC meeting we said that we were going to bring in Committee of Supply before the budget. Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the minister, yes, he might have said that. I am not going to say, he did not say that. The budget is going to come down April 6. When did he know we were going to be going into Committee of Supply? Did you know today? Did you know at eight o'clock? Did you know after you found out that you are not going to get your departments into the Estimates? Is that when you decided to go into Committee of Supply?

An Honourable Member: It has been on the Notice Paper.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we did not know that the government—we did not know.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the government does want to get into the Estimates process. I do not believe that we should be going into the Estimates process. I am going to let you know why I believe that.

In fact, the Leader has given me the opportunity to be able to have her designation on the motion. I anticipate that what will happen is that we will not go into the Department of Family Services and we will not go into the Department of Highways. It is not a question of not being able to or not wanting to be able to discuss the different cuts that are out there. It is a question of having the main Estimates before us like every other Legislature has had for the last number of years. [interjection]

* (2030)

Well, you do not know—the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) knows no more than I in terms of the considerations that were given with that exception to the rules. There is a tradition that has to be followed. Mr. Speaker, we as an opposition party have a responsibility to ensure that it is going to be followed.

I was somewhat hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that I would be given unlimited debate time on this, but I

have just been told that I would not be able to. So that means I am going to have to be a bit more specific.

I am going to get back to the lack of co-operation from this government. I have to comment on the lack of co-operation, because the government and the official opposition are very sensitive whenever I start talking about the budget because they believe that this particular motion has nothing to do with the budget.

Mr. Speaker, out of respect for that, I will stay away from that budgetary discussion and just focus again on the importance of allowing individuals the opportunity of having some sort of notice that would allow people to be somewhat prepared. It would be nice.

Can you imagine at eight o'clock we find out that we are going to be going into Committee of Supply? This is what we found out. At eight o'clock we are told we are going to go into Committee of Supply.

Well, what kind of notice—how does that allow members of the opposition the ability to be able to ask the questions that they feel are necessary to be asked of the government? Mr. Speaker, after all I am sure that the government ministers would like the questions to be well researched and informed so that when we ask a question the minister would be better able and better equipped to give us a response that in fact would be worthy or meaningful of something, Mr. Speaker.

That in itself is one of the reasons why the Committee of Supply, we should not be even going into the Committee of Supply.

Another reason—

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I will make you a deal, Kevie. You have a leadership campaign. You take two weeks holidays, let us get on with the business, and you go out with the leadership.

Mr. Lamoureux: Maybe the Minister of Health should leave the debate for myself at least at this point in time, because he and the rest of the government and the NDP want to get into the committee stage. So if they do not want to debate it, and there are members who are willing to be able to debate it, well, we are entitled to do that debating.

I know that the government is a bit sensitive in terms of, rules do not necessarily have to be

followed nowadays, that they are quite willing to go over the rules or ignore the rules wherever possible—

Mr. Orchard: We make the rules.

Mr. Lamoureux: No, the government does not make the rules.

Mr. Orchard: We make the rules in this Chamber.

Mr. Lamoureux: The government does not make the rules. It is the Legislative Chamber that contributes to the rules.

Mr. Orchard: That is right. That is what I said.

Mr. Lamoureux: That is not what the Minister of Health said.

Mr. Orchard: It is very unusual that New Democrats and Conservatives would agree on how we do the rules.

Mr. Lamoureux: No, that is not true. The Conservatives and New Democrats have been agreeing a lot lately together. That does cause me some concern, but I guess there has to be a silver lining in everything. The silver lining I guess would be something to the effect that they are somewhat fearful of a Liberal resurgence, and a Liberal resurgence, Mr. Speaker, will in fact occur. All you have to do is just look around at some of the glum faces and the in-fighting that is going on in the other two. We have people who are leaving, not only leaving caucuses; they are leaving and joining other political parties.

Anyway, I digress somewhat. Mr. Speaker, Committee of Supply is very important in the sense that what it does is, it allows us the opportunity to be able to ask those questions, very important questions no doubt, that need to be asked, and the Leader of the official opposition wants to get into those questions, and I am sure that, I hope at least he does want to ask a question or two, it is not just an attempt to get myself to sit down and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, I recall an incident—it was not that long ago—where it was suggested that I sit down because they want to ask questions, and then the NDP and the Conservatives again took sides and they passed it. They called it the concurrence, if they will recall it, in which they took that liberty, and my mistake at that time was listening to a Mr. Cowan and a Mr. Manness to some extent. It happened that time, so you will have to forgive me if I do not necessarily believe when I am being heckled from

the Leader of the official opposition and members of the government that this might not necessarily be the best and most opportune time to stand up and give a debate.

What we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, is the principle of what this government is doing and the fashion in which it is trying to accomplish it. So what is the government doing? It is trying to go into a committee, and the way that it is trying to go into that committee is really what we oppose. [interjection] The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) is wrong. It is not by a consensus. If it was a consensus, that would imply that there was a general agreement from all of the members. That did not occur. Maybe the member for Burrows and his caucus were advised that this would be happening. Maybe they were advised that this in fact would be happening this evening.

But, Mr. Speaker, they might not necessarily like to believe that we are an opposition party, but I would suggest to you that we are just as legitimate and argue that we are more of a real opposition than them, than the New Democratic Party. We, too, deserve a warning. We do deserve the co-operation from the government House leader as to what its intentions are. The government has not been forthright with their intentions.

We knew that, for example, they were going to try to bring in two departments into the Estimates, the Department of Family Services and the Department of Highways, something that we had indicated to the government we could not do. The reason why we said we could not do that, Mr. Speaker, was quite simply because we do not believe we can go into the line-by-line discussions of any department until we have the Main Estimates tabled.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is not unreasonable to ask for. The reason why I say it is not unreasonable is because it has never been done before. It has never been done before in the Province of Manitoba where we have seen two departments coming forward for thorough questioning and so forth prior to the Main Estimates. Now, one can come up with all sorts of rationale, and the government tried to do that.

I go back to two remarks. The first remark was something where there was a consensus between the government House leader and the New Democratic Party and that was that they want to do something now. There is no sense in wasting time.

Mr. Speaker, there is no need to waste time, I agree. We do not have to waste time, and I propose a way in which we can ensure that there is no wasting of time.

