



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.	St. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Cliff	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 16, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Northern Manitoba Economic Development Commission Northern Manitoba Draft Plan.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling today the Annual Report for 1990-91 and 1991-92 of the Seizure and Impoundment Registry, as well as the Fifth Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon Mr. William Witting, who is the Consul General of the United States of America, and Ms. Pamela Tremont, the Vice Consul.

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

Also this afternoon, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Miss Miranda Kowalec and her parents Alan and Christina Kowalec. Miranda is a Grade 6 student at Balmoral Hall, who is the Manitoba artist whose work represents our province in the 1993 Energy and Environment Calendar.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Anti-Poverty Association Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the First Minister. We have learned today that 19 more employees have been laid off at Northern Telecom. That follows on

45 jobs that were lost a couple of months ago, and it follows on another 45 jobs that were lost a year ago.

Ironically, when we were asking this government yesterday about tough choices, we asked questions about the training grants and payroll deductions for corporations for training purposes. This company has received \$65,000 from the provincial government, which is the same amount of money this government is cutting from the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. The Premier was wrong yesterday to say the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization did not provide any direct services to people. It is in fact on the ground level of providing services to the most vulnerable people in our society. In fact, sometimes they are the last place for people to get referrals for food banks, for clothing for children in winter and other vital services that are essential for our society.

I would ask the Premier: Would he consider redeploying money that he has had for training grants, particularly to companies that are laying people off in the province and putting it to the vital social services that the Premier has announced he cut yesterday?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), it is not just a question of whether or not services are provided; it is whether or not those services are available elsewhere. The ones that he referred to are obviously available elsewhere.

The other aspect of his question, Mr. Speaker, again is wrongly put because we do not make grants to the businesses. In fact, what we do is provide them with a credit against their payment of their payroll tax. We reduce the amount that they pay on payroll tax in keeping with the amount that they spend on educating and training people, which is indeed a very much needed investment in our economy, and we believe it is important. Even though the New Democrats do not want to see investments in training and education, we do, and the program has proven to be a very successful one to encourage businesses to invest in training and development of their human resources.

* (1335)

Aboriginal Friendship Centres Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, that is why there were over 300 people working at that plant when the NDP was in power, and there is almost half that amount now with the Conservatives in power in terms of that very vital plant.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier defended his cuts for people, for agencies when I asked him the question saying that these agencies that we have cut do not provide services to the people of Manitoba.

I direct the Premier to the Indian and Metis Friendship Centres across the province that provide housing counselling, that provide institutional support. They provide drug counselling, cultural counselling, provide elders programming—again, inconsistent with the Premier's announcement—provide volunteer programming for aboriginal people, provide fine option programs, provide youth programs, provide income tax services for aboriginal people and provide job counselling services for those people in the inner city and many communities across Manitoba to get jobs.

The government's announcement yesterday laid off some 33 people working all across the province with the people again who are some of the most vulnerable in our society. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the government has corporate grants to Linnett Graphics of over \$1 million. It has corporate grants that they have announced with the Vision Capital Fund of \$15 million.

Why does the Premier not cancel a few of those corporate grants and keep that \$1.3 million for those people working with the most vulnerable people in Manitoban society?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, the Leader of the Opposition is misrepresenting what is happening. These are not grants to corporations. There are investments in the developments of technology, investments that have been made by previous governments, including New Democratic governments.

The things that he referred to are exactly the same kinds of program decisions and investments that were made by the government of which he was a part when they invested in computers in Unisys,

when they spent some \$30 million on computers with Unisys. If he wants to call those grants to corporations—that was a New Democratic policy—he may do so. The fact is that the ones that he refers to are investments in technology development which employ, I might say, many, many people in high technology fields because of the fact that these investments are being made.

Student Financial Assistance Program Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we did not cut back the grants to vulnerable people in our society. We had a balance between investments in corporations and investment in people.

This government is cutting all the grants to people and leaving in place all the grants to corporations, and that is clear from the Premier's answers here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the Premier: The government has announced the reduction in support for student social allowances. This program has been assistance to social allowance recipients to get an education, to hopefully get off of welfare, to get off social assistance, to get into meaningful employment.

I would like to ask the Premier: How many people will be cut off of their educational opportunities with the reduction from this government? What will be the long-term economic impact of it not allowing some individuals in our society to get the education, to get the training and to get off welfare as they plan their life careers, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Concordia indicated yesterday, there are many difficult choices that have to be made in putting a budget together.

I would take this opportunity to remind him of what Premier Romanow said in January when he said, for a New Democrat who is used to being in government when the economy is expanding and who is used to redistributing wealth, the change to creating wealth and to taking back concessions given to people in better times is so darn difficult.

I would mention to the member for Concordia that these are difficult times and the government is making very difficult decisions. The program that the member is asking about is one that did not exist

in other provinces. These students who are primarily high school students will be finishing up their programs in June, and after that, this program will be terminated.

* (1340)

Education System Medical Services

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, a potentially serious situation exists in our schools and our daycares because relatively untrained people are providing medical procedures such as catheterization, tube feeding and medicines to children. In some locations, in schools, kids line up at the principal's office to receive their medicine.

MTS, unions and parents have all pointed out the dangers of this situation, and the Manitoba Medical Association is doing a medical audit of Winnipeg School Division No. 1 as a result. What, if anything, is this government doing to provide adequate and safe medical treatment for our children in schools and in daycares?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether my honourable friend wanted me to answer the question, but I will indicate to my honourable friend that this issue has been before the government for several months now, and a meeting was held with Winnipeg School Division No. 1 last year, I believe, in December.

What we are attempting to do is a number of things in co-operation with the school trustees and the school divisions of the province of Manitoba in terms of trying to provide a reasoned and equitable solution to some of the issues they have identified. I believe that the co-operative approach and the discussions that we have had to date will lead us to a resolution that will resolve some of the identified issues that have been raised by MTS and by MAST most recently.

Mr. Chomlak: My supplementary to the same minister: Why is the government, therefore, firing the four nurses who have developed the only on-site comprehensive program to train paraprofessionals in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, the only one I am aware of that trains them, provides them assistance and monitors them to all, not only schools, but to daycares? Why is the government firing these nurses at the end of the month?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am not accepting my honourable friend's analysis of initiatives verbatim,

as he states. Within the Ministry of Health, we have actively been pursuing a co-ordinated approach available across the province to resolve the issues that have been identified, as I say, by MTS and by MAST.

Now, that discussion with those two professional organizations and my ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, will lead, I hope, to a reasoned program which is understood by all and will in many ways alleviate some of the concerns that have been raised by teachers in the classroom and indeed, Sir, school divisions.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister: The only program of its kind in existence will end at the end of the month. Will the minister consider funding the pilot project that has been before his ministry, the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and, I believe, the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) office for months now and has received no response?

Will he consider funding this program for 20 months at \$177,000 and take some of that money out of some of the money they are going to pay to their American consultant who flies in here, Mr. Speaker, and who probably costs more in one month than the whole program will cost in a year?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, despite all my honourable friend's rhetorical flourish and attempt to gain attention that he possibly does not earn, that is exactly the process this ministry and this government has embarked upon in discussion with the school divisions as represented by MAST and other individuals who are concerned about the issue of a potentially complex medical services provision within the classroom.

Student Financial Assistance Program Funding Elimination Impact

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I have a question for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), as the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) seems unaware of the answer and the Minister of Finance seems to be making most of the decisions in this government.

Mr. Speaker, when a child becomes a ward of the state, it is usually because their family is so abusive or so dangerous that they are no longer seen as capable of caring for the child, and in other circumstances, when a child's family is so impoverished that they can no longer provide care,

we have always allowed these children a route out of that poverty. We have allowed them the chance to get educated, and we have supported them in receiving that education.

This government has now made the decision to cease that support as the Minister of Family Services just said. What I would like to know is, how many students will this affect this year?

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, we have about 1,200 to 1,400 students in this program who are completing their course by the end of June. Following that, the program will be terminated.

Mr. Alcock: How easily he says it, Mr. Speaker.

* (1345)

Alternative Funding

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education: Will there be grant and bursary support available to these 1,200 students to allow them to continue their education or further it at university?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): The member is asking about the Manitoba Student Financial Assistance Program, and I have explained to him, that by the way, is the second application students would make. The first one is to the Canada Student Loan. Information regarding the Manitoba Student Financial Assistance will come forward with the budget. [interjection]

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, I realize the government finds this a funny issue, but the rest of us do not.

Funding Elimination Impact

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Can the Minister of Family Services tell us this: Of these 1,200 students, in the fall, how many will remain on municipal or city social assistance rather than come on the provincial program?

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): As the member is well aware, those individual students, as they finish their high school this year, some of them may be returning to high school, may be returning home to complete that high school program, others will be accessing programs that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) has just referenced to go on to other forms of study.

Child Daycare Centres Staff Salaries

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government of Manitoba announced the elimination of grants to 56 organizations, including the Manitoba Child Care Association and the Family Day Care Association of Manitoba, organizations which provide important resources to staff and to children.

This government then, after cutting the grants to the organizations, went on to attack women and children by reducing the number of subsidized child care spaces by 400, requiring subsidized parents to pay an additional \$1.40 a day, reducing operating grants by 4 percent and for licensed nursery schools by 50 percent.

Does the Minister of Family Services expect child care centres and nursery schools to continue operating due solely to the subsidy provided by their staff, staff who are professionals but who are underpaid, have no pension plan and few benefits?

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated in the past, the budget line for daycare is one that has had the most dramatic increase of any budget line in government. It has virtually doubled in the last five budgets. Our budget line again will increase there, and we will be spending upwards of \$47 million on preschool children who are subsidized in daycare homes and daycare centres.

I did have the opportunity to attend the provincial Day Care Conference in Brandon last fall, where they tabled a project that was done on daycares across the country. Manitoba has the second highest salary for daycare workers of all provincial daycare associations. They also have the lowest turnover in terms of the staff. Manitoba has continually had a high standard of daycare, and I expect it will continue.

Unlicensed Care Monitoring

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, this province used to have the best daycare system in Canada. Now this government is eroding it and attacking it.

Will the minister tell the House how his government, as a result of freezing licensing of new child care spaces, will monitor the proliferation of unlicensed caregivers? How will this government protect children being cared for in unmonitored

homes? Does this minister not see the relationship between—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to do an interprovincial comparison, the province of Saskatchewan, very similar in size to Manitoba, spends about a third of the amount of money on daycare as we do. Manitoba has a well-developed system. Parents will always have the option of making private arrangements with friends and relatives for the care of their children.

Subsidized Spaces—Fee Increase

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): How can this minister justify stealing from the poor and contravening the agreement between provincial and territorial ministers of Family Services made in Charlottetown that there would be no clawback of the child benefit? Will this minister admit and tell parents that he is clawing back the child benefit by increasing fees of \$1.40 per day for subsidized parents?

* (1350)

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I would tell the member that the care for children in daycare centres and daycare homes is a very, very expensive proposition. It costs the government, for fully subsidized children, in the neighbourhood of \$7,000 to \$8,000 a year per child. We are asking families that have subsidized children to participate in that cost by asking them to pay \$1.40 a day.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I should have risen a moment ago, but just so the members opposite do not feel or come to believe that the word "stealing" is something that is parliamentary when it is not, I would refer you to the unparliamentary list, which indicates very directly that the word "stealing" is something that should not be used within debate or indeed Question Period.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, in determining whether language is unparliamentary or not, it is very clear that context has to be taken into account. The member was not suggesting the minister was individually stealing anything, but

anybody who is observing what is happening in Manitoba now can see very clearly that this government is taking from the poor in this province. It is a government of privilege, and it is stealing from the poor.

Mr. Speaker: On that point of order raised, I also was attempting to find the word in *Beauchesne*, and quite clearly the word is unparliamentary. I would caution the honourable member that that word will not be tolerated. I did not get my hands on it at the time, but I would caution the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the words "stealing from the poor" in spite of the fact that it is a good—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Unqualified. I would like to thank the honourable member.

Child and Family Services Agencies Foster Family Training

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stated that the Manitoba Foster Family Association is, and I quote, an "advocacy group." In the same Question Period, the Minister of Family Services stated that in the past, the Manitoba Foster Family Association had had responsibility for training of foster families in the province and that from now on, since the Minister of Family Services has clawed back the entire grant to the Manitoba Foster Family Association, Child and Family Services agencies would be responsible for the training of foster families.

Can the Minister of Family Services give us the assurance today that additional resources will be made available to the Child and Family Services agencies in the province of Manitoba to enable them to do the training and ongoing support to foster families that the Manitoba Foster Family Association has undertaken for so many years with such high-quality programs?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday, the agencies would now be responsible for the training. In the past, they have done the recruiting of foster homes. They have done the licensing of foster homes, and in the future, they will do the training of foster homes.

This morning, I met with the executive directors of the three mainstream agencies in the province, along with the presidents of their boards, to go over

this with them. We believe that we will have an opportunity with department staff and the co-operation of those agencies to put in place a plan where they will not only do the recruiting and licensing, but also be responsible for the training.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Family Services guarantee today that there is not only a plan in place with these agencies, but that there are the resources in place for these agencies to do the training, seeing as how Child and Family Services agencies today not only do not have the resources to do additional training, but they are putting children into hotels because they do not have the foster families and the services available? Will there be additional funds available for these services to be able to provide this essential training for foster—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I have just finished saying that agencies have recruited and licensed foster homes in the past. They will continue to do that. There will be times when there are emergencies where other forms of accommodation will have to be used on a very short-term basis. In my discussion with the board chairs and with the executive directors this morning, we talked about staff resources and financial resources that we could identify to assist with that training.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, cool comfort indeed.

* (1355)

Foster Families Recruitment

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Given the attack on foster families and foster children in the province of Manitoba by the cutback to the Foster Family Association, how does the province expect to attract foster families in the future when there is reduced resources or perhaps no resources for training those families and when the province has cut back by \$2 a day or \$730 a year support for each foster child in this province?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Well, Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is factually incorrect. I just indicated in my previous answer that we would dedicate staff resources and financial resources to do this particular job. I would also point out to her that the rate that she raises, the basic rate in Manitoba is still

\$2 higher than that offered in Alberta and Saskatchewan and comparable to that rate in B.C.