Mr. Speaker, the second thing—and the government House leader himself is the one who said it—he said that it was unparliamentary what they were asking us to do. I agree with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), the government House leader, that what he was asking the official opposition party and the opposition party to do was, in fact, unparliamentary. [interjection] Well, that is what the government House leader said. [interjection] No, it is very clear. I will get another opportunity in which I will quote it right from Hansard.

* (2040)

This particular debate, we had anticipated the government to push on this afternoon. In fact, they did attempt to push on it. Then, Mr. Speaker, when they figured out that the Liberal Party was not going to allow the government to do this unprecedented action, they decided that the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) would adjourn debate and not even allow myself the opportunity to start debate on that issue, which is a shame. Out of the time that I have been here, it is the first time that I have seen the government prevent someone from speaking, from debating on a motion or a bill. We even had a vote on the issue, a vote which indicated that not only did the Conservatives not want me to speak, the NDP did not want me to speak.

This is something that I find is somewhat unfortunate, because whether you agree with what it is that we want to do as an opposition party or as an individual member, the very least, I suggest to all members of this Chamber, is to respect the rules and procedures and precedents and traditions that have been established, and, Mr. Speaker, that has not occurred. This government, and with co-operation, has not done that, and now we see as a direct result of this the government is now trying to move into Committee of Supply. Had the government wanted to again have that co-operation from the Liberal caucus, as I am sure that they had—he must have consulted with the New Democratic caucus—but had he consulted with us, we could have, in fact, moved into Committee of Supply—[interjection]

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of having one's nose out of joint; it is a question of being able

to be aware as to what is going to be coming up so that members are able to ask the questions of the ministers and so forth. Well, I do not believe that is too much to ask. It is not too much to ask for a common courtesy of the government House leader indicating to the opposition party that we want to go into Committee of Supply this evening.

Mr. Speaker, even had the government House leader implied it to us at six o'clock on Friday that eight o'clock we were wanting to go into Committee of Supply, and we felt that it was an appropriate thing to do, then we would have entered into the Committee of Supply. But I think this has provided an excellent opportunity for me to have commented on the issues that I did comment on. After all, what the government, as I say, has done in the recent votes that we have had on Friday and the two that we had today does, in fact, need to be reinforced, because it dangerously come close to infringing on the rights of individual members inside this Chamber.

You know, it was interesting. I do not know if the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) intentionally sat in his chair a bit longer than he usually does when he stood up for that one vote. I think that the dean of the Chamber, whom I have had some discussions with—I do respect the things that he does say with respect to the rules. I do not necessarily agree with some of the stuff that he has done or some of the things that he has said, particularly that you have to have four members in the Chamber to vote, because that was not in fact practised previously.

I am sure that there are members in this Chamber that cross all three political parties, that believe that what the government is doing is not right, that the government should not—if it wants to do what it is, that if it wants to get those two departments in particular brought through, then do it with the unanimous consent of all the individuals inside the Chamber.

If they were to take that sort of approach to dealing with the agenda of the Chamber there would be that much more co-operation. It is the same thing with the Committee of Supply. If the government House leader was more co-operative, we potentially could have been into the questions and answers of the ministers at this point in time. Potentially, we could have been but, unfortunately, for whatever reason, the government has decided not to do it.

Mr. Speaker, that is something in which I believe that I hope the government will think about. I would like to see the government House leader think about what it is that he is suggesting. If I can give some advice or an opinion or a suggestion to the minister or to the government House leader, it would be not to force in the Estimates until, at the very least, the main Estimates have been there. We cannot as a responsible opposition comment and question on issues or budgetary detailed lines not knowing what the other Supplementary Estimates are going to be.

This is not something that is new. This is something that every other Legislature, from what I understand, in particular in Manitoba, has never ever done before. Never has the government ever had two departments or broken it up prior to sending in the main Estimates. If the government House leader was in fact sensitive to that—well, Mr. Speaker, then we can get onto debating the bills, passing them to committee, having committees meet so that it is dealing, so that the hours that we are putting in here are in fact productive. Every day that we sit in here, it costs taxpayers dollars. [interjection]

Ah, Mr. Speaker, they walked into the trap. I was hoping that you would hear the bit of uproar that they just finished giving. The Liberal Party has been prepared to pass bills into committee. We are not the ones that are standing the committees. Whatever happened to the Sunday shopping bill? It has never been called into committee. Here we are going into the committee—the government has asked for the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I fail to see what the Sunday shopping bill has to do with setting ourselves up into Committee of Supply. I ask the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) to keep his remarks relevant.

Mr. Lamoureux: The government wants to go into Committee of Supply because they say that there is no other agenda, that there is no other debate. Mr. Speaker, we have not even seen the government act on other issues, on the other agenda items that this government is supposed to have, things like the Sunday shopping, that the committee has not been called. Even the Leader of the official opposition agrees with me on that point.

Mr. Speaker, if the government had its agenda in place and knew what it was going to be doing, had some things which we could be debating and was

calling those up for debate, then we debate them. Then, if we are done debating them, we go into the Committee of Supply, or when the government gives notice saying that we are going to go into Committee of Supply, then we do that. But, once the government's agenda is over, if you will, and April 6 is what he says the budget date is going to be, well then, why continue to waste the taxpayers' dollars by sitting inside here? Why not recess it if it is necessary? [interjection]

* (2050)

I will deal with that, once we get into the main motion about going into the Estimates, where I will have ample opportunity to talk about it, Mr. Speaker.

Had the government House leader been able to deal with the opposition parties on a consultation basis, in fact, we could achieve a lot more, not to be preoccupied with not sitting in July, not sitting for a summer period—and this is the reason that we have to sit now. I would ask for the government House leader to seriously consider and not to try force in the Estimates prior to the Main Estimates because, in fact, that would be—

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

Mr. Ashton: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wonder, first of all, if you could perhaps remind members of which motion we are dealing with.

Mr. Speaker: Presently we are dealing with the motion and I will read the motion back to the House: It was moved by the honourable government House leader (Mr. Manness) and seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that the House at this sitting would resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Ashton: I asked for that reminder because the last 50 minutes I wondered if I had perhaps come to the wrong place today, Mr. Speaker. I thought I had come to the Manitoba Legislature. I thought the Minister of Finance had introduced a Supply motion.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would advise the opposition House leader that, in fact, the time to bring up this particular issue, or if he is trying to raise a point of order, he would have been better off to raise that point of order in terms of relevancy in the last 15, 20 minutes.

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

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I was not raising a point of order. I was speaking to the motion, and I would advise the Liberal House leader perhaps to come out of the twilight zone of irrelevancy and understand what we are debating. We are debating a motion that would take us into Committee of Supply.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the order was announced by the House leader at eight o'clock, agreed to by all parties in this House in terms of the order.

I understand that the Liberal member has a concern; he feels we should not be debating Estimates until after the Budget. Let us understand what that would result in. The Budget has been announced on April 6. We would not be debating Estimates until after the Budget Debate has taken place. We would be into the middle of April before we would be dealing with it.

I, for one, after seeing what has happened in departments such as Family Services, and our caucus having seen what has happened with some of the cuts that have taken place in terms of grants, some of the policy issues, Mr. Speaker, we do not want to wait till the middle of April to discuss them. We want to debate them today.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the best use of the time of this House would be for us to agree to this motion and go into the business of the people of Manitoba and discuss the Department of Highways and the Department of Family Services Estimates.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on this motion. The issue in front of us is the basic parliamentary debate in terms of what is good for the people of Manitoba. For the last five years—[interjection] One of the members was saying that my reputation is going to go down the drain. That is very unfortunate because I do not think that is the case, but that is his view. Time will tell whose reputation is going to go down the drain.

Mr. Speaker, for the last five years, we have gone into the Estimates debate after we have seen the main booklet, after we have seen the whole budget, and that has happened for the last five years. Basically, what the member for Inkster (Mr.

Lamoureux) is simply requesting is some respect for the parliamentary system, and I was reading the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), for whom I have a great deal of respect, and he said that day that it is really unprecedented, that these things have never happened. Why are we doing this now?

We understand that the Minister of Finance is going to bring the budget down on April 6, but why debate something when we do not know the whole part of the budgetary process? It will be really unfortunate if some of the organizations which we see today are getting cuts, if some of these individuals are getting hurt. It is a very tough economic time, and people want to know exactly what we are going to do. It will be best if we can debate the whole thing in a major way and try to understand where the areas are where we can make a rational judgment, where we can say we have alternate ways of delivering help and alternate ways of delivering some of the services.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we do not have a single department which does not affect other departments. The whole process has to be dealt with as a budgetary process. Why set up something which we cannot continue to deliver next year? We are simply asking the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to respect his own views.

The Minister of Finance said that we are in a very tough economic time, and we want to make certain changes. We want to be responsible, and to be responsible we will assist him. We are simply asking him to wait for a week.

Let the whole budget come down, and then we can debate all those things. The argument was given to us that we have not debated all the departments. For the last five years, we always missed some departments. We have debated many areas within hours, and that was not very good, but what we are simply asking today, we are simply asking you, through the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), to come to a conclusion and respect his own views. I was reading the Minister of Finance's comments, and he made it very clear that this thing has never happened. Why do we want to do it now? That is not very right.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of taking shots at the government. It is not a question of taking shots at the official opposition. It is simply asking all of us to do the right thing. The right thing is to bring the

budget and when the budget comes, then let us debate.

Mr. Speaker, if we read your comments, you did not specify that the budgetary process has taken place in the past. It has never happened. [interjection] No, it did not happen. Absolutely not. Mr. Speaker said that this kind of motion has been presented and motions can be changed, but he never said that the debate has taken place in the Estimates process, as far as I can recall.

Mr. Speaker can correct me if I am wrong. That was the interpretation we were given. We can make the argument on both sides of the issue. The question here is that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has not been treated with respect on this whole process.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the common sense then. If common sense says, let us deal with our budgetary process and let us deal with the process as a whole, why do you want to change the process? We want you to make the tough decision, and we want you to do what is best for the people of Manitoba.

We want them to make the right choices. We are not going to derail the whole process. We are simply asking them to respect the parliamentary system.

An Honourable Member: You want to sit here in July; that is what you want.

Mr. Cheema: It is not a question of, we want to sit here till July. We have sat in this House at the end of July. That was in '88 and '89. We have sat many hours, we have broken many records, and what has changed now? Basically, things have changed. Something is happening in Ottawa. They have delayed the budget, and the minister of Finance is in a very tough position. So we understand how the Minister of Finance is going through a very tough time, and we want to help him to make tough choices.

An Honourable Member: You asked us to explain why we were using this approach, but you do not listen.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, we are listening and the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) tried—

An Honourable Member: No, you are not. If you listen to what was said and why, he was asking you

to accommodate a situation. That is what this is all about instead of wasting this stupid time here.

* (2100)

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) is getting a tad bit excited from his seat.

Mr. Speaker: What is the point?

Mr. Lamoureux: I would suggest that if the Minister of Highways and Transportation wants to exercise his right to be able to speak on this that he wait until the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) is done and then take that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, I do understand the Minister of Highways, who has been a very polite person, has been very upset. There has to be some reason. We understand that reason is that the government has not been able to bring the full agenda and they do not have anything to discuss so they are upset.

We are simply asking the Minister of Highways and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to be accommodating and not to get very excited and not to get upset.

It seems like the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is being shouted down and being threatened. I think that is not fair. The member for Inkster has been very fair to the government.

An Honourable Member: I have never seen Albert mad in my life.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, that is true. I have never seen—

An Honourable Member: Even when Glen Cummings got kicked out before he was supposed to, I never saw him get mad.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, could you please ask the members to let me speak? I do not think I can speak when there is so much heckling going on.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to see is some kind of common sense approach to a very complex issue in front of us; we are debating a very, very important thing in terms of why we have to debate two parts

of the whole budgetary process. That is what we are debating. Why not bring the whole budget in? Why not bring the main Estimates book in? Then we can debate all the things in a very positive fashion. Well, if they do not have their act together, why not have a recess for a week, come back and do it again?

An Honourable Member: It has happened before.