Offender Employment Program Funding

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the—[applause] I want to thank honourable members, but that is not good for my campaign, and I will not be taking advice on leadership from a number of the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. A week ago, the minister told me in this House in response to a question, that the reason it was okay that someone like Mr. Timothy Zaber only spent six out of 90 days in jail for domestic assault was that, and I quote: "... what we are talking about is supervised work being done while under a temporary absence. . . ."

However, Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the government's announcement, work programs in the community was the only excuse the minister gave, and yesterday the John Howard Society program for offender employment was eliminated.

My question for the minister: What is the current excuse for release of an offender convicted of domestic assault after one-fourteenth of his sentence now that we know there is no offender employment program?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Despite the fact that the honourable member has said that he will not accept advice from this side of the House on how to run his campaign, I would offer one suggestion, and that is that after five years as a critic for the Justice portfolio, he could at least get his facts straight. It might be helpful during his campaign. That would be one little piece of advice.

I say to him that the announcement yesterday about the John Howard employment program and the issues he has been raising recently with respect to temporary absences and work programs being carried out under that are not directly related.

So the honourable member tries to import into a debate something he has all his facts wrong on, something else on which he has his facts wrong.

Mr. Edwards: The minister does not put any contrary facts on the record. He just huffs and blows. There are no contrary facts that he has come up with.

My further question for the minister, Mr. Speaker. The government press release says a priority is protective services for Manitobans. How is the elimination of the John Howard offender employment program, whose sole purpose is to successfully reintegrate offenders into society as law-abiding citizens, how is the elimination of that program in keeping with the government's commitment to protect Manitobans?

* (1400)

Mr. McCrae: I think the honourable member will agree, despite all of the demands for more spending by him and his colleagues, that the Province of Manitoba finds itself in a very difficult fiscal situation, as does every other province in the country. So we are therefore required and obliged by the taxpayers of this province to spend every dollar as carefully as we can.

Unfortunately, the offender employment program run by the John Howard Society, with every good intention on their part and on the part of the government at the time it got going, the evaluations of that program have not been as positive as we would have liked. They have not met the expectations that we or John Howard would have liked to have seen.

Seizure and Impoundment Registry Production Costs

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that the minister raises spending every dollar carefully.

My question for the minister: I have just been handed the Seizure and Impoundment Registry booklet which is made up of four pages that says anything—there are another nine pages that say nothing in this booklet. Mr. Speaker, two manila covers, two pages of pictures of the minister and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Edwards: . . . for every dollar they have spent, and this government continues to spend excessively on totally useless things like pictures of the Minister of Justice and his acting deputy Attorney General.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I know it upsets the honourable member that the reports distributed in this House have covers, Mr. Speaker. I know that is upsetting to him, but most books that I have ever read had covers, too.

The other thing that I should raise, after a lot of kicking and screaming, we finally managed to get the honourable member for St. James to support our anti-drinking and driving campaign. Part of that legislation calls for information to be made available to members of this House by way of a report on the registry. The honourable member ultimately supported that legislation. I would have assumed he would want to know how it is working, and that is what these reports are all about.

Aboriginal Friendship Centres Funding

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier suggested that friendship centres in this province were being cut because they do not provide services to the vulnerable. I do not know the last time the Premier set foot inside a friendship centre, but if he came to the Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre in Thompson, he could observe the elders program, the hospital visit program, the medical interpreter escort program, the education workshops, the literacy programs, the youth programs that provide services to more than 30,000 people in our community in Thompson.

I have but one very simple question to the Premier. If this is not providing services to the most vulnerable, what is?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I know that in their wonderful world in which they can take no responsibility, the New Democrats of this Legislature can stand up—[interjection] I certainly do not take responsibility for the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). I can say that without equivocation and with a great deal of pride. They take no responsibility. They are unwilling to look at the very difficult challenges that face every government in this country. They need only listen to their colleagues who are in government, the Roy Romanow's, the Bob Rae's of this world, who are making very, very difficult choices, massive cuts in health care and education, because they are dealing with reality. They are not dealing with the never-never land of the New Democrats of Manitoba, which is sheer irresponsibility.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make difficult choices. We have to look at the options, and we have to look at the future. We want to protect vital services in the province. We cannot simply fund everything and, particularly, we cannot fund things for which there

may be alternatives, for which there may be services being provided by others.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Fillmon: It is the children of this province who will have to pay back for the deficit spending that the New Democrats—increased taxes that will be a millstone around their necks and ensure that they never have the opportunities of their parents' generation. That is a very sad legacy. That is a very sad priority that New Democrats have chosen.

I repeat for you, that other provinces in which New Democrats are in office are taking these measures and even more difficult measures, because they know and understand responsibility. They do not sit there and chirp away in their irresponsible fashion like the New Democrats of Manitoba.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, to quote another Tory, you, sir, had a choice and you cut the friendship centres.

I guess it is no accident there is no friendship centre in Tuxedo and there are no friendship centres in all but one of the NDP ridings.

I want to ask the Premier, will he now admit, Mr. Speaker, what is patently obvious to anyone who has looked at the list of the grants that was released, that the real agenda here is politics? You cut those who speak out against you. You cut those who do not share your political philosophy. Will the Premier admit to what is actually happening?

Mr. Fillmon: Mr. Speaker, the old adage that when you have nothing of substance to say, shout and scream, is very, very obvious by the demeanour and the actions of the member for Thompson and his colleagues.

My short answer to his question is absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

Brandon Friendship Centre, Inc. Funding

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, in the cuts that the government announced yesterday, is included a cut in the annual grant to the Brandon Friendship Centre amounting to an elimination of the annual grant, amounting to \$76,300, which means, according to the chairperson of the board, Rita Cullen, that two workers dealing directly with disadvantaged youth in the community will be laid off in two weeks, and

programs to help idle youth stay off the streets and from getting into trouble will be eliminated.

My question to the Premier or to the minister is: How can they say that these cuts do not affect services for people when in the Brandon community programs for young people will be directly eliminated?

Hon. Harold Gillleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the Brandon Friendship Centre has a budget in excess of a million dollars. The province is responsible by grant in the past for 8 per cent of their total grant. Just as other groups in society are making some fundamental changes, in health reform, in school divisions, I think the friendship centres also have some changes that they have to make.

Again, I point out to the member that we are only responsible for a small portion of their total funding, and the board of that friendship centre will have decisions to make internally as to how they allocate those funds.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Maybe the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) would like to respond, because we are talking about specific programs that help specific youth in that community from disadvantaged homes.

How can we expect the level of juvenile delinquency to be kept down in the city of Brandon when this government is eliminating a specific front-line service to young people who are mostly from disadvantaged homes and who indeed may get into trouble? This is specific money for a specific program, and you are eliminating it.

Mr. Gillleshammer: Mr. Speaker, this is part of their global funding. As I indicated in my previous answer, the board of the Indian-Metis Friendship Centre in Brandon will have decisions to make as to what services they are going to continue, whether it is social services that are dedicated to children, whether it is recreation, whether it is some of the other functions they perform.

Again, I point out that our contribution is eight per cent and that they will have the ability within their global budget to make those changes.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I wish the minister was right, but according to the chairperson of the board, they will be laying off two people. They cannot afford to keep two people who do work with young people. That is categorical. The drop-in centre in the evening will be closed down as well.

So I am asking this minister or this Premier (Mr. Filmon) to reconsider and reverse this decision to cut an important grant so that this centre can continue to maintain services to young people, including the summer program activity and various other school programs and to allow the drop-in centre to stay open in the evening so these kids have a place to go. But it is going to be closed—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1410)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the member seems to indicate that they are going to close the doors when 92 percent of their million-dollar budget is still in place. The board of that centre is elected, appointed to make policy decisions, to make decisions on expenditures. They are facing the same tough decisions that all other organizations are facing at this time. With government revenue declining, this was a difficult decision for us to make.

Child Daycare Centres Subsidized Spaces—Fee Increase

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the whole purpose of a subsidy in daycare is to provide the opportunity for a parent to have that child in that child care space because the parent cannot afford it. A subsidy is not given because the parent has money; the subsidy is given because the parent has no money.

When you look at the child care centres in the inner city of the city of Winnipeg, many of them have 100 percent of their children on subsidy. In many of those cases, they never collect the \$1 a day they are supposed to collect now because they cannot. You cannot take blood from a turnip, and the sad part about it is they are now going to be asked for \$2.40 a day.

Is this minister suggesting that there is any viability left for these child care centres when they will not get enough money to keep in operation?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Daycare subsidies are a complex issue. I would invite the member to come to Estimates, and we can deal with this in more detail.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, this government has reduced the seek-employment subsidy from eight weeks to two weeks. Not only have they cut students so that they will not be able to go to school any longer, they have now said that those who have the opportunity to find employment, that they used

to give a step up—will get eight weeks of subsidy and a child care space while they looked for that employment. Yesterday that was cut to two weeks.

Child care centres that I spoke with this morning said they cannot develop a relationship with a child in a two-week period of time.

Can this minister tell this House how women are to go out and find employment when they will not have a child care space so that they can conduct interviews—so that they can find jobs?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would invite the member to join in the Estimates process within the next hour, and we can look at this in some detail.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, let me tell the minister that I will participate in the Estimates process only when they tell me what they are doing to every other department in this government, and that I am not going to have my parliamentary rights removed from me.

Will the minister tell this House now: How many child care spaces he thinks will be eliminated in this province as a result of his decision to charge subsidy parents \$2.40 a day?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the daycare issue is one that the Liberal Party has avoided in the past, and I would invite the member to Estimates to go into some detail on this.

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

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

I am ruling on a matter of privilege raised by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) on March 11, 1993. In speaking to the matter of privilege, the honourable member stated that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) on March 3, while answering a question, stated that outpatient services for children would continue in most, if not all, of the locations currently, including St. Boniface and Victoria Hospitals.

The honourable member for Kildonan then went on to say that the next day an official in the Minister of Health's office sent a letter to community hospitals indicating that children's outpatient surgical services would be provided by the Children's Hospital only. Therefore, the claim of privilege was that the Minister of Health said one thing in the House but had already made a different decision.

The issue here is whether there is a prima facie case of privilege; I do not believe there is. I would refer to my rulings of June 13 and June 19, 1991; "... a motion of privilege should be worded in such a way that another member is alleged to have deliberately or intentionally misled the House" and a member "... must support his or her charge with proof of intent."

The motion put forward by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) did not indicate that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) deliberately misled the House, nor did the member in his comments provide proof that the minister deliberately set out to mislead the House. I would also quote from page 191 of Parliamentary Privilege in Canada by the authority Joseph Maingot which states, and I quote: An allegation of misleading the House is not out of order or unparliamentary, nor does it amount to a question of privilege.

It is clear that this case is a dispute over the facts which, according to the rulings of previous Speakers in Manitoba and according to Beauchesne Citation 31.(1), does not constitute the basis for a matter of privilege. I am therefore ruling that the matter of privilege is out of order because the member for Kildonan failed to establish a prima facie case and because the matter is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I will recognize the honourable Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs). The honourable Leader is moving a motion, I believe, at this time.

Prior to recognizing the honourable member, I believe the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) has a committee change, so I will recognize the honourable member for Point Douglas for this committee change, and then I think we have a couple of nonpolitical statements, at which time I will recognize the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) for Tuesday, March 16, 1993, for 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be amended as follows: the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns); the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) for the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme); the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) for the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh); the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson); and the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) for the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Government Services have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Dakota High School kept its winning traditions intact last night by winning another provincial championship.

I would like to congratulate Coach Jerry Ilchyna and the Freshmen Girls who defeated Oak Park by a score of 48 to 36 to win the '93 Freshmen Girls Basketball Championship. The players are Lisa Bennici, Dayna Butterworth, Cheryl Clark, Cynthia Croatto, Kyla Hanec, Cadence Hays, Kathy Holmes, Shawna Johnson, Dana Klatt and also Katie Marie and Jill McAndless. I congratulate them.

* (1420)

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the House, for an opportunity to make a nonpolitical statement.

I was pleased to have Miranda Kowalec as my guest today, Mr. Speaker. Miranda is a Grade 6

student at Balmoral Hall School and is one of 12 students from across Canada whose art work was chosen to represent their home province or territory in the 1993 energy and environment calendar. The calendar was produced by Energy, Mines and Resources Canada in co-operation with provincial and territorial Energy departments.

Copies of the calendar were made available to you through the respective caucus offices earlier this year. You will find Miranda's work in the month of May.

She shows us two neighbourhoods and reminds us that the choice is ours. The right choice, without question, is to be responsible, to be resource wise and energy efficient. It is a proud moment as we pay tribute to Miranda, Mr. Speaker.

It should be noted that Miranda produced her winning art work for the Fort Whyte Centre Summer Nature Day Camp Poster Contest. The enthusiasm of 180 youngsters who participated serves as a constant reminder of just how important it is that we are resource conscious for the sake of our children and our grandchildren. Thank you.

* * *

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

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to pay tribute to a group of young people in my constituency, the Sturgeon Creek Collegiate cheerleaders who won the provincial cheerleading competition held at Sturgeon Creek Collegiate on March 6: Karen Alho, Wendy Bueckert, Kim and Shannon Chartrand, Alana Dodge, Amber Hayden, Jen Horsman, Cheri Keller, Judy Lawrence, Wendy Leland, Mary-Ann Manness, Jackie Monteith, Patty O'Brien, Jennifer Olynick, Jackie Papineau, Heather Patterson, Jedda Rempel, Adrienne Shewfelt, Heidi Swanson, Nicole Vigilance and Kristy Warner. The coaches were Kim Vigilance and Marni Barnes.