Mr. Cheema: It has never happened in this House. [interjection] Once we have the whole Estimates book.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has raised a very good point. Why are we wasting time? I want to tell you that we are not wasting our time. We are simply protecting the parliamentary debate and the right of all the members in this House. [interjection]

Mr. Speaker, anybody who can give me a good argument, I will agree with them, but I think this issue is more important than short-term arguments. We have been very co-operative. We have been very assisting with the government in many ways. We have been asking them to make tough choices. We are simply asking the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to consider many things, which are very important. I have heard the minister for the last five years, and I do have respect for him because I understand we are in a very, very tough time, and we have to make tough choices. To make those tough choices, the minister should bring the whole budget in front of us where we can debate it in a very intelligent way. I do not think we can debate in a pick-and-choose way and say we are going to debate this department today and that department the next day. That is not right. That is not the way things work.

Mr. Speaker, today we had the list, and lists can only have a meaning if we have the whole process in front of us. When we do not have the whole process, when we do not have the whole Estimates book, how can we debate one or two departments? [interjection] The public impact, as the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) is saying, is great. That is why we should be very, very careful. We should not be making choices unless we know the full truth. I do not know what, in terms of the process—we do not know how much Health is going to get. We do not know how much Education is going to get. We do not know how much the social services are going to get. We do not know how much Highways and

Transportation is going to get. We just want to know the whole process. [interjection] I do not know whether they are going to get a minus two or minus four. We are simply asking to have the full process—

Mr. Speaker, it looks like my speech is getting some members yawning and some are sleeping. It does not matter to me. [interjection] If the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) wants to send this speech to my constituents, please feel free to do it. It does not matter. I do work for them and they know it very well, and I do not have to make speeches to prove that. I am there to work for them.

Mr. Speaker, we are simply requesting that you ask the government to follow what has been done in the past, to bring in the whole Estimates process and then debate all the departments in a meaningful way, and that has not happened this year. That is what the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has been trying to do since this morning, to try to convince the government to have some kind of respect for the third party in this House.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that the political spectrum can change very quickly. Things can change, and if, as legislative members, we do not perform our functions well, which we were asked to do by the taxpayers of Manitoba, we will not do our job properly. To do that job effectively, we must do what has been done in the past, unless we have some disasters happening, which could happen if we are just debating one or two departments.

Debating one or two departments separately is not going to tell the agencies and the other departments how this government is going to—it is not an ideal situation, but what is the rush? Why can we not have a recess for a week and come back and debate the whole issue?

Mr. Speaker, if we do not want to have a recess, then bring in the bills and talk on those bills. If there were no bills, then why did we come back on March 2? [interjection] It does not matter to me what the opinion of the Agriculture minister is. What matters is what I think in terms of what I am supposed to do here.

There has to be respect in terms of the parliamentary debate, accountability and a responsible opposition. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has tried, as of this morning and probably as of Friday too, to tell the government to come to their senses and try to reach a compromise and make sure that all party views are represented.

[interjection] Mr. Speaker is laughing because he has never seen me speaking on anything else except health, so I am trying to get some ideas together here.

The important thing is that we should follow what we preach, and what we preach, then we should practise that. That was said by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). That was on March 12. He made it very clear, this thing has never happened before. [interjection] As the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is saying, perfectly clear. He tried to make it perfectly clear, so why does he not follow the same way as he said?

Mr. Speaker, we are asking, through you, through the government of Manitoba, make sure that they bring in the full Estimates process so that we can have intelligent debate.

It has been a tough time in terms of the many things happening in this province. Many workers are laid off. There are families that are going through a rough time. There are going to be very difficult decisions, so government should try to be as flexible as possible, to make sure that at least a third party is on their side in terms of making tough decisions.

If they want to have that kind of co-operation, then I think they should respect the third party the same way they are respecting the official opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the difference of 2,100 votes between the two parties does not really make much difference. Things can change. Fifty votes per riding can change the whole spectrum.

So let us not discount the third party. I think I am seeing that this has been the case for the last few days.

* (2110)

As I said, 2,180 votes does not really tell them the third party has no status in this House. That is not right. There are a lot of Manitobans who voted for us—138,000. There was only a 2,180 vote difference between us and the NDP. That is not more than 50 votes per riding. So let us not say that the third party—muzzle the third party and do not worry about them. That has been the case.

That is very unfortunate, because we would like to co-operate with the government. We know tough choices have to be made. We will help them to make tough choices, but to have an intelligent debate, an informative debate, you need to have the

full picture and, when we are missing the full picture, how can we make a judgment call?

We saw this morning some cuts, but those cuts, unless you see the whole picture, as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) said, if we are cutting in one area, that does not mean you have other services also being cut, so why not have a full picture and see which area, if there is any duplication of services, so we can take away, but that can only be done if we have the full picture.

There are many examples. There are many services which are being duplicated and triplicated. That can be done in a very meaningful way. That will only happen if we have the full picture. At least we can study the whole prospect and see what we can explain to our constituents. We can tell them that the government has to make tough choices, and tough choices will only be appreciated if we are well informed and we can inform others also.

We will do our best. As far as I am concerned, I will do what is best for the taxpayers of Manitoba. That can only be done if I know what is in the Health debate, in the Health Estimates book, what is in the social services book, what is in the Education book and how they are going to impact on each other.

It is very, very difficult to be on the government's side as a third party. It is very, very politically risky, but if it is the right thing to do, then we should do it. We have seen in the Health debate that we have achieved a very, very intelligent, intellectual debate which has helped not only all of us to understand what should be done but, also, to help Manitobans who are going to benefit in the long run.

We are simply telling the government to do what they have done in the past.

As I was going through some of the examples in terms of some of the cuts, for example, the Independent Living Resource Centre, and the Home Care Self Management Project, those things should be studied in connection with the other departments.

Mr. Speaker, I am not filibustering. I am telling the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that what you have been telling me, what I have heard about you, what I have seen about you for the last five years, I am very disappointed that you have gone around the circle in terms of, you should be asking for our help. We want to help you in a very meaningful way.

As the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) said, he did not know. That is not right. We want to at

least have some respect here, respect for the parliamentary system, Mr. Speaker. It is not a question of filibustering. It is simply explaining what is right. The right thing is to let the Minister of Finance do what is best for the province, and that can only be done if we have the whole budgetary process. That is the understanding I had from the member for Inkster.