I would ask all members to join with me in wishing the young people well as they travel to St. Paul, Minnesota, for the National Cheerleading Competition for March 17 and March 21 of this year. Thank you.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that under Rule 27, the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely tabling of department Estimates prior to the tabling of Main Estimates, contrary to the well-established practices of the House respecting the introduction and referral of the government's Expenditure Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: Before determining whether the motion meets the requirements of our Rule 27, the honourable member for River Heights will have five minutes to state her case for the urgency of debating this matter today.

A spokesperson for the government and the other opposition party will also have five minutes to address the position of their party respecting the urgency of debate on this matter today.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, I rise on what I consider to be a very serious matter happening in the events of this Chamber, events which have never happened, not only before in this Chamber but not in any Chamber of this country.

In this province we had a history and tradition up until 1983 of introducing a Main Estimates book, and then it could be followed by a budget. I accept that, and there is no question of that. That has also been done in the House of Commons, but neither in the House of Commons nor in this Chamber has it ever been done, to our knowledge and to any knowledge we have been able to acquire from House of Commons staff, that they have introduced independent Estimates of a few departments and cherry-picked departments and not presented at the same time the Main Estimates book. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the relevancy—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: In order to introduce this motion, a number of conditions have to be met. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there was a letter sent to you earlier this morning indicating my desire to introduce this motion at this particular point in time.

It also has to be proven that there is no other time within the debating mechanism for this particular motion and discussion to take place. I would

suggest to you that we have tried consistently to get this debate on the floor of the Chamber, and we have been unsuccessful in our attempt to get it on the floor of this Chamber.

Something happened yesterday afternoon which had never happened in my years of experience in this House. I quite frankly spoke with one of the deans of the legislative press gallery to ask her if she could recall any event in which an individual had risen at their place in order to speak on a motion and had been denied the opportunity to so speak.

The purpose of that individual speaking at that particular point in time was to explain as well as he could the problems and difficulties that we feel as an opposition that we are having imposed upon us. The whole purpose of rules and proceedings is that individuals—

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): You were not here.

Mrs. Carstairs: I was in the Chamber, with all due respect to the Minister of Finance, when the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) tried to speak and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) moved that debate be adjourned. I was in the House.

So we have tried to facilitate this debate. I very carefully reviewed all of the rulings that you cited, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the motion which the government had put on the Notice Paper last Wednesday and addressed on Friday. You talked about March 16, 1883, and June 1, 1898, April 8, 1948, the 24th of April, 1961, and the 14th of May, 1964. None of these rulings, with the greatest respect to your position, had anything to do with Estimates. They did, indeed, have to do with the aspect of whether a motion could be introduced which would suspend the rules of the House. That was true.

The issue that I want to deal with today in the matter of urgent public importance is not the issue of whether we can suspend the rules of the House; it is the issue of whether a parliamentary tradition is being broken in this Chamber, as to the presentation of individual Estimates without the presentation of the full and Main Estimates book.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that we have not had an opportunity to debate that, nor will we have an opportunity to debate that. I urge you to allow that kind of debate to continue today because, without that, this House is in serious jeopardy of

creating a precedent which I would suggest to you is highly dangerous.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has indicated that in this instance it would only be a week, or a week and a half, but you, Mr. Speaker, stand up day after day after day, and you cite what has happened on other occasions in other Chambers and in other Houses. Once this becomes a precedent of this House, it can, not only be used in this Chamber, it can be used in other Chambers throughout this country, in the House of Commons and in other parliamentary systems of government.

We are suggesting that we are going to establish a precedent in Manitoba that has never, to our knowledge, been established before. We are going to get this into books written by people like Erskine May, and they are going to say that, yes, this has happened; yes, this is possible; yes, this can be done.

I would suggest that is not a tradition that we wish to have as a legacy to the parliamentary system, not only of this province but of this country, yet that is what the Minister of Finance and the government of the day are suggesting that not only should be possible but is desirable.

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker, it is not possible now, and it should not be possible today or any other day, because it desperately infringes upon my rights as a member of the opposition to do my job to the best of my ability. That is all I ask of these members, that I be given the opportunity to do my job to the best of my ability. I cannot do that by seeing an Estimate in isolation from all other Estimates.

I would be irresponsible if I could not say to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), why are you being cut in this way, if I do not know what has been cut in the Department of Education or I do not know what has been cut in the Department of Highways or I do not know what has been cut in Urban Affairs or I do not know what has been cut in Rural Development.

How am I supposed to be able to make those kinds of judgment decisions without that information?

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to take this motion extremely seriously and allow the members of this House to debate this important matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I, first of all, want to deal with the technicalities as to whether this is a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): It is.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the Liberal House leader (Mr. Lamoureux) says, it is, from his seat. I believe it is your decision, Mr. Speaker, and this House's decision, ultimately, as to whether it is a matter of urgent public importance.

In terms of the mechanism that was used in this case, I am obviously satisfied. We are satisfied that proper notice was given. Mr. Speaker, without even getting into the question as to whether this is important enough to set aside the normal business of the House, I would point out that our rules—I am reading from page 18, 27.(5)—indicate there are a number of restrictions in regard to matters of urgent public importance. In particular, our Rule 27.(5)(c) says "The motion shall not revive discussion on a matter that has been decided in the same session"; and "(d) The motion shall not anticipate a matter that has previously been appointed for consideration by the House, or with reference to which a notice of motion has previously been given and not withdrawn;"

Mr. Speaker, I raise those two points because it appears that some of the debate that took place in justifying it referenced a debate that already took place last week in a matter of privilege, took place yesterday in a point of order and yesterday in debate on the motion to go into Committee of Supply for Estimates and also perhaps could be considered to anticipate debate at a further point in time in regard to going into Estimates.

I think the difficulty that we are facing here, Mr. Speaker, in this particular case, is the Liberals want to make a point. I think the more they get into the procedural wranglings, the more they are losing not only their point, but the point of the situation we are faced with. I would say it is very clear that everyone in the opposition would prefer to have not only the Estimates, the full Estimates book, but the budget as well. There is no requirement the two be introduced concurrently, but we would like to see the entire budget tabled. We find it unfortunate that the minister, because his government is continuing to cut back on a daily basis the vital services in this province, has moved back the budget date and we are in this situation.

Mr. Speaker, the problem we run into in this particular case is—just take yesterday: 56 organizations had their funding not cut, but eliminated, slashed by this government. We want to have the opportunity to deal with those cuts as soon as possible. As I said, in an ideal world, we would prefer to have the entire Estimates process, but let us face the reality that if the budget date is on April 6 and we then have the normal time period of debate, we will not be dealing with a detailed Estimates discussion until well into the middle of April.

The bottom line is, we want answers now. Not only do we want answers, we want to be able to put this government on the spot and we want them to reverse many of the kinds of vicious cuts they brought in and the kind of announcements we saw yesterday, Mr. Speaker. So this is the dilemma we all face in this House. It is a dilemma that I do not blame the Liberals for in the sense that the government has moved back the budget date and the government is making these kinds of cuts and does not have the complete Estimates process.

Mr. Speaker, if the question comes down to whether we should discuss the cuts that are taking place in Family Services in the middle of April and have to hear the kind of responses we heard today from the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), wait for the Estimates—by the way, he was incorrect when he said that we could ask questions on the child care office; that has not been released by this government—if that is the choice, we would rather discuss the substantive issues than continue with the procedural wranglings.

I appreciate the Liberals wanted to make a point, but they have made it on the point of privilege, they have made it on the point of order, they made it in debate yesterday. Mr. Speaker, today they can make the same point in regard to the discussion on the motion to go into Estimates. All of the motions are debatable, and it is well within their rights.

I spoke yesterday—[interjection] Well, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal House leader talks about being in wonderland. The point is, these concerns can be expressed in other ways. There is no reason to have a matter of urgent public importance. If it had been a matter of urgent public importance on dealing with cuts in Family Services, we would have been the first ones to support it. We should not be using MUPs to raise procedural points that have been raised and can be raised in other ways.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would say to you that the Liberals are abusing the rule calling for an emergency debate. I would end by telling you, in my view at least, if this is ruled in order, then everything under the sun can be used as a guise for emergency debate.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party, of course, are very sensitive on this issue, because they are taking a beating in the public mind, because they are embarrassed, because we know and they know that we are chewing up \$5,000 a day in being in this Chamber—[interjection] It is \$10,000 a day, I am reminded.

Indeed, we have been sent here in the spring session to work. Mr. Speaker, 50 members of this House, approximately, want to work and seven do not. Fifty are wanting to work, wanting to ask the very critical questions dealing with the decisions and the rationale behind some of the announcements made yesterday, but seven do not.

The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) said we cherry pick departments. Not true. We offered up the economic side of the portfolio. That was pointed out to me as being cherry picking, because we have not offered up a human services department. We went in an area where we had not even finalized decisions. I tried successfully, finally, to get Family Services up, one section—one or two lines, Mr. Speaker, with a promise that by Wednesday or Thursday of this week, the whole department's Estimates would be presented, so we could not be accused of cherry picking, so there would be a major social department on one side and an economic department on the other side, so we could not be accused of cherry picking.

Mr. Speaker, the members say that we put down one of their members because we moved a motion—pardon me, we stood our own motion. I say to the members opposite, when they claim that they tried to facilitate debate, the best word I can think of is hogwash. Yesterday, the bells rang for two hours—two hours, when the members could have been debating the issue. What took so long to decide how you were going to vote? Did it take two hours? No, the word is filibustering, nothing more—pure, unadulterated filibustering, nothing more.

When the members talk about the fact that they are trying to facilitate debate, I say to the Leader of

the Liberal Party, be honest with yourself. You do not let the bells ring for two hours if you are trying to facilitate debate—and be honest with all the members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, we stood debate. I acknowledge that. We adjourned debate, which is our right to do. We adjourned debate because it was obvious that members opposite were going to do nothing more than try to again filibuster that debate. Then what do we do? Last night at eight o'clock, we came, which we are allowed to do under the rules, and tabled the sequence of Estimates which we are allowed to do under the rules, in keeping with the rules. The Liberal Party was offended with that. They were offended with that, because we were following the rules, the rules of this House, and they were offended with that.

Mr. Speaker, from that we moved a motion to set up the Committee of Supply and, yet, all the time when the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) said they were trying to facilitate debate, I saw two people, I heard three people who spent two hours trying to argue against why it was that we should not set up a Committee of Supply to deal with the issue.

* (1440)

So, Mr. Speaker, the member talks about precedent. She does not want to see this then be enforced on other Houses because of the fact it becomes a precedent. We have a 240-hour rule which I would tell you is a precedent, because nowhere else in the land is 240 hours devoted to Estimates, yet nobody has seen fit that they have to follow that model. If the Leader is so concerned, I would say why then would not other Legislatures and other parliaments put into place a rule prohibiting the fact that you take apart the Estimates book, which can be done. Her argument on precedent setting that is going to spread throughout the whole commonwealth is wrong. It is absolutely wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are, again I say to you, filibustering, plain and simply, under the guise of a point of principle. I would indicate to you that there is absolutely no urgency. There is absolutely no case made as to why there should be a debate on this. Furthermore, I call this tyranny of the minority, seven members. Mainly, I say to you that the Liberal Party are desperate for an issue.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all honourable members for their advice as to whether the motion proposed by the honourable Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs) should be debated today.

I did receive the notice required under our subrule 27.(1) and according to our Rule 27 and Beauchesne's Citations 389 and 390, the two conditions required for a matter of urgent importance to proceed are (a) the subject matter must be so pressing that the ordinary opportunities for debate would not allow it to be brought on early enough; and (b) it must be shown that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention.

I would remind members that " 'Urgency' . . . does not apply to the matter itself, but means 'urgency of debate,' when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and the public interest demands that discussion take place immediately."

I am ruling that there are other opportunities to debate this matter; one, the House is now debating the motion to create the Committee of Supply; two, there will be a debatable motion to refer the tabled Estimates to the Committee of Supply; three, the member will have the opportunity to grieve when the motion to resolve itself into the Committee of Supply is moved.

Therefore, I am ruling that the honourable member's motion does not meet the criteria set out by our rules and practices, that is, there are other opportunities for the matter to be debated.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

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

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

The question before the House is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

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

Yeas

Ashton, Barrett, Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Dewar, Doer, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Filmon, Findlay, Friesen, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Hickes, Laurendeau, Manness, Martindale, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Pallister, Penner, Plohman, Praznik, Reid, Reimer, Render, Rose, Santos, Stefanson, Storie, Sveinson, Vodrey, Wasylycia-Leis, Wowchuk.

Nays

Alcock, Carstairs, Edwards, Gaudry, Gray, Lamoureux.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 44, Nays 6.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair is accordingly sustained.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill 2.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Endangered Species Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), Bill 2, The Endangered Species Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les espèces en voie de disparition, standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon, who has 31 minutes remaining.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I began my remarks the other day on Bill 2. I had only a couple of additional comments that I wanted to relay to the minister through my remarks dealing with Bill 2. Those related to some concerns that have been expressed, I believe, to the minister directly. It has to do with, I guess, the purpose and the meaning behind the wording changes, particularly those that reference indigenous species.

I think generally the concern is that there is a perception that indigenous species, of course, may be interpreted differently. It is difficult sometimes to

put a time frame on what indigenous species may in fact be. Over a period, in terms of epoch, animals do transfer, wildlife transfers. What was one time indigenous to Manitoba now may no longer be indigenous to Manitoba but may be found further north or further south or further east or further west.

There is a concern that we may be in fact empowering the minister to do or to undo things which historically should not be changed and, Mr. Speaker, that is, I think, a genuine concern, although I have to say that personally I do not share that concern too deeply.

I think perhaps the minister, when we get to committee stage, could perhaps clear up some of those concerns, perhaps by just commenting from his own perspective on what that might mean and how those things may be determined in the future.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I am going to conclude and let someone else join the debate.

* (1550)

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Would you call Bill 3, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 3—The Oil and Gas and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), Bill 3, The Oil and Gas and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant le pétrole et le gaz naturel et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois, standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, Bill 5.

Bill 5—The Northern Affairs Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), Bill 5, The Northern Affairs Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les affaires

du Nord, standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Bill 8, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 8—The Insurance Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Co-operative Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), Bill 8, The Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances, standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Bill 10.

Bill 10—The Farm Lands Ownership Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), Bill 10, The Farm Lands Ownership Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la propriété agricole et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois, standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bills 11 and 12.

Bill 11—The Regional Waste Management Authorities, The Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), Bill 11, The Regional Waste Management Authorities, The Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les offices régionaux de gestion des déchets, modifiant

la Loi sur les municipalités et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois, standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Bill 12—The International Trusts Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill 12, The International Trusts Act; Loi sur les fiducies internationales, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bills 13 and 14?

Bill 13—The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 13, The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Fonds de participation des travailleurs du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Bill 14—The Personal Property Security and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill 14, The Personal Property Security and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les sûretés relatives aux biens personnels et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bills 15 and 16, please.

Bill 15—The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 15, The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Act; Loi sur la Commission de la boxe et de la lutte, standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Bill 16—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey), Bill 16, The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased this afternoon to be able to speak to Bill 16, The Public Schools Amendment Act.

I must say, as well, that I was pleased that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) gave opposition members the opportunity to be briefed on this particular bill by her deputy minister and senior staff and, certainly, I appreciated that opportunity.

It would have been interesting if the critic for the NDP had been at that particular briefing as well. I always feel that it is never too late to learn and one can always learn more information. So I certainly appreciated the opportunity to not only hear what the minister's staff had to say about the bill but in fact to pose questions to her staff as well. So I do thank the minister for that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: The Public Schools Amendment Act that this government has presented in the House I think is indicative of the style of management that we are seeing from this government. We have started to see since the fall when this House first came into session and the throne speech a

management style that borders on dictatorship. [interjection] I hear comments from the member for Niakwa, who asked me to speak on the bill. I guess I find the comments from that member indicative similar to her comments last night where she seems to perhaps lack sometimes the understanding of how you approach a subject from a broader perspective and then talk about the details. That is how I plan to approach my comments as I speak about this bill today.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I believe that this bill is indicative of the style of management of this particular government, because what we are seeing is a government who is saying to the education community out there, we want you to run your school divisions. We want you to run your organizations, whether it is Manitoba Teachers' Society or Manitoba Association of School Trustees. We want you to ensure that education is delivered in a quality manner in the province of Manitoba. It is your responsibility.

What they are saying with this bill is, we are going to take away some of that autonomy. They are saying that they are going to put a cap on what school divisions are able to tax their taxpayers. They are suggesting, and I recall the minister saying in this House that in fact she was doing this to ensure fairness across the system. Well, in fact, it does exactly the opposite. It does not create fairness in the school system, in the education system in this province.

We are starting to receive information from school division after school division after school division, and they are saying to us, this is basically creating an inequity from one school division to another. Because of the way that this particular amendment act reads, what will happen is that in fact there will be a difference in the services which can be offered in one school division versus another, so that in St. Vital School Division, their taxpayers may receive a decrease in terms of the amount of tax that they are going to pay in relation to schools, but they may not be able to provide the same level of services as perhaps the River East School Division that may find that their taxpayers will be paying 2 percent more. That is not fairness in the system, Mr. Speaker. That is definitely an inequity.

We also see a number of inequities between the rural school divisions and the urban school divisions. What this bill does is it creates an unfairness to the system, and that unfairness in the

final analysis translates to an individual child who is attending school being offered a very different type of service, quality of service, from one school division to another.

What this bill purports to do is to say to school divisions, we are taking away your autonomy to make decisions. I find that a great contradiction, because we have the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) who also stands in this House and who also says to Manitobans, we are going to no longer hire speech and hearing clinicians to provide services out in the school divisions. You as a school division will now be responsible to hire those specialists. We are going to give you a grant of \$45,000 to do that.

The reason that the minister uses for this decision is she wants to give more control to the school divisions. Well, that is in direct contradiction to what this bill, Bill 16, is saying. On one hand she is saying, take more control. On the other hand she is saying, we are going to take that autonomy and that control away from you.

* (1600)

That is a basic contradiction, and I would ask the Minister of Education and Training—and I look forward to hearing comments from the other ministers on this particular bill—what is the rationale behind what this government is doing in regards to education and training? What is the purpose of Bill 16 but to take away autonomy from the school divisions?

How can education and training be seen as, and I quote, the keys to unlock a world of opportunity, unquote, as purported by this government in their throne speech, when in fact they are tying the hands of education officials, of teachers, of parents, of school trustees?

They are tying the hands of these individuals in this province so that, in fact, they are making it very difficult for these people to make reasonable decisions so that they can deliver a quality service to our children in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, what the real tragedy is about this Bill 16, which is a symptom of how this government is treating education in this province, is that it may not be the first year and the second year and the third year of these policies that have the most impact, but the impact will be seen perhaps in four and five years and down the road, right until another generation of children come into the school system.

That is going to be the real tragedy, where the services that school divisions are able to offer will be so severely impaired that the deterioration of education in this province will be so severe that it will take decades to restore that to the province of Manitoba.

One looks at this bill and sees how this government in a very autocratic way is saying to the school divisions, you are only allowed to do X, Y and Z. We will not allow you to raise funds in another way. We have also cut back your funding. This is not a fair bill because what happens is, although it is an average of a 2 percent cap and there is an average of a cut in terms of the Department of Education, that translates very differently depending on which school division you talk to.

In some school divisions, the cut amounts to less than 2 percent, but in other school divisions that cut in terms of real dollars amounts to over 5 percent in some situations. How can school divisions be expected to deliver a quality education service in their classrooms when their hands are tied, when they are not allowed to make decisions, and when, in fact, there is no leadership and no support from this government or from this Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey)?

School divisions are beginning to say they are going to have to have larger classrooms. They are going to look at cutting services, such as special needs services. Surely, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to special needs, those children are some of the most vulnerable children that we have in our education system today. Even before these cuts, what we saw from parents out there and from teachers who were involved with special needs children is the real difficulty expressed by parents and teachers, a real difficulty because they said the dollars and the services that are now available are still fairly sparse. They, in fact, do not meet all the needs of our special needs children.

What happens, Mr. Speaker, when a government forces education officials and educators of this province into a siege mentality? What happens is that those individuals, whether it is at a university level or within the public school system, are forced to protect whatever it is they have left. They are forced into a situation where it oftentimes becomes survival of the fittest; and, when that occurs, the best decisions are not made for our children. Oftentimes, the decisions that are made are based out of protectionism, and they are based on survival

of the fittest. So such programs and services for some of our most vulnerable children do not occur.

When we look at Bill 16, The Public Schools Amendment Act, this type of bill, I would suggest, is probably unprecedented in recent history here in Manitoba in terms of this Department of Education headed by this minister suggesting to the people of Manitoba that they are going to take away the autonomy of school trustees who were duly elected by their constituencies to do the best job that they could in terms of providing a service in education. Those school trustees, Mr. Speaker, want to do a good job. They do not want their hands tied. They want to be able to work with their constituents. They want to be able to talk to the people in their community and ask those individuals what the best way is to deliver a service.

This government likes to stand up in Question Period and in the House and talk about how this side of the House suggests that we should spend, spend, spend. Well, that is not true, because in fact we have not said that on this side of the House. We recognize that we have a crisis in terms of economic times not only in the province of Manitoba, but across this country. We recognize that there are very, very difficult decisions that must be made by this government, whether it is in education or health care or agriculture or finance or justice. We recognize that there are very difficult decisions, Mr. Speaker.

What we are concerned about—and this bill is a perfect example of that—is the shortsightedness of this government, the regressive nature of their policies. I use the word “policies” loosely, Mr. Speaker, because I really wonder if in fact there is a policy framework behind what this government is doing, other than the bottom line that they have to try to reduce the deficit, and they have no thought to what the future is going to hold for Manitobans.

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

That is very, very unfortunate because in 1988, this government was elected, duly elected by the people of Manitoba to do the best job they could. We had hoped that since 1988, this government would prepare a strategy, develop a plan, work with the education officials, work with the school trustees, work with the parents, work with the teachers' association, say to them in 1988 or 1989, times are tough, dollars are limited, resources are

not always there, how can we best ensure that education and training remains a priority for people in Manitoba and still be as efficient as we can in delivering those services?

We would have hoped that in fact they would have started that process—and I say in 1989 because I am giving the benefit of one year to get their feet wet as a government—at least in 1989 that they would have started this process and actually taken the concept of partnership, which they talk about so much in this House, and actually put some teeth into what partnership really means.

Why did they not do this in 1989? Why did they not work with the people in the education system? Why did they not come up with a strategy as to where they wanted to see education move over the next five years?

In 1992 we saw a throne speech from this government in the fall that referred to education and education reform. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we support education reform. We supported health care reform in this House. We were not afraid to take the risk to do that, because health care reform was very important and is important.

We support education reform. We very much support the idea that the education system needs to be reformed in the province of Manitoba. We support very much that there needs to be a framework developed so there is a kind of reform in this province, but all we have seen from this government is talk about, well, let us standardize tests across the province of Manitoba; let us bring in a Public Schools Amendment Act that talks about taking away autonomy from school divisions in this province; let us talk about cutting speech and hearing clinicians to rural school divisions and try to let the people of Manitoba believe that in fact they are creating fairness across the system; let us start to cut more curriculum services within the Department of Education because we are—and I would suggest the government must be thinking curriculum is not that important.

* (1610)

Well, you talk to any parent, any teacher, any school trustee out there, and they will tell you that curriculum is probably the most important thing that we need to be concerned about. We need to have curriculum that is on the cutting edge. We need to be prepared to have our children be competitive in the 21st Century. We are not going to be able to do

that with the regressive policies of this particular government.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Like what?

Ms. Gray: The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs wants to know what—[interjection] Name one policy. Well, I have to admit that it is a little difficult to come up with some education policies from this particular government. If I use the term loosely, policies, one policy is obviously taking away autonomy from school divisions. That is very clear by the bill that is being presented, Bill 16—very, very clear, that they are taking away the autonomy of school divisions and school trustees.

It is also very obvious, when we talk about policies of this government, that they support destreaming. They support the concept of destreaming, and there are a huge number of parents groups out there who are right now trying to lobby the minister to get her to possibly change her mind. It is also true that this government, in terms of a policy, supports standardized testing across the province. We read that in the throne speech.

So these are all examples, I can tell the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), of policies that this government has adopted. [interjection] Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs suggests the answer was not good enough. Well, I agree with her, because in fact all I did was repeat what the government has come up with, and you are right, it is simply not good enough. She is right on when she says that.

This bill is very, very fundamental, not just because of the capping that it will create across school divisions, not because it is going to make the school divisions' task almost impossible in terms of how they are going to come up with enough dollars just to maintain services, but the fundamental point behind this bill is, again, to me, a management style which indicates that now that this government is in a majority situation, they basically feel they can do whatever it is they need to do to basically reach the bottom line.

They do not care about the future of children in our province. They do not care what the consequences are going to be because their planning is on an election cycle. So they may be concerned about what they are going to do in the short term, but as the third party in this House,

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are concerned with what is going to happen to the next generation of Manitobans, to the next generation of children in this province. That is what we are concerned about, and that is what we feel that Manitobans are concerned about.

I receive over 10 phone calls a day from individuals who want to speak about education, whether they are teachers or whether they are parents. I receive at least two letters a day from someone across the province of Manitoba who wants to talk about education. You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, when people write these letters, whether they are teachers or parents, they recognize when they send messages to me, they say in their letters that they know that these are very difficult economic times in the province of Manitoba, but they also say that they want this government to prioritize education and training, that if in fact there has to be difficult decisions in terms of what the spending priorities are, let education and training be one of those priorities.

I will say it again to the member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), and I have had people from Minnedosa tell me, if you have to make tough decisions, and it is a choice between having smaller-sized classrooms versus giving community services dollars to put roofs on curling rinks, to put cross-country warming shacks for people, I am sorry, but I believe the people out in Manitoba will choose education. They will choose their children over those kinds of services.

I know that there are communities across this province, including the one that I come from in Virden, who have utilized Community Places dollars, but those individuals, as well, are saying that in fact if it is a choice between Community Places dollars and providing someone in the school system to do counselling on substance abuse, they will choose the individual in the school system to provide a service to children regarding substance abuse versus building another curling rink.

That is what Manitobans are prepared to do. Those are the priorities that Manitobans want to see. They are asking this government and they are asking this Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) to take some leadership and start to work with the education officials, work with the trustees, work with the parents, because it is very difficult times, Madam Deputy Speaker.

It is very, very difficult, and tough decisions have to be made. We believe that if we had an understanding from this government of where some of the dollars are going to be going, i.e., if we had the Main Estimates to at least know what the expenditures were as far as looking at the overall picture, we would even be more informed and could indicate to the government if we, in fact, support their priorities.

I recall the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) suggesting last night that there were not cuts to spending in regard to the cuts that we have seen announced in Education, in Family Services and other areas, but, in fact, there was going to be a reallocation of dollars.

Well, if they are not cuts and that money is simply being transferred to provide other services, we would like to know where those dollars are going. What are the services that this government has prioritized? Are they going to be in the area of education and training? Are they going to be in the area of health care?

Education and training has to be prioritized by this government. This government talks about education reform; it talks about the importance of it. This minister talks about consultation with school divisions. I have yet to talk to a school division in this province that has felt that the minister has actually consulted with it.

She also suggests that her door is always open. Well, there is a difference between having your door open and receiving people. There is a difference between that and actually showing leadership and actually taking the initiative to say, here is what I want to accomplish; here is what I want to know.

The minister should be going out and saying to these organizations and school divisions, I want to meet with you. I want to talk to you about X, Y and Z. Here is what our framework is. Here is what our education reform is all about. The minister should be taking some leadership to go out and talk to school divisions, because we know there are not going to be easy decisions that have to be made.