I just want to go back and again try to explain about why it is so important to have the whole Estimates process, to deal with the process in the way we have dealt with it in the last five years. As the Minister of Finance is saying, we should not be wasting time, and we do not want to waste time. That is why, Mr. Speaker, it is so essential for them to bring the whole Estimates book and try to have intelligent debate.

We are simply asking the government of Manitoba either to have a recess or to bring the bills forward and debate the Estimates process after they bring down the budget on April 6. We are going to have 240 hours. During those 240 hours, we can discuss many departments, and the time can be divided very effectively. That has been done in the past. Without the full participation by all three parties and without full knowledge of what is going to happen in each and every department, we will not be able to make a judgment properly, we will not be able to have intelligent debate, we will not be able to do what is right for the taxpayers of Manitoba.

It has been the practice in the past, and I have seen it, we have gone many hours in the Department of Health. We have discussed at length. We have gone line by line, and sometimes we have missed some parts but, at the end, we were always able to make a rational approach because we had the full picture in front of us.

Mr. Speaker, we want to have the same flexibility we have had for the last five years, and especially now at this time, during tough economic times, we should have flexibility. That flexibility can only be provided if we have the full picture, so that we can make the rational decisions and help the government in terms of doing what is right for the people of Manitoba.

There are a number of areas of concern that are going to be brought forward once we have the full budgetary process. As we are seeing across this nation, all governments are having a tough time. Some governments, for example in Newfoundland

and in Saskatchewan, are going to bring their budgets in, and they have to face a large deficit, Mr. Speaker.

We hope that the Province of Manitoba will have a meaningful budget, that the budget will deal with the balance of some of the essential services and also try to balance the budget deficit.

I think it is going to be very crucial because we do not want to see what the NDP did. That is why we are in this mess, the financial mismanagement which happened between '81, '82, '83, '84, '85, '86 and '87. During those years, they were borrowing money, and they brought many problems. Now we are almost paying, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was saying, about \$450 million, only interest on the debt. It is very dangerous. We have to make sure that we do the responsible thing, and that can only be done if we deal with the process as we have dealt with it in the past, and especially when we are having such a tough economic time, then we should deal with that in a more meaningful way.

Mr. Speaker, I am really astonished that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is having more co-operation with the official opposition, which is going to scream and shout once the budget is going to come. I think we are going to be the party which is going to be very careful. We are going to examine the whole thing, and we are going to present some of the alternate ways in terms of where some of the services, when they are having a duplication of services, can be cut.

So I think it will be to the advantage of this Minister of Finance to have the co-operation of us also, because we can be a very valuable asset. Simply, I am asking the Minister of Finance to continue to provide the best possible way he has served Manitoba in the past, to try to do his best and make sure that he is flexible, that he is going to do what he has done in the past and try to bring in the Estimates process after he brings the budget down. Then we can discuss all aspects of the budgetary process.

Mr. Speaker, as I recall, when we came in 1988, we went through the process, and it was new for us, so we went through department by department, and I remember very clearly the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) brought his capital budget at the end. So we passed the whole budget within 20 minutes, I guess, and that was the Minister of Health's answer to my questions for at least one year. So we do not

want to do the same thing again. That was not very smart.

The government is asking us in terms of doing the same thing now. They are simply asking us to do something which we do not know in terms of we do not have the full picture. They are simply asking us to debate something where we do not know the full direction. We do not know the full implications, how they are going to have an impact on other departments, how is it going to impact on the services in a given area, how they are going to have an impact on other areas of services, in terms of whether Family Services is going to have an impact on health care or if some of the health care services are going to have an impact on education or if some of the services are going to have an impact on the total financial picture.

* (2120)

I think it would have been even much better for the government this time to be more flexible and have the co-operation from all two parties. But I think they have chosen just to go to the NDP because they have the official opposition status, and as I said, a difference of 2,280 votes does not really mean much in the parliamentary system.

Things can change very, very quickly, and it did change in 1988 and changed in 1990. It could change again in 1994, Mr. Speaker.

I think the government will be wise to take the advantage from the third party, which has been very supportive of some of the steps this government has taken and make sure that we are on this side to make tough decisions, to make tough choices and to be responsible and try to do what is best for the taxpayers of Manitoba.

I remember during last session, when the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) had a motion in front of us saying that we should have the full details of the budget speech and every hospital it is going to cut. I remember that. We voted with the government that time. We said, we will not debate each and every issue separately. We are going to have the whole budget in front of us. I think we are facing the same problem today. I am really astonished that the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), the most senior member in this House, has not said a word of how he feels about the whole issue.

An Honourable Member: You have had him muzzled.

Mr. Cheema: No, I think the member for Lakeside has seen many aspects of the parliamentary debate. He has been here for 25 years. I do have a great respect for his views. We are just new in this game, and we probably are not 100 percent up to some of the procedures and some of the matters in this House. We saw in 1988 and 1990, we made some mistakes and we paid for those mistakes in 1990. I think the most important thing that we have learned, what I learned, is we should do what is best for the taxpayers. It does not matter, sometimes, if you have to deviate from the so-called political philosophy or political affiliations if you can do what is best for the taxpayers.

Now simply we are asking the government to do what is best for the taxpayers and to bring the budgetary process, bring the budget, bring the whole book in front of us, and we can have an intelligent debate. I see many ministers are shaking their head. They are not happy with my time, but I think I will be dishonest to myself if I do not speak on this, because I feel very strongly about the parliamentary system.

I feel very strongly that we should respect our parliamentary debate and make sure that we abide by the laws, abide by the moral and ethical duties of the parliamentary debate. I think that has not been happening as of last Friday in some aspects. I think government really got themselves into trouble because Mr. Mulroney resigned and they did not have the budget. Now they have this problem of how much money they are going to get. It is very tough, because the federal government has not treated Manitoba fairly.

They have taken much money out, and now they are asking \$200 million back from this government. It is going to be very tough, because they have to try to provide essential services. It is going to be next to impossible to try to provide what was even provided last year or some miracle is going to happen. We know that the revenues are down. We all know what the federal government has done to this province, but I think ultimately it is going to be very tough for the government to do as good as they did in 1991, '90 and '89. It is going to be tough.