We are quite prepared, Madam Deputy Speaker, to support this government if we feel that it has made decisions which are in the best interests of Manitobans, particularly in the area of education and training, because we are on the record as supporting this government in the area of their health reform initiative. We are not afraid to support

this government on an education reform, but we would like to see a plan.

What is the education reform that is contemplated by this government? Is it simply Bill 16? Is it simply The Public Schools Amendment Act where they are going to be taking away the autonomy? Is that the policy that this government purports for education and training?

We would be very happy, Madam Deputy Speaker, if this minister was prepared to sit down with all of the school divisions, to sit down with the officials from the Manitoba Teachers' Society, to sit down with the organizations of parents out there and reconsider this piece of legislation and reconsider it within the context of what exactly does this government want to do in regard to education and training.

Let us know where the reform is to be. Let us know what you are looking at. Is the minister going to be looking at curriculum changes? Is the minister going to be looking at the existing funding formula? Is the minister prepared to look at the taxation base and where we receive our dollars from for education and training? Is the minister prepared to look at the co-ordination of services among Health, Justice, Family Services and Education? Is the minister prepared to look at that?

These are all areas within education and training that should be part of an overall review, should be part of an overall education reform. Is the minister prepared to follow up on her promise to have a school division boundary review? Is she prepared to follow up on that?

* (1620)

What she has actually done with this bill and with similar policies that she has created, she has actually said to the school divisions, well, it is up to you to share resources. I force you to share resources because of the lack of funding and the way I have determined that you will receive your extra funding. It is actually up to you to do that but you will have to come up with how you are going to share the resources.

Again, she has forced them to do it in very adverse circumstances.

What she should have done was said, we need to review the entire structure of the Department of Education, of school divisions and how they operate and the services that are provided. Let us have a reasonable review. Let us set up a system where

we can logically look at this, and let us all try to agree on what are the best ways to approach restructuring of school division boundaries. What is the best way to look at the services that are currently provided to the Department of Education and Training?

Why was this minister not prepared to do that, Madam Deputy Speaker? Why was she not prepared to follow up on her talk about school division boundary reviews? Now what she has forced—she has really created ad hocery throughout the school divisions because of her approach to the education and training. We find that simply unacceptable, and we believe that Manitobans out there find that equally unacceptable.

We would ask that this minister please reconsider her decisions, reconsider this piece of legislation, sit down with the officials from the various organizations, talk to the people in the communities, talk to school division officials, not just simply talking to her cabinet colleagues, because with all due respect, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it is very important that she talk to people who work in the education system and who know what will happen in education if she continues on this slippery slope of regressive policies within the education field.

So we do urge that the minister review this and consider withdrawing this piece of legislation. It is regressive. It is done without consultation. It was done in a manner which suggests autocracy and dictatorship and not partnership, which this government likes to purport. We would ask that it be withdrawn and that in fact she reconsider it. We are prepared to work with this minister to ensure that appropriate education reform does occur in the province of Manitoba, because it is our children who are important, Madam Deputy Speaker, and not just children in this generation but children in the future generation.

Thank you.

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Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, as we have completed all the bills before us, I wonder if you would call private members' Resolution 9.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resolution 9.

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, because the government obviously has shown intent that they would like to be able to debate this resolution, I would be more than happy, with leave of the House, to introduce it on behalf of the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs), and she will be up shortly, in which she can debate it.

If the government wants it debated during government business, we will be more than happy to at least introduce it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave of the House to permit the honourable member for Inkster to introduce Resolution 9?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Manness: Madam Deputy Speaker, would you call then Resolution 13.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resolution 13.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that the government wants to debate the Liberal resolution, very pleased to hear that. In fact, again, like the previous one, I would be more than happy to introduce that resolution so the government can, in fact, speak on that resolution, if there is leave of the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the honourable member for Inkster requesting leave to introduce Resolution 13 on behalf of the mover? Is there leave to permit?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Manness: Madam Deputy Speaker, again I ask whether or not—well, no, I will not.

Madam Deputy Speaker, seeing the Liberals are not in their place to debate their resolutions which I have called—

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government House leader is not allowed to say who is present and who is not present.

I can assure him that we have more than 50 percent of our caucus here during government business. I only wish they had 50 percent of their caucus here during private members' hour. At private members' hour, when our resolutions come up, our members are here, unlike the government.

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

Mr. Manness: Madam Deputy Speaker, this is the greatest percentage of Liberals I have seen in the House since the beginning of the opening of the session.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would ask you to therefore call Resolution 46.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resolution 46.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am starting to feel bad. The House leader has forgotten the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), the member for—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the honourable member for Inkster up on a point of order?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, on a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, again, with the leave of this Chamber, I would be more than happy to introduce that particular resolution or to debate any of the other four members who are in fact here who would like to debate a resolution in government business.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Does the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) have leave to introduce Resolution 46?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

* (1630)

DEBATE ON PROPOSED MOTIONS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am having great difficulty. I am calling the Liberal resolutions. They are not here to debate them. I have done them a great service and, of course, they choose not to debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker, would you call then the motion in my name, namely, that this House, at this sitting, will resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): The government House leader had requested that we could have Resolution 9 debated and was concerned in terms that—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster does not have a point of order. The resolution was called. Leave was denied.

* * *

Madam Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable government House leader that this House, at this sitting, will resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, standing in the name of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), who has 10 minutes remaining.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to continue my comments on this particular motion.

This particular motion is really requesting that this House go into the Committee of Supply and discuss the Estimates.

There is a particular problem with the request that this government is asking. The difficulty with the request is that in fact we do not have the complete picture available to us as to what is the financial situation, what is the financial position of this particular government.

They have tabled in this House to date Estimates for the Department of Family Services, Estimates for Highways and Transportation, Estimates for the Department of Agriculture, or some Estimates for the Department of Agriculture. They are suggesting to all members of this House that we resolve into the Committee of Supply and that we discuss these three departments and not have an understanding of the entire financial picture of this government.

We have already made a compromise to this government because we have said to them, we recognize you may not have the entire information regarding your revenue, we recognize you may not be able to present your capital expenditures but, surely to goodness, this government should be

prepared to introduce the entire Main Estimates—[interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing great difficulty hearing the honourable member for Crescentwood.

Ms. Gray: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Surely this government should be prepared to table the Main Estimates so that in fact we can act as a responsible opposition, so that in fact we can best represent the people of Manitoba, not just in our own individual constituencies, but throughout this province.

It is very, very important that we have an understanding of what the entire picture is because, and I quote exactly from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), who said in this Chamber last evening in response to our concern about the recent press releases about cutting of dollars and eliminating funds to a number of community organizations who we believe provide services, whether it is friendship centres, whether it is the Association for Community Living, whatever the agency, his response was, we are not cutting funds, we are reallocating funds.

I said at that time, and I will repeat again because it bears repeating, that in fact the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) just proved our point and made very well the principle that we are explaining in this House today. If in fact they are not cuts as those examples of elimination of funds were yesterday, if in fact those dollars have been reallocated to other areas within the various government departments, have been reallocated for other priorities, then we as a responsible opposition in the third party, we want to know where those dollars have been reallocated to. We want to be able to say to Manitobans, yes, we agree with that reallocation of funds or, no, we do not agree, but we have not been afforded that opportunity, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have not been allowed to see a complete financial picture.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government talked about total quality management and certainly purports that, at least in regard to health care reform, it is essentially an important way to go in regard to planning, implementing and changing the health care system in this province. I was looking through a book this morning that Ernst and Young had prepared and I believe had presented to this government on total quality management, and they talk about some of the key factors, the key stages

that are necessary in order to accomplish total quality management.

The first thing that they talk about is create a common understanding. Well, I ask you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I ask the members of this House, how does this government create a common understanding of what their goals and objectives are, where they want to proceed with their budget, unless they are prepared to give us the entire information? They need to be prepared to give us the Main Estimates.

Let us know what the spending is across the other 23 departments. Are there similar cuts? Are there increases in some departments? Are there increases in some divisions, in some sections of some departments? What is the exact situation? If you are going to create a common understanding which is the first stage of planning for total quality management which this government purports to agree to, we need to have all of the information. We need all of the data that is available to us to be able to make reasonable decisions, to be able to be responsive opposition.

The other thing in the planning stage that this government says that they believe in, they say that you have to develop a vision and you have to change strategy. Well, in order to change strategy, Madam Deputy Speaker, you have to know what the strategy is and you have to know what that vision is. How can one determine what the vision is of a government which is responsible for 26 departments when in fact we only see a snapshot of three departments? Is the government suggesting that these three departments are in fact representative of the entire 26 departments? We do not know that. [interjection] Well, my honourable friend the critic for Education, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), says in fact that there is no vision. There is just cutting and slashing.

You know, I really have to disagree with the member on this. I really do, because I believe that in some indirect way the government probably does have a plan and they have a goal, and they have something in mind. The problem is we do not know what it is, and Manitobans do not know what it is, because if in fact their plan is that they have to reduce expenditures in all the departments because revenues are so flat, if in fact that is the plan, then at least we need to know that, and we will not know that unless we get all the expenditures. [interjection]

Again, my honourable friend the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), when they stand up in this House, they talk about the cutting and slashing. That is all they refer to, yet I have not heard any solutions from the members in the official opposition. I have not heard any solutions as to what are the answers, what are the priorities.

We have not heard any priorities from that side of the House on health care reform. We have heard a lot of complaints about the way the government is going in regard to that, but we have not heard any suggestions. At least we, on this side of the House, in the third party, have offered suggestions in regard to health care reform and we have more suggestions. We have offered suggestions in regard to education reform.

We have at least suggested, let us start a consultation process with people out in education. That means creating a common understanding among all the stakeholders, and you cannot create a common understanding amongst all the stakeholders, when you do not have all the information in front of you.

I cannot believe that the ministers in the government, particularly the ones who own small businesses or who are farmers would ever make a strategic plan for one year or two years or five years unless they had all the financial information in front of them. I cannot believe that they would do that.

I cannot believe that they would suggest that any business would, in fact, only take the data and the information from one division or one section, take it to their board of directors and say, well, here is a little piece of the pie, this is what we are doing, now make the decisions for the entire year. You tell us what our goals are going to be, but we do not have the rest of the financial information.

* (1640)

That is totally irresponsible. There is absolutely no logic to that. I really cannot believe that members on either side of this House actually accept the fact that you should be making decisions without all of the information. It goes against every basic management principle that there is or there ever was. I do not really believe the members on each of the House are prepared to accept that.

Now, unfortunately, I saw a lot of mismanagement when the NDP were in power, very much, so perhaps their management principles are a little askew. I can see that my time is running out and,

again, I will close by saying, we recognize what the principle is behind the government not bringing in all of the Estimates. We are prepared to work. Bring in the Estimates and we will work. We will be responsible opposition.

Thank you.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Deputy Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise today on an important parliamentary debate. The member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), I think, and others in his caucus make light of this debate, but I recall speeches in this House—[interjection] Perhaps the member for Sturgeon Creek would be quiet and he might learn something.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wanted to give him some words of wisdom from one Sterling Lyon, the erstwhile premier of this province, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. Sterling Lyon would never, ever, ever have supported the type of convenience that this government is seeking at the expense of the parliamentary process. He was first, foremost and always a defender of the parliamentary process.

Mr. Manness: I will ask Sterling.

Mr. Edwards: Well, I hope the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) does defend it. Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance should have asked Mr. Lyon prior to doing what he is doing here because he would have known clearly from that former member, now member of the Court of Appeal, that governments come and go but the parliamentary process must be preserved, and the integrity of the parliamentary procedure, or we all lose and all Manitobans will lose. We should never, ever allow any government to choose the convenience of the particular moment that they find themselves in and at the expense of setting a precedent which will affect this province, this Chamber, for all time, and, indeed, the parliaments around the world because we rely on decisions.

We look at decisions from parliaments all across the globe. We cannot allow this government to bastardize the process and choose convenience over what is clearly convention. To bring forward a part of the budgetary process without seeing the whole goes against not only parliamentary convenience, but, as with most rules that stand the test of time, it is based in logic, and the logic is nobody, nobody ever in any business or any enterprise and, indeed, should not in any

government attempt to debate the whole with only part of the information. I mean, that just makes sense, Madam Deputy Speaker. That is why this rule has been there for decades and centuries, because it makes sense.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget has not come forward, of course, we know, because this government just has not got its act together. It just does not know where it is going. It does not have—[interjection] Well, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says that is true, but he is supporting this government in their fiscal incompetence, Madam Deputy Speaker, and the only possible reason for that is that he and his former government wrote the book on fiscal incompetence. It is no surprise then that they are in the same boat with the government, supporting this type of piecemeal approach to the budgetary process in this province.

The people of this province deserve better. The people of this province deserve to have the full picture, and until they have the full picture, everyone in this province, and certainly every member of this Chamber, is fully within their rights and, I would argue, under an obligation to demand that the government come forward with its fiscal plan for the budgetary year.

What business would ever—what CEO or president would ever take to the board of directors about a part of the process and say, let us start debating this aspect of the business without giving the whole picture? You would not do it. You just would not do it. It would not happen.

In every business that members on the opposite side are involved in, every business enterprise, Madam Deputy Speaker, they would never tolerate that. Not for a second would they tolerate a detailed examination, which is what the Estimates process is, without knowing the whole picture. Why? As with any enterprise, and this is no exception, there are interrelationships of necessity, and, indeed, those interrelationships are proven time and time again, as members of this House, as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) recently said. He stood up and said: We are not cutting; we are reallocating.

Well, if that is what they are doing, if we are going to debate the Estimates, we have to know where the money is going. We have to know where it is coming from, where it is going to. Anybody who has ever sat through Estimates knows that that is the gist of what we are doing. We are not just talking

about cutbacks. We are talking about where money goes, how it is spent, who is cut more, who is cut less. That is the gist of the Estimates process.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is just logic, that is just common sense, and that is being sacrificed for the convenience of this government because of their fiscal incompetence. They cannot come forward with a budget, they cannot tell the people of this province where they are going, they do not know. They are hiding, they are asking us to bypass a convention which has stood the test of time, and why? Because they cannot get it together. That is it. That is the only reason, and that is not good enough. I dare say, their own predecessor, Mr. Lyon, would never, ever, ever have stood for this. He defended the parliamentary process in this House first and foremost, and this party is a shadow, is a shadow of what he stood for in this House on the issues of parliamentary process.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, proof, of course—just an example of the interrelationships between the departments is the fact that this government and other governments regularly take whole branches and whole divisions and move them between overall departments.

Some examples in my experience: Corrections went from Family Services to Justice; Workplace Safety and Health was Department of Environment, went to Labour. It made sense, but the fact is, these are not stand-alone branches. They have interrelationships between the various areas of government; of course they do. When you get into these branches, when you get into these departments, any review of any hour of Hansard in the Estimates process will reveal that all kinds of other departments and considerations and branches are brought into the process. That is just the way it works.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister in one department that I am responsible for, Highways and Transportation, did bring forward the Estimates book in that department. There was a desire to get into Highways and Transportation. Well, let me just remind the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) that a lot of the debate we had last year was about Rural Development. Highways and Rural Development are linked down the line.

The review of Hansard from last year's Estimates will show that. We were constantly comparing and the minister was constantly defending his Highways

program in terms of what was happening to Rural Development. He used it constantly. He brought in Agriculture as well. He brought in recreation and Tourism to talk about highways and defend them, and this money was being spent here and this money was being spent here. He was drawing the web of the interrelationships between these departments, and that is legitimate, that is logical. That is what he was doing, and we were asking him questions on that.

Now this government wants to bring in Highways and Transportation and have us talk about this \$93-million budget for a new Highways program. He wants us to bring that in, and we do not have any information about Rural Development; we do not have any information about Tourism, Madam Deputy Speaker. [interjection]

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says, let him tell us. Well, is the member for Dauphin saying that we will just let them tell us whatever they want to, we do not demand any documentation to substantiate what they are saying? Is he saying he puts his implicit faith in every word that is going to come out of the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) saying, oh, well, do not worry, you will see. I am going to be bringing money from Tourism. I am going to be covering that, or I am going to be bringing money from Rural Development. He believes in these people to do that?

He has been so brought into the fold on this that he wants to sit here and put it to these ministers and let them just tell us whatever they want, and he is not—[interjection] Trap them. I see. Good thinking.

* (1650)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I dare say, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) knows full well. He is talking tongue-in-cheek. He knows full well that this is wrong. He knows. He would never have tried to do this when he was in government because he knows it is wrong. It is illogical. It is unparliamentary. It does not make sense. It is just wrong. [interjection]

Well, I think what people expect of the official opposition is to defend the parliamentary process because, you know what, the parliamentary process works first and foremost for the opposition. We are here and we have rules to allow us, the opposition, to do our job. We keep the government in check. That is our job. That is why we are called the

opposition. We are supposed to do that. We are not supposed to cave in when they want to bend the rules because if it is this rule today, it will be another rule tomorrow. [interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is always a treat to hear from the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister). He should say some things from his seat every once in a while, because it then gets recorded. I think we would all like to hear what he has to say on the record, because if you take the words that are actually on the record from the member for Portage la Prairie, I do not think the people in Portage la Prairie are getting that good a deal. He just does not go on the record very often.

I feel badly for him, because I think he probably would like to say some things on the record, but they have a muzzle on him somewhat like they did the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik). He is paying his dues and probably hoping for better things in the future, but it has not worked for others. His predecessor, the former member for Portage la Prairie, he knew that. It does not pay to toe the line at all costs.

There is a point at which one has to assert one's own right to stand up for one's constituents. I have yet to see the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) do that, but I look forward to the day he does come out of his shell, do what the people of Portage la Prairie elected him to do, because I know those people in Portage la Prairie. They are freethinking individuals. They want a spokesman for their cause. They do not want some lap dog for the Premier (Mr. Filmon). They want a spokesperson, and that is what they had in the former member, and they want it again.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I await the day the member for Portage la Prairie has the courage to get on the record on some of these things he is saying. I do not see it in the near future, but I hope so. He certainly has the ability to be heard.

It is very important, and I know the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) knows as a businessman that it is important to have all of the facts before you before you attempt to determine spending priorities.

Now, obviously, for the government to have come up with the Estimates for these three departments, they have made those choices. They had to have. How could they make decisions about Family Services, and Highways and Transportation,

hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars without looking at the whole picture? Of course, they did. That is exactly what they do before they come up with these things.

Why are they hiding? More importantly, what are they hiding? That is what we would like to hear. Why not show us the whole—what are they afraid of? Let us see the whole show. Let us see where they made the cuts, where they put money. That is their right. I have no problem with that. They control the fiscal future of this province. They do that. That is their right, but it is their obligation to come forward publicly to the people of this province with the whole picture.

That is their obligation, a parliamentary obligation, as I say, which has stood the test of time, not just for a few years, a few decades, a few centuries, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are talking about throwing that to the wind. [interjection] I hear others making strange noises on the other side. That is not that uncommon in itself, but as I have told the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), I think their constituents deserve words on the record on this issue, and I invite them to speak. I want them to speak.

I am prepared to—[interjection] Well, if the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinsson) is going to speak, I am certainly prepared to have him take the floor. As soon as I am finished with my comments, I very much look forward to that member's comments because he has made many, many important comments in this House. He regularly puts very intuitive comments on the record, the member for La Verendrye does. I know he will have some thoughts about this as a man of principle. When I am done, I look forward to his comments because it is an important debate.

I dare say it is an historic debate, I think. We are talking about undercutting a tradition which has become, I think, a convention over time in the parliamentary procedure. It is unprecedented. I go back—I think it is unprecedented mostly because it just makes no sense. As with most good rules that stand the test of time, they have logic at their base, as does this one.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

We have an obligation to the people of this province as opposition members to have these debates to assess the record of this government, and we can hardly wait to do that. We cannot do

that until we have the whole picture. For the member for Springfield, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), would he ever consider taking a look at the business he is involved in, just one aspect of it, and making critical decisions for the future without knowing the cost associated with the other parts? Not a chance. He knows full well that not only is—he knows.

If anybody in his department came to him with this kind of piecemeal approach, they would be out the door if he was doing his job, out the door, and told, go and get me the whole picture. Go and tell me all, show me the interrelationships which have led to this budget in front of me. There is no obligation. In fact, there is no right on this government to come forward in the type of piecemeal approach they have. I want to know, Mr. Speaker, I want to know what they are hiding, because they could not have come forward with the Estimates they have without having a good look at the Estimates for the whole shooting match. They had to see the whole procedure to come up with these Estimates. Where are they?

How come other provinces can come up with these in due time? It is not the federal government. Other provinces do not have that problem. How come this province does? How come this government, which has attempted to build its reputation on fiscal responsibility, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) will have 21 minutes remaining.

* (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), Bill 200, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), who has seven minutes remaining.

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Also standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing in both members' names? [agreed]

Bill 203—The Health Care Records Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), Bill 203, The Health Care Records Act; Loi sur les dossiers médicaux, standing in the name of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Bill 205—The Ombudsman Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), Bill 205, The Ombudsman Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman, standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Are we proceeding with Bill 202?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Are we proceeding with Bill 208?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Are we proceeding with Bill 209?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Are we proceeding with Bill 211?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Okay.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 7—Free Trade With Mexico

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that

WHEREAS since the Free Trade Agreement with the United States was signed, Manitoba has lost thousands of jobs, with employment in the manufacturing sector showing a decline of more than 20 percent; and

WHEREAS the Premier of Manitoba clearly stated his opposition to free trade with Mexico during the 1990 Leader's Debate, saying, "I am not going to be supporting free trade with Mexico"; and

WHEREAS the Premier then changed his position, indicating that the government of Manitoba would support a Free Trade Agreement with Mexico if the deal met six conditions; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has concluded an agreement in principle with the United States and Mexico that represents a serious threat to the workers and residents of all three countries; and

WHEREAS none of the conditions outlined by the government have been met in this agreement; and

WHEREAS many Manitobans continue to have grave concerns about the formalization of the North American Free Trade Agreement and its impact on workers' wages and benefits; and

WHEREAS there has been no public discussion about the elements of the North American Free Trade Agreement; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has refused to take a final position on the North American Free Trade Agreement, in spite of the recognition that "the benefits for Canada are, of course, a little less clear."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Premier to state his final position on the Free Trade Agreement signed with Mexico and the United States, including whether the agreement meets the six conditions he established last year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly unanimously oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement because it will mean fewer jobs

and lower employment and environmental standards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assembly urge the government to consider holding public hearings throughout the province to discuss the dangers of the North American Free Trade Agreement for Manitoba jobs, industry and social programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this opposition be voiced to the federal government in the strongest possible way.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a touch dated in the sense that since we have raised the questions in this Chamber on NAFTA on a number of occasions, the government has, after the parliamentary committee has come and gone from Winnipeg and Manitoba has taken an on-the-one-hand-and-on-the-other-hand position on NAFTA—and I will get to that very specifically.

This resolution calls on the government to be a little stronger, a little firmer, but I will concede that since this resolution was placed before this Chamber, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) has put together a position on NAFTA.

Now, it is interesting to look through the very cleverly worded position that was tabled in this Chamber some three months ago on NAFTA by the minister, because the six conditions are dealt with, but you have to really take a look at the six conditions and you have to translate these sort of quasi-weasel words in the resolution of the minister and put those against the actual six conditions to really determine what the minister is really saying about NAFTA.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask you whether the text of the agreement dealing with the apparel industry is contrary to the government's six conditions or supported by the government's six conditions in the NAFTA agreement. I suggest to you that when you look at the minister's six conditions, the minister is not objecting to the apparel provisions of NAFTA, the triple transformation, in his statement in this House.

When you look at things like the generic drug industry, it is referenced in the minister's statement—I am going by memory right now, but it is referenced in the minister's statement—but of course that is in the context of the NAFTA agreement and,

as we have pointed out to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and to all and sundry, that of course will override any federal legislation on generic drugs, and we all allegedly are concerned about the jobs in the generic drug industry in Manitoba and the cost of health care in terms of the NAFTA agreement—again, very clever words by the government on the issue of generic drugs.

The government does agree with the position we have taken before when we cited the Sierra Club and Mr. Pope from the Sierra Club in the United States and environmental groups in Canada that the environmental protections that they had set out as one of their conditions is not being met. I applaud the government for that condition.

I also will say that the labour standards is also a provision that this government has stated as one of the conditions, and again they state that that issue needs further work.

Mr. Speaker, I was quite surprised then, because it looks to me as if the government of the day is not taking a Conservative position on NAFTA; i.e., unfettered free trade, corporate trade, whatever you will. It is not taking a New Democratic position to be opposed to the removal of sovereign investment decisions in Canada. I actually thought the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) sounded like Jean Chretien, that they want to renegotiate a few of the conditions of the NAFTA agreement and, if they do not get that, oh well.

That is why I was quite—[interjection] Well, the member must be flattered that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) have kind of gone down the middle of the road on this NAFTA agreement—very, very clever in his statement. I guess that is why they had to wait for the—I hope that amendment is out of order. I hope the minister is not talking to the Speaker in the middle of our speech about whether this amendment, which he is surely not going to move, is in order or not.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very carefully worded statement. I have to say, we were absolutely pleased that we had half a conversion on the road to Damascus, because I guess they saw the moon and not the sun when they were going to Damascus. After supporting the disastrous Canada-U.S. trade agreement, with a decline of 20 percent in the manufacturing jobs, they have now realized the

errors of their way and they are trying to make amends in the NAFTA agreement, which, of course, we have opposed in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, this is fairly important. We were pleased that the minister came up with a statement, but we were very disappointed how late he was. We were pleased that the minister was reviewing this issue, but we were disappointed that we had to table the drafts in this House, the Dallas draft and other drafts that were so important on this issue. We were pleased that the minister reluctantly admitted with us that the triple transformation clause was ultimately going to hurt jobs in the apparel industry. I know he tried to attack our little definitions from here and there, but you know the real substance was how many jobs are we going to lose, and what are we going to do about it?

I recognize that there is not a total consensus in Manitoba. There are some producers who are in favour of this NAFTA agreement. I recognized and I listened to their presentations at the House of Commons committee presentations at which the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) and I presented a brief.

Mr. Speaker, many of the groups that also appeared before that committee were opposed to NAFTA and were opposed to it for very, very good and sound reasons. I refer the minister to the Environment Committee of Manitoba and its presentation on the environmental impact of NAFTA on the province.

Since then we have received a tremendous amount of information on the impact of NAFTA on water, that, of course, being a very precious commodity. Some of the colleagues across the way fought on water protection years ago in the Garrison Diversion project, and we should have fought against the loss of sovereignty and water in the Canada-U.S. trade agreement, but we should certainly stop that now in NAFTA.

Mr. Speaker, I am worried that the Conservatives in this House and in Ottawa are going to be letting this issue pass by without any being part of the debate. Let me refer the minister to what has happened in Manitoba. Did they have public hearings on NAFTA? No. They did have consultations, private consultations. Did they have public hearings? No. An issue of this importance, I suggest, should have had public hearings across the province, as we had recommended. We should

not have had to rely on meetings in ministers' offices or other meetings on this issue.

* (1710)

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, what are they going to do with the federal Conservative government? Why did they refuse to release their own position on NAFTA until after the House of Commons committee had left town? Was that because they did not want to be offside with the Mulroney Conservative government? They had the document since August of 1992. They did not present their position until well into December of 1992, coincidentally a couple of days after the parliamentary committee had gone.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that we are left with the only conclusion on that process, that the government did not really want to take a position and offend their Conservative cousins in Ottawa. After all, they helped elect these people, and they did not want to offend them.