That is why it is so important for them to have a good start, but I think this was a bad start on their part. I think the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)

will be wise to sit down with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and try to resolve this issue and try to win his sympathy in terms of what is good for the taxpayers of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, because it seems that for the last few days, the member for Inkster has been shut down and not been consulted, as far as he has told us, and I trust him, so we are simply requesting the Minister of Finance to do what is best for the taxpayers of Manitoba and come up with a budget which is responsible and also which is not going to put the taxpayers of Manitoba into a problem in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the problems created by the previous administration. The problem is very clear. There is a lot of debt and the interest on that debt is almost \$450 million. That could probably settle many of the hospital needs and many of the social services needs and many of the education needs. That is why it is so crucial for them to make right decisions and be bold and be creative, and I sincerely hope they will.

Mr. Speaker, many Manitobans believe that we need a government which is going to be tough, which is going to have a clear thinking process, a government which is going to be true to their word and is not going to be derailed by public opinion for short-term gain, and we want to see that. I sincerely hope that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and Finance minister and other ministers will do that.

Mr. Speaker, can you tell me, how much time do I have? Five minutes. It seems like I have been speaking for 35 minutes. That will be the first opportunity I have spoken for 35 minutes on any other subject other than health care, so I will end by saying, let us respect the parliamentary debate, let us respect all the parties in this House and let us respect the process which has been set in the past.

That process is to have the budget first and then have all the Estimates process as a whole brought forward and make sure that we have all the departments so that we can see which department is getting cuts or we can see where there is a duplication of services, so we can see which area we can get away, which area we can make some choices. It is the time to make right choices, and I think we should do that, and to do that job effectively we should follow what the Minister of Finance said in terms of making rational decisions. In my view you cannot make a rational decision if you do not have the full picture. How can you make an intelligent decision if you do not have the full picture?

How can you do your job as a member of the Assembly if you do not get the respect of this House?

Thank you.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this issue this evening. This issue that we are debating here is a matter of principle, and it also relates not just to principles that are important to Manitobans, but principles that are important to taxpayers, principles that should be important to all members of this Legislature. What we are talking about is how this government runs its affairs and how we as an opposition party can continue to be a responsible, resourceful opposition.

* (2130)

Mr. Speaker, we have already agreed to compromise with this government in regard to the budget that we know we will not see until April 6. We are quite prepared for this government to table their main Estimates so that at least we have an opportunity to review the spending Estimates of the 26 departments. We are prepared to do that and yet not have the revenue side of the equation. We are prepared to at least know what the spending side is, and that is a compromise. That is a compromise when you are talking about reasonable management decisions, when you are talking about how do you run an organization, when you are talking about how do you run a business.

Even the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), the official opposition, on Friday agreed that we on this side of the House had a very valid point in terms of the issue that our House leader, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), raised on Friday. Even the Leader of the official opposition recognized that our point was very valid.

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

How does one provide reasonable opposition? How does one be reasonable in the monitoring of government spending, of asking questions, of supporting the government if it has to make difficult decisions? How does one provide that responsible opposition when one only has a very small piece of the pie and only has the knowledge of one very small piece of the spending and does not have an overall picture? How does one provide that responsible opposition, Madam Deputy Speaker?

I would suggest to you that this government which likes to pride itself on the fact that they know how to manage—and I use that term loosely—they believe that they are good at managing business. They believe that they are good at running organizations. Are they going to stand here this evening? Are they going to tell us in this House, are they going to tell Manitobans, are they going to tell taxpayers that if there is a huge corporation, whether it is IBM or Petro-Canada or General Motors, that when the board of directors sit down and look at what the budget is going to be for the year and what their priorities are going to be for spending, that they are only going to look at one division of their operation and take that and decide on how they are going to make their overall decisions?

Surely, Madam Deputy Speaker, they are not going to stand here this evening and tell us that that is how organizations, and that is how businesses, and that is how nonprofit organizations are supposed to make their decisions, that they take one small piece of the budget and in isolation of all of the rest suggest that this is how we are making our decisions. That is totally, totally irresponsible, and this government knows better.

I suggest that in fact this government is quite well aware of the principle that we are promoting here, and it is fully aware of it, but the overall concern as we listen to members on the opposite side of the House this evening seems to be, do we want to sit here in July? What does a month of the year have to do with the business of running the government in Manitoba? There are many people across this province who have to work in July. There are many civil servants. There are many people who work in hospitals, in health care institutions. There are farmers. Everyone works in July.

What has the month of the year got to do with the decisions that we make in this Chamber here this evening and decisions that we make in the coming days? I find it very interesting, and I really question whether in fact any of these cabinet ministers and some of their backbenchers as well have ever picked up a book on how to run an organization, know anything about management principles. Where is the total quality management that this government is purporting and likes to talk about and likes to give information to their civil servants about? Where is that concept of what strategic planning is all about? Where is that information? Where is the framework? Where is the main budget?

If they really do not have that information, then why do we not recess, let the members of the Legislative Assembly spend time out in their constituencies doing the work that they need to do? That is what we are required to do. Let us get away from the old style of doing politics. Let us get away with being in the House and not doing important work, because that does happen from time to time, Madam Deputy Speaker. [interjection]

Well, I cannot understand how the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) can stand here this evening and talk about, let us get on with it. How can he suggest that we should take the Department of Family Services and the Department of Highways and Transportation and discuss serious decisions that affect the everyday lives of individuals, of children, of parents, in this province, and we would do that in isolation of the other departments of where the spending is going to be? How are we to know what the philosophy is of this government, what the goals are of this government, what the planning is of this government? How are we to know that when we only have two departments? I do not understand that.

In fact, I would suggest that even the official opposition agrees that we have a point because they feel it is very valid. Only the difference is, when the official opposition stands in this House they do not really care what the overall framework or plan is because all they do is rant and rave and say cut, cut, cut, slash, slash, slash. So it is not as important to them. We are here as a third party to provide responsible opposition to the government, and we are here to support the government if in fact they have to make some tough decisions. We are here to support them if that is the case, but we want to know what the overall spending plan is of this government. We want to know what their priorities are. We want to know where they have decided to make changes. We do not want to receive the information hit and miss in a press release here, a press release there. Two departments tabled in this House and yet we have no understanding of the overall plan.