What are they doing now on the leadership convention? Are the Manitoba Conservatives making the issue of free trade and NAFTA an important issue in the Conservative leadership convention? When I hear members opposite talking about running federally, when I hear members opposite talking about what candidate they are going to support federally, are they making it a condition? Are they saying to Kim Campbell, we do not want to go with NAFTA. I am not going to support you unless you oppose NAFTA on behalf of Manitobans? Or are they going to do the hallelujah Conservative chorus with all these leadership candidates, Mr. Speaker, and jump on the Conservative bandwagon? [interjection] There we have it, the hallelujah Conservative choir right over there.

It does not matter whether Kim Campbell or Patrick Boyer or Jean Charest or somebody else is going to be the Leader of the Conservative Party. They obviously do not care. They are not making this a condition. They do not care at all, Mr. Speaker.

Now look at what is happening in the United States. Here we have the spectacle that in Canada Mulroney is planning to ratify this agreement, without a public outcry from this government, by June of 1993. Mickey Kantor, the Congress and the Senate in the United States have said that they are not going to ratify this agreement without

substantive changes to the NAFTA agreement. [interjection] We could—that is right, he was in the Senate—in fact, Mr. Speaker, have a situation because of Mulroney's electoral timetable that he is going to pass this in the House of Commons and it will not even be the final agreement.

What are the members opposite going to do about it? Oh, they are going to amend this resolution with a self-serving amendment saying how great they are. I can say, how great thou art, and they are going to say that they are right here with us in this battle, but I am waiting for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) to stand up to his federal Conservatives. I am waiting for the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to stand up to the leadership contenders and say that this Manitoba Conservative Party will not support any candidate for leadership unless they stand with the Manitoba Legislature and be opposed to the NAFTA agreement. Then we will believe that members opposite are sincere.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that NAFTA is even worse than the Canada-U.S. trade agreement. The countries that are doing well in the world, they have liberalized trade. I have absolutely no problem with opening up trade, no problem whatsoever. We are a trading country. We are a trading province. I would ask the minister, when he talks about his trade statistics, do not just talk about exports, talk about imports. Do not just talk about the percentage of money increasing, talk about the deficit of trade, because deficit of trade is key.

I am pleased that our deficit of trade should decline right now with the United States with the dollar going down to a more sane amount because the billion dollar deficit of trade is intolerable. I do not blame all that deficit of trade on the Canada-U.S. trade agreement. I never have and I never would. [interjection] Well, when you start speaking out for your friendship centre then we will start listening to you in this Chamber. Mr. Speaker, you know the old saying about curling from behind the glass, it is easy to curl from behind the glass.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, if I could have a little order here.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the Canada-U.S. trade agreement and the extension to Mexico is bad because it takes control of our greatest asset, and that is our energy resources. Even the Mexican

government did not agree to having energy resources as part of the free trade agreement.

Secondly, it deals with the resources, period. Why would we want to give away resources? Even Margaret Thatcher did not give away North Sea oil in the European Economic Community, Mr. Speaker.

We are opposed to NAFTA because it does not allow for a government to make sovereign investment decisions. You cannot have a job strategy, you cannot have an economic strategy without a sovereign investment strategy. That is clear.

We are opposed to NAFTA because it does not have any ability to raise the environmental standards up and to raise the labour standards up. It has only an ability to lower the standards, which we believe will result in negative impact.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the government should be much stronger in its opposition to NAFTA. We believe the minister should not be moving a self-serving amendment here in the Chamber today, in his predictable way.

We believe the government should stand up to the Mulroney Conservatives and stand up to all the Conservative leadership candidates.

Is there going to be a real change in the federal Progressive Conservative Party or are we going to see more of the same, the big corporate agenda for the Conservative Party and a bad trade agreement for Canada and a bad trade agreement for the people, I believe, of Canada, United States and Mexico?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak on this motion, motion No. 7 regarding the issue of free trade with Mexico. At the outset, I think, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) himself admitted, in many respects the motion is outdated because it had certain suggestions about the tabling of our position and so on. He recognized that in his comments, I believe.

I will not read into the record again—I do not know how many times it would be—the six conditions that we as a government have put on record, going back to June and July of 1991 when we formulated a position on the proposed North American free trade.

I should indicate again that was after extensive consultation with Manitobans from all sectors, from all groups, whether it was business, labour, academia, or whatever field it might be. We met with them and we consulted with them because ultimately they are the people who are going to have to live and work with any proposed North American free trade agreement.

It is interesting to note that we put forward that position back in July 1991. We have consistently taken the message to federal-provincial trade ministers' meetings. In fact, I would suggest that we were the first province to come out with a clear position in terms of the concerns that we had relative to North American free trade. Unlike many of the other provinces in Canada that did not do that, Mr. Speaker, we put forward our position. We put forward the concerns and conditions that we had and we brought focus to them, which was very important.

We brought focus to very important issues, and I am glad to see that the focus that we brought to them ended up getting the support of parties like the New Democrats and the Liberals from across Canada, in fact, the members in this House supporting some of the very important conditions that we put on record.

When the Leader of the Opposition made his comparison between Liberal positions, Conservative positions, NDP positions, Jean Chretien, I was a little confused I have to admit in terms of what he was saying about the New Democratic Party. I got the impression at that point in time, when he was talking about Conservatives supporting liberalized trade and New Democrats having concerns, that he opposed the liberalization of trade, that he believed in putting up barriers around Canada, believed in putting up barriers around Manitoba and had no confidence in Manitobans, in the ability of Manitobans to compete in the Canadian context or in the global economy. I am glad that at the tail end of his comments, he seemed to clarify that, that he did, if I heard him correctly, say finally that in many respects they do support liberalized trade.

* (1720)

I am pleased to hear that, the recognition that that is fundamental to the economy of Manitoba, it is fundamental to the economy of Canada. We have recognized that all along, but we believe that if you are going to have liberalized trade it has to be on a

level playing field and has to be under conditions that are fair and equitable to all regions, to all countries. That is why we put forward the six fundamental conditions that we have had throughout this process.

I am also pleased to see that after we had put forward this position back in July of '91, we carried it to the federal-provincial ministerial meetings, we corresponded with the federal government on many occasions on our position, we sent them copies of our declaration here in this House, we sent them copies of correspondence on individual concerns, whether it was the apparel industry or whether it was Bill C-91 in the pharmaceutical industry. We have continued to put forward the concerns of this government and the concerns of Manitobans.

Finally, in December of 1992, it was with some pleasure that I noticed again that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) made a presentation and, by and large, his submission paralleled the concerns that we had been putting on the record, that we had been putting forth in this House on many occasions.

I have a copy of the presentation on the North American Free Trade submitted by the Leader of the New Democratic Party and the Trade critic and, once again, they get into areas very much that we had already put on the record on many occasions, read into the record, answered questions of the Leader of the Opposition and the Trade critic.

Environmental standards—the position outlined in this paper parallels the concerns that we had put forward. Labour standards—the issues here parallel the concerns that we had put forward. So I was pleased to see that they are supporting the position that we have taken in terms of recognizing the concerns and what is required to truly make a fair and equitable trading agreement.

It is also interesting to note the reaction now in the United States, by the new government in the United States. I have to disagree with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) in terms of what I am hearing them suggesting. They are not suggesting, certainly the officials whom I have read, that the North American Free Trade Agreement has to be reopened, but they are suggesting that there have to be parallel agreements addressing very fundamental issues, again, the issues we have talked about on many occasions, the issue of labour standards and the issue of environmental standards. So it is certainly again with some

pleasure that we see that the United States is recognizing those very fundamental concerns and that we now have negotiations taking place between the three countries addressing those fundamental issues.

I have to go to a couple of specific issues that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) touched on, because I am not sure he does a service to the issue if he tends to muddy the waters and not be crystal clear on certain aspects of the agreement.

He has raised the issue before, as had the Liberal Party, on the issue of water exports. I want to clarify my understanding of the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement in that particular draft document.

There is no mention of water in the body of either NAFTA or the FTA text, but water is listed in the tariff schedules as Item 22. It is clear that the kind of water in Item 22 is primarily natural or artificial mineral waters and aerated waters, whether containing or not containing some sweetener. Ice and snow are also explicitly mentioned because there may be some bagged or party ice.

I have to point out that there is nothing whatsoever in either NAFTA or the Free Trade Agreement which would require Canada to divert a body of water to the United States, just as there is nothing which would require Canada to issue a mineral licence for a particular body of ore or a cutting licence for a particular stand of timber.

However, even if what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and others have hinted at was true, that there was a fear of the diversion of some body of water from Canada, Canada, in fact, through this agreement, in my opinion, would have another out.

Article 409 of the Free Trade Agreement states that either party may maintain or introduce a restriction otherwise justified under articles, and it goes on at length. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion Article 409 has the effect of allowing Canada to restrict water exports to the United States if we need it for conservation or short supply reasons, so long as we meet the conditions under this particular section.

The point I am making when I speak to water very specifically, and I know it is a genuine concern of Manitobans and of Canadians and rightfully so, but in terms of this particular draft agreement I have outlined already, my interpretation and my

understanding of the agreement is also provided by officials within my particular department and officials from across Canada. I think to paint a suggestion, that again, whether it is a water issue or any other natural resource or any aspect of a trade agreement, to paint a picture of something being to the detriment of Manitoba or Canada that is inaccurate, if that is the case, does not do justice to the process or to the agreement or any aspect.

So I would caution all members, whenever we talk about an agreement of the magnitude and detail of a proposed free trade agreement that we are accurate with our comments. I am suggesting that in the area of water some comments have been not necessarily entirely accurate and have led to some concern and confusion unnecessarily, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of our outstanding conditions, Mr. Speaker, in December of last year I outlined again our analysis of how the final text met our original six conditions, and we said at a minimum at least three fundamental conditions were still not met—the issue, as we have already talked about, of labour standards, the issue of environmental standards, and the issue of adequate adjustment provision. We outlined that in some detail again here in this House, forwarded a copy of that text directly to the federal minister of trade and had the opportunity at trade minister meetings to put forward that position and that concern on those kinds of occasions. So, once again, I know from the feedback that I have had from the federal government, our position is perfectly clear, to quote other members of this House, and there is no doubt in the minds of the federal government the position of our government and the genuine concerns that we are expressing on behalf of Manitobans.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) referred to the issue of no public hearings, Mr. Speaker, and I would encourage him to take a look, if he has not already, at the position paper that we tabled in this House back in December, and the Appendix A which is attached to it which goes into detail outlining the extensive consultations that took place with, again, individuals across this province, whether it was the Manitoba Fashion Institute, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Export Association, Winnipeg 2000, the Manitoba Federation of Labour, the Electronics Industry

Association of Manitoba, the Software Association of Manitoba, Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association, various companies like New Flyer Industries, Motor Coach Industries, Manitoba Printing. I could go on and on and read the additional four or five pages.

Mr. Doer: What about my next-door neighbour? Does he get a chance to speak?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) refers to his next-door neighbour. I could also read names that are attached to these organizations, and I would assume one of them might well be the Leader of the Opposition's next-door neighbour.

To suggest that there is a difference between individuals who represent organizations and other Manitobans, I find that a stretch that is bewildering, because these are all individuals who live here in our province, they work in our province, they raise families in our province, and one of them might well live next door to the Leader of the Opposition. One might live next door to anybody else in this House, but without reading the names, we are talking about hundreds of individuals who live in this province and are concerned about the future of this province and came forward expressing their position on the North American Free Trade Agreement, the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement, and clearly spoke, I believe, on behalf of their sectoral organizations but also Manitobans as ordinary Manitobans, as neighbours of all of us and as concerned citizens of this province.

So I think, in concluding that our position has been consistent, we have not done this in an ideological fashion like potentially other parties in this Chamber, most notably the comments from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) that even though, on the one hand, he expresses the need for liberalized trade and the opportunities it creates for Manitobans and the need for Manitoba to participate in that kind of an environment, he still falls back to the staid, old position that they have always had that, no, we are not prepared to support, we just unequivocally are not prepared to support any expansion of trade agreements.

We were saying this particular agreement, we have concerns about it. We are not prepared to support it until the conditions we have put forth are addressed. Some of them have been addressed. Some of them are still very much outstanding and

need to be addressed. So I am somewhat concerned about the comments of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer).

I am pleased to hear his support for the conditions that we put forward and the support for our position on labour standards, his support for our position on environmental standards, his support for our position on adequate adjustment provisions. That is encouraging because we have talked about the need for co-operation and the need for support. I am pleased that he is supportive of those positions that we have taken. He even went so far as to table his position at a parliamentary committee hearing and again supported primarily most of the issues that we have already put on record.

* (1730)

Having said all of that at this time, I am pleased to move, seconded by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau),

THAT Resolution 7 be amended by deleting all words following the first "WHEREAS" and replacing them with the following:

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba recognizes the existence of a global economy and supports measures to increase trade of goods and services by Manitoba firms; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has established mechanisms to encourage innovation through the establishment of the Economic Innovation and Technology Council to facilitate the necessary changes to foster competitiveness; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba indicated its general support of liberalized trade involving Canada, the United States and Mexico subject to fulfillment of six conditions; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba tabled a Position Paper on the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (referred to as "NAFTA") before the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba in December 1992; and

WHEREAS the Position Paper indicated that the government of Manitoba shall withhold its support of NAFTA until and unless the Government of Canada fully addresses the enforcement of labour and environmental standards and ensures the adequate funding of comprehensive labour force adjustment measures; and

WHEREAS the Position Paper was developed after broad consultation with Manitobans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the position of the government of Manitoba withholding support of the North American Free Trade Agreement until and unless the Government of Canada has adequately addressed all six conditions outlined in the Position Paper; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly support the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism in conducting further discussions with the Government of Canada to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to address labour and environmental standards and to provide comprehensive labour force adjustment measures under the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: The resolution tabled by the minister, notwithstanding his self-congratulatory statements, Mr. Speaker, is—the substance of his resolution and his amendment is substantively different than the resolution that calls for opposition to the proposed NAFTA.

The request to just support the six conditions of the provincial government alone is quite different than opposing NAFTA. I believe that that is substantially different from the resolution, and I believe, Sir, that you should rule the minister out of order with this self-serving amendment.