I do not understand how this government can purport to talk about total quality management, can talk about management by objectives and result, can talk about every basic management theory which has been recognized within governments since about 1954, can talk about this—[interjection] Well, you know, I really suggest that the comments

that are coming across the way, that they do not understand what total quality management is and they do not understand the principle of how a department should run, how an overall government should run. They do not understand that very basic principle.

I have talked to members in my constituency. I have talked to individuals in the last few days in the community, and I have said to them, this is what the government wants to do. They are going to table Estimates of two departments—

An Honourable Member: Then you did know.

Ms. Gray: Of course we knew on Friday. They want to table Estimates of a couple of departments and they want us to discuss it in a reasonable logical way without having the total picture. I have not found one person who has felt that that is even a reasonable, responsible approach—not one individual, and these people are not even political people, they are apolitical. They are taxpayers in the community. There is no one I have talked to who feels that is a reasonable approach, and even this government knows it is not a reasonable approach. Even this government knows that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have talked to a number of individuals in the last four days, many of whom were not Liberals. I have talked to individuals who work in the media who are not Liberals. I have talked to my neighbours, who are not necessarily Liberals. I have talked to civil servants, and this may surprise the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), but even those civil servants, even they are not all Liberals.

So, I have talked to a number of individuals who feel that this is an irresponsible approach on the part of the government. Why are we here if we do not have the entire budget picture? Why are we here? What is preventing this government from bringing down the budget, from showing us what is in the departmental spending, showing what is on the revenue side, if there is anything other than gambling revenues?

* (2140)

What is this government prepared to do? Are they prepared to table every department piece by piece and expect us to provide reasonable, responsible opposition? I know that the Minister of Health, who sits in his chair this evening, knows full well that is not a responsible way to go about

organizing and leading a government. I know he knows better. I am quite aware that he knows better about that, and the fact that we may be in here discussing Estimates until July, I do not understand why the month of the year is relevant to this discussion, other than some ministers may want to be on vacation in July. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am quite prepared to work during the month of July. [interjection]

Well, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) suggests that we on this side of the House as nonministers do not have any responsibility and that, in fact, we walk around with nothing to do. Well, I think every member on this side of the House, the official opposition and the third party should take exception to those comments because we work very hard out in our constituencies and also with people across the province in Manitoba. I must say, as well, that I believe the ministers work very hard too. So even though she may want to criticize this side of the House and suggest that we have nothing to do but walk around the halls, I would suggest she is wrong, because I believe all of us in the House, all 56 members work very, very hard for our constituents and for the people in Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when we received a press release today we were told of a number of cuts in a number of organizations who provide services in the province of Manitoba. Some of them were foster parents association. Other of the agencies were the Committee on Unplanned Pregnancy, and I know when the minister rose in this House today in Question Period, he talked about, well, his staff could provide some of those services. Well, my first thought was that his staff, particularly his nursing staff, is so busy doing early discharges and providing services to young mothers they do not have time oftentimes to deal with the prevention. In fact, that is correct because that is what they have said to me.

Another area that we heard about cuts in was services to aboriginal organizations. [interjection] Well, you know, the minister from his seat has just suggested these are not cuts and they are funding reallocations. The minister has just made my very point because, if in fact they are funding reallocations, if that is what they are, then we need to see the total budget so we know that the money has been reallocated, but we do not have the total budget. We have no idea that it is a reallocation, so

why do you not present the budget? Let us know so that we know it is a reallocation, and we can provide more responsible opposition.

Point of Order

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I guess, as we listen to the comments from the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), it almost sounds to me like in fact if she had the budget before her today she would be voting in support of it. I would like her to clarify that.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Ms. Gray: I would say that was a wild, wild interpretation of what my comments were but, be that as it may, I go back to the point that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) just raised about suggesting that the press releases that came out that talked about the dollars of which there were lesser amounts of dollars going to these organizations were in fact not cut, but they were funding reallocations.

As I suggest to all members of this House, that makes our very point, because if in fact those dollars which are now not going to those organizations, whether it is the foster parents association, whether it is friendship centres, whether it is the Flin Flon-Creighton Crisis Centre, whether it is the Association for Community Living, whether it is the Manitoba Teachers' Society, whatever that organization is, if in fact those dollars are not going there, then where are they going?

If they have been reallocated, as the Minister of Health suggested, where are they being reallocated? The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) is saying, they are not being spent. Well, what is it? Are they not being spent or is it being reallocated? What is the story?

Let us know. We want to know. Manitobans out there want to know. Those organizations want to know that if they are receiving fewer dollars, what is the reason behind it? Have they been given an explanation.

An Honourable Member: There is no money.

Ms. Gray: Well, we hear the question—there is no money. If there is no money, why are the deputy ministers getting a 23 percent increase? Why do

the deputy ministers get to go to Civil Service courses that are paid for when no one else gets to? Why is it that there are all these dollars going to Community Places? Why is it that monies and dollars—excuse me for pausing, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am just waiting for the din to not be there.

Madam Deputy Speaker, my comment is about the Community Places grants. What are the priorities of this government? I mean, we have seen where the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) has given money out in Virden, Manitoba, lovely community, and I have heard we get calls from people out in Virden saying, if the budget is going to be very tough, if we are in recessionary times and we have to make tough decisions about where we spend our money, if we have to choose between children in the classroom or counsellors for substance abuse versus a roof for a curling rink, what is the choice of the government going to be?

It is a very good question that constituents are raising. It is not constituents in my constituency of Crescentwood. It is people throughout Manitoba who are starting to ask those tough questions. They are very valid questions, and I am sure that the ministers themselves, as they have sat around the cabinet table, have had to ask those very difficult questions, have had to ask those very, very tough questions. So all we ask is that we see an entire budget, that we have an opportunity to know what the spending Estimates are throughout the departments.

How does Family Services fit in relation to where spending is in the Department of Education or the Department of Health or the Department of Justice? What is the relationship? Are we still going to have a Department of Government Services? Is it going to exist when the budget comes down on April 6? These are questions that civil servants, that Manitobans, that teachers, that health care professionals, that farmers—these are questions that people want to know the answers to.

I would also ask, what is the revenue side of the equation? What kind of revenues do we have coming into the province? We have already heard that some ministers might even be voting against their own budget because the deficit is too high. Is that the case?

If they know the facts—and the ministers across keep saying as they shout across the room, there is no money, there is no money, we do not have the

money, it is not being spent. Then they know the facts, so let us present them here in the House.

Let us present them here in the House so that we all have an opportunity—[interjection] We all want an opportunity to discuss the budget. We all want an opportunity to see where the dollars, scarce as they may be, are being spent. What about the minister responsible for culture and heritage? What about services and programs for women in this province? Are there going to be cuts across the board? If that is the case, we want to know what priorities this government has. We cannot determine and logically and responsibly discuss the priorities of this government unless we see the entire financial picture.

* (2150)

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, I would like this government and this cabinet to perhaps go back into their meetings and perhaps review their total quality management, the program that they are trying to promote throughout government, and actually examine if in fact they are following their own guidelines and their own rules.

As I said, they surely must know—and a number of the cabinet ministers are farmers. They run businesses. They know what it is like to have an operation that has many divisions of that operation, whether it is your household budget, whether it is capital purchases that you are making.

Whatever the various division sections are, are they going to sit here tonight and suggest to us and suggest to business people and farmers and people in this province that they make decisions when they only know what one part of their budget is going to be, so that they look at their household budget for the year and say, oh well, it looks like we are going to have to cut maybe 3 percent there, although I have no idea what some of the revenue is coming in, or I do not know in fact how much income tax it is I am going to have to pay, but I am going to make my decisions as to what I am going to do for the next year based on this one household budget?

That is what this government is asking us to do tonight. That is what they are suggesting to us when they table two small departments and do not give us the entire picture, Mr. Speaker. It is irresponsible. It is definitely irresponsible, and nobody would run a business like that, no one.

Anyone I talk to suggests that is not the way a responsible government acts. We have attempted to provide responsible and reasonable opposition in this House. We know that it is difficult times. We know these are recessionary times. We know that there may have to be changes in some of the allocations of the dollars. We know that perhaps Community Places grants, perhaps there have to be changes. We have seen already some lowering of dollars for some of these organizations and groups. I do not necessarily agree with how that was done. Why the Flin Flon-Creighton Crisis Centre gets their funding cut when we still have crisis centres being funded in Portage la Prairie and other areas, I do not understand. It sounds like discrimination to me, Mr. Speaker.

I am not quite sure why we cut funding to the Association for Community Living. I am not sure why we have cut funding to the foster parents association.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member for Crescentwood that the question before the House is that this House at this sitting would resolve itself into Committee of Supply. That is the question before the House. I would ask the member for Crescentwood to keep her remarks relevant to said question.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, we are debating the motion of whether this government should move into Supply, and as I have been speaking about, the issue has to be what is the reason and what is the rationale behind this motion? As I suggested in the very beginning when I rose to speak on this issue, we have to look at the principle behind why the government has put this motion on the floor. I would suggest to you that in fact the reason for their doing this is expediency.

They want to move into discussion of Estimates because they know that the members who are in the official opposition are only going to rant and rave about all the cuts, and they know that they are going to go ahead and do what they are going to do anyway in regard to how they spend in the departments. They forget that the third party in this House has attempted to provide reasonable, responsible opposition. So when we move in to the Committee of Supply we want to be armed with the facts, the facts that this government has at their disposal, because I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that they know exactly what the spending Estimates are

going to be for the 26 departments. If they do not, then they should not have already been making decisions on two departments, Family Services and Highways and Transportation and decisions on Agriculture without having the entire picture.

I would hope that this government knows what the revenue side of the equation is. I would hope that this government has made the decisions on where their capital expenditures are going to be, because surely they cannot resolve into the Committee of Supply and expect us to discuss reasonably and logically the spending in those particular departments unless they know the entire picture and then, therefore, we should know the entire picture.

It is a basic, fundamental principle based on any kind of management principles that you would have within an organization, whether that organization is nonprofit, whether it is a big business or whether it is government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, government is the organization, the vehicle in which they should be providing leadership on what is responsible and how one should proceed in an orderly manner. They should be able to present to us what their strategic plan is for the next year, for the next three years, and for the next five years. They should be able to tell this side of the House what their spending priorities are.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) earlier referred to reallocation of funds. If in fact we are going to dissolve into Committee of Supply, and a number of these departments, as they have presented Family Services, have had cuts to some of their organizations, and they are not cuts, they are, as the Minister of Health suggests, reallocation, we need to know the context within which those decisions were made.

Where has that money been reallocated to? If it has not been reallocated into other areas within that one Department of Family Services or Highways, we need to see those other 24 departments to know where that money is going to be reallocated to. We need to know that so that in fact we can represent the people of our constituencies better, so that in fact we can represent the people in Manitoba.

There is a realization out there, Mr. Speaker, that in fact spending is not endless, that there has to be limits, and that we are going to have to be innovative and creative in terms of how we spend the limited dollars that there are. In order for us to communicate with our constituents about what this

government's plans are, what their priorities are, we need to have the entire picture. We cannot go into the Committee of Supply and sit with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) and go through the spending Estimates line by line without an overall picture.

Obviously, the members of the official opposition are prepared to do that, because, as I suggest—I mean, having lived through the regime of the NDP for 10 years as a civil servant, I understand some of their thinking. I do not agree with their thinking, Mr. Speaker, but I do understand it, that their ideas and plans may be good, but their implementation leaves much to be desired, and that in fact in speaking with the idea of the Family Services which is one of the Estimates that is being presented in this House, I remember in the Department of Family Services when we had the Welcome Home program, that all the managers were told out in the regions, oh, spend whatever you need to spend, the important thing is to move people out of the institution. Do not worry about the dollars.

Mr. Speaker, that is irresponsible. I would hope that this government would think that those kinds of

decisions were irresponsible and that in fact if we were to see the entire 26 departments, the entire budget as it is being presented, that in fact we would know if this government is being responsible as opposed to being irresponsible like their predecessors were, where their line was spend, spend, spend. Do not worry about the cost to Manitobans. Let us just do what we want to do.

I would hope that this government is not irresponsible. I would hope that this government and its cabinet are prepared to present the spending Estimates of the 26 departments. I know we are not going to see the revenue side, Mr. Speaker, and we are prepared already to compromise on that one issue. It would be much better if we were able—

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 10 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, March 15, 1993

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