Mr. Speaker: I will be reviewing the amendment, and I will decide in a moment whether or not it is in order.

Mr. Doer: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, the motions are quite different. One calls on this Legislature to oppose the NAFTA agreement totally in the RESOLVED. The other RESOLVED is clearly asking the Legislature to support the position of the government of Manitoba until and unless the government has adequately addressed all six conditions.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think you should rule it out of order.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for his advice on this matter. We will decide in a moment.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would argue very strongly that the amendment is in fact in order. The point that the Leader of the Opposition raises I would propose is really a moot point.

If one opposes free trade, one must have a reason to oppose it. I think what this resolution does is define the parameters on which this province would either accept or reject it. It defines further the resolution moved by the Leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair is considering the amendment at this point in time, and I thank again all honourable members for advice on this matter.

On the points of order raised, I would like to remind all honourable members of Beauchesne 567: "The object of an amendment may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability or to present to the House a different proposition as an alternative to the original question."

Therefore, it has been moved by the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau),

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba recognizes the existence of a global economy and supports measures to increase trade of goods and services by Manitoba firms; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has established mechanisms to encourage innovation through the establishment of the Economic Innovation and Technology Council to facilitate the necessary changes to foster competitiveness; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba indicated its general support of liberalized trade involving Canada, the United States, and Mexico subject to fulfillment of six conditions; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba tabled a Position Paper on the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (referred to as "NAFTA") before the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba in December 1992; and

WHEREAS the Position Paper indicated that the government of Manitoba shall withhold its support of NAFTA until, and unless, the Government of Canada fully addresses the enforcement of labour and environmental standards and ensures the

adequate funding of comprehensive labour force adjustment measures; and

WHEREAS the Position Paper was developed after broad consultation with Manitobans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the position of the government of Manitoba withholding support of the North American Free Trade Agreement until, and unless, the Government of Canada has adequately addressed all six conditions outlined in the Position Paper; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly support the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism in conducting further discussions with the Government of Canada to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to address labour and environmental standards and to provide comprehensive labour force adjustment measures under the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement.

The honourable minister's amendment is in order.

* (1740)

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, with regret, I am going to have to speak against the amendment. The reason for that is not that I do not respect the competence of the minister. I do. I think that he has, by and large, been forthright with the members of this House, but the fact is that his amendment calls for us to support his and the government's activities on this matter. The problem with that is not so much the six conditions. Six conditions, we could come up with more, but the problem is that we just have not seen the results of anything that this government has done in getting those six conditions in place. It is just a government that has not had any impact, and that is the problem.

When I first came to this House, we were in the throes of dealing with another international matter, and this government's inability to—not this minister, he was not in the House then—deal with that and protect Manitoba's interests, I think, belied the fact that this government talks a different line here than it apparently does when it is discussing things with Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, of course, I am talking about Rafferty-Alameda.

I remember, and I know the NDP have some explaining to do on this one, too, but when we came to this House, the ministers at that time in the fall of 1988 gave us the same type of rhetoric. They talked about defending Manitoba's interests. They said,

we are in there. We are going to be sure that we are protected in respect of water supply in this province vis-a-vis North Dakota, Saskatchewan.

When the facts came out, embarrassingly for this government, in court, the truth was revealed. The document came forward and what it showed was Manitoba was not even at the table, Mr. Speaker, the very days that we were discussing it in this House and being assured that they were being forceful, that they were going to bat for Manitoba. It turned out they were not even at the table. They were relying, in fact, on the U.S. Corps of Engineers. They were relying on the word of Mr. Devine in Saskatchewan, the word of Mr. McMillan and others in Ottawa, and all of the conditions of water supply and quality of water that were spoken in this House and, frankly, sounded good at the time. It was not that they were trying, that they were forcefully going and that they lost. It was not that. They were not even going. Those words were not leaving the House. So that is my concern here, that the history of this government just is not good on these issues.

Now this party, our party, and I believe in freer trade. There is no question about that. We need a worldwide move towards freer trade. [interjection] The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) points that out.

Mr. Speaker, the only problem with this is that the Conservative government in Ottawa, and I hope to a lesser degree, but still the Conservative government here, are just incompetent. They cannot be trusted to go out and get the kind of protection that Canada needs in an arrangement with our partners, not only in the United States but around the world. We just cannot trust them to do the job. That is the problem.

Mr. Speaker, there have been all kinds of discussion about what has happened since free trade and how much of these current economic problems we can tie to free trade. Probably people on both sides of the debate are bringing in extraneous factors, unfairly, but I think when you cut away those irrelevancies on either side of the debate you are still left with the fact that we are seeing an economic restructuring taking place in our country.

We are not just seeing a recession when things are down and they are going to come back. We are seeing manufacturing industry jobs leaving this province, which we will never get back. We are

seeing structural change. You only have to go to the industrial companies, not only in this province but in Ontario and Quebec, to understand that. If they are not relocating their whole operations, you can be certain that their expansion has been greatly affected by the free trade arrangement. They will, by and large, go where their markets are closest. They will go where the labour costs are the cheapest and where the environmental standards are the lowest and where the workplace safety and health standards are the lowest. That is where they will go.

You know, Mr. Speaker, business is like that. It goes where it can make the most money. I understand that. If I was in business—and I have done lots of work with business people. I understand that their primary goal is to make money. They want a profit because if there is no profit you do not survive. The bigger the profit is, the more chance you have for re-investment and growth and more jobs. That is the point—and the more taxes you pay.

Mr. Speaker, government's role is not to stifle that business. Government's role is also not to let the business community direct our future with unbridled—without some restraint. Government has a role to play in containing and controlling some of the unfortunate consequences of business being allowed to, at all cost, chase the almighty buck. We have a role to play. We cannot abdicate that role.

Mr. Speaker, the problem with the Free Trade Agreement is that it simply opens Canada for business, unbridled business from those south of our border, the United States, and now it has proposed Mexico. It opens us for business and essentially sacrifices the only real card we had, which was unique on this continent.

Our resource base is our ace, if you will, Mr. Speaker. That is what we had. That is what they do not have. What have we done? We have essentially gone to the United States and said, let us just open up the borders, both sides. You get access here; we get access there.

Mr. Speaker, if you are in a manufacturing industry, you are employing—it is a labour-intensive industry. Where are you going to go to expand? If you can get natural resources from this country for the same price as if you are here, if you can get them south of the border, your labour cost is your biggest cost. Any manufacturer will tell you that.

Manufacturing and industry, the major cost is labour, and you are going to go where your labour cost is lowest. You are going to go where you can deal with your labour force with the least restriction. You are going to go where you do not have to worry about pollution, you do not have to worry about the restraints of workplace safety and health legislation. You do not have to bother with those things. The added advantage for these people is that they can go closer to the major population centres which they mostly serve.

We have given up any right to control profit making from our resources. We have given up any right to demand that in return for providing this abundance of resources, we get some jobs and some investment. We have given that up. That is the fundamental problem with the Free Trade Agreement in my view, Mr. Speaker. We just got it wrong. We gave up the only thing we had, the only leverage we had to keep the jobs in this country.

I remember companies coming to us in the heat of this debate and singing the praises of expansion: Just give us the Free Trade Agreement. We are going to win, we are going to win big and we are going to expand.

Do you know what has happened to those companies now? If they did win at all, if they did make money, they expanded all right. They expanded in Florida, down in Texas, Mississippi, Arkansas. That is where they expanded. They did not expand here. They sure did make some money off of this, but did they reinvest it, did they stay here, did they create jobs in Manitoba? No.

Oftentimes the Free Trade Agreement is defended by saying, well, look at the Auto Pact. The Auto Pact has been wonderful. We have achieved so much. We have built Ontario with the Auto Pact. This is just an extension of the Auto Pact. Anything but, Mr. Speaker. Read the Auto Pact. It has nothing to do with the Free Trade Agreement. It is a totally different approach to trade between two nations. The Auto Pact, there was a quid pro quo and it was, do you want access to this market, unbridled access to the automobile market in Canada? You put your plants here, you employ people here, you build your plants and the manufacturing base in our country. That was the deal. It was a good deal.

Free trade has none of that. This agreement has none of that. That is the problem, and these same

people in the last gasping days of their tenure in office in Ottawa are down there cutting the same deal. They are down there doing the same work under the same philosophical framework that they started with in their last gasping days. The problem is not that Canadians need freer trade, we agree. We want to look at this on a global perspective. The problem is that these people cannot be trusted to defend our interests and get the best deal. That is the problem.

Mr. Speaker, on the international market—and I know the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) has had many discussions about the impact of restricted trade on agriculture, agricultural subsidies. There are all kinds of problems. We acknowledge that and agree with that. We want to see the worldwide community deal with these things effectively, obviously. So why did we go and get—and I really believe, swindled—swindled in a free trade deal with the United States and are now proposing the same type of deal with another country whose biggest resource is cheap labour. That is the biggest attraction in Mexico, inexpensive labour and lack of governmental restriction.

* (1750)

Why are we entering into those arrangements with those countries without the guarantees that our interests will be protected, that our resource base will not go for free to those nations to develop their manufacturing industry and to create jobs for their people and bigger profits for their companies?

We have essentially doomed ourselves through this arrangement to forever be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. That is what we are doing. We have essentially said, that is fine. We will just be the ones who, if you will hire us, we will help you just extract the resources and take it somewhere else. That is what we have done, and it is wrong.

Again, I do not say that this minister is not being forthright with us in the House; I think he has been. My problem is they just have not done the job. They just have not gone and taken what they have said in this House and been tough with the government in Ottawa. I just really believe that Manitobans are going to lose as much or more as anyone in this country with this type of arrangement.

Mr. Speaker, as a result, it is with regret that I am not able, and our party is not able, to support the government's amendment on this resolution.

Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate opposing the amendment introduced by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) and, ultimately, to support some of the ideas that we have just heard from this side of the Legislature.

There is no question that the North American Free Trade Agreement is a serious threat to the sovereignty of Canada and to indeed the sovereignty of the provincial governments as we now know it. There is no question that it is a threat to jobs that now exist in this country.

Canadians know full well the extent to which we have lost jobs because of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States. It has been a disaster. We have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs in the manufacturing sector across this land. We have had major structural changes.

We have seen our industrial base being seriously eroded. We have seen it right here in the province of Manitoba, and we can cite chapter and verse of companies that have folded up their tents, more or less, and have gone south.

I give you one example from my own constituency, Marr's Leisure Products, manufacturer of fibre boats. Their main market was in central Canada. Yes, they were getting to be a bit of a marginal operation, transport costs and so on, but the Free Trade Agreement was the proverbial straw that made this possible for this company, the management of this company, the owners to sell out to an American buyer.

They moved the entire plant from the city of Brandon to South Carolina, lock, stock and barrel. Today, they make these fibreglass boats in the United States and ship them up to central Canada. Because there is no tariff on those particular items, it was one of the first items to go when the Free Trade Agreement came into effect on January 1 of that year.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we have lost jobs. You can look at the town of Steinbach, or where we had Toro Engines. Small engines were also freed under the agreement. The owners, whose main plant is in Minneapolis, simply closed the factory in Steinbach and moved the operation to Minnesota because it now made sense for them to concentrate in that area.

There are other examples as well that one could cite chapter and verse of important manufacturing jobs that have been lost because of the Free Trade Agreement.

The Manitoba people and the people of Canada know what has happened, and I say that the people of Manitoba, the people of Canada, if you put it to them in a referendum, would absolutely vote down and change the course of history that has taken place the last two years. They would reject the Free Trade Agreement if they had the opportunity, and they would certainly vote against NAFTA.

They would vote against the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement because what they would see, what they fear is simply more job losses, more shifting of industries, more shifting of manufacturing plants out of this country south to Mexico.

We have seen already what has happened in part of Mexico in the free trade zone that exists along the American-Mexican border, where there is now an opportunity for American and Canadian capital to invest. Indeed we have seen hundreds of millions, if not billions of investment dollars, going to that area where manufacturing processes that used to take place in the United States and Canada are now being shifted.

It is a very natural thing to shift your business, to shift your industry to the low-wage areas but, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot more to it than that, and the Americans have expressed their concerns. In fact, I would not be surprised whatsoever if the American government finally did not go along with the agreement as we now know it.

President Clinton has indicated a great number of concerns about the environmental impact, about the impact on the health and safety standards and, of course, on the threat to jobs themselves. There are powerful interests in the American congress who are now stating publicly that they are not happy whatsoever with NAFTA and would be very happy to see it completely defeated.

So I would not be at all surprised, Mr. Speaker, if the American government itself does not proceed with this agreement. The sad part of the matter is that the present government, in its dying days, Mr. Wilson, the Minister of Trade, is determined to push it through the House of Commons even though opinion poll after opinion poll after opinion poll indicate that the Canadian people do not want

NAFTA, they do not wish the Canadian government to go ahead with the North American free trade deal, but Mr. Wilson and Mr. Mulroney and the existing government is determined to force it down the throats of the Canadian people, force it down their throats, in a very, I would say, undemocratic fashion.

What we have with the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement is really a new economic and social constitution that is redefining the powers of all levels of government, federal, provincial and municipal and, like the original Free Trade Agreement with the United States, NAFTA will, if enacted, become entrenched as a supreme law with powers to override not only federal but provincial legislation as well.

It is based on a vision of the Americas being a borderless continent but, frankly, Mr. Speaker, it would be a borderless economic, borderless continent where the government is subservient to the needs of the marketplace. As such, the objectives of government attempting to fulfill the needs of their people will be thwarted by this agreement, by this new economic and social constitution.

As we were falsely promised under the original Free Trade Agreement with the United States that we would have jobs, prosperity and protection, as I indicated, after more than three or four years of the free trade agenda, where we found that it has not been in the interests of Canada, we now see the federal government attempting to extend and enhance the Free Trade Agreement to become the NAFTA agreement.

So really, the NAFTA agreement is a refinement of the Free Trade Agreement, and it is not a vision, Mr. Speaker, which provides for sustainable

development in the future in the interests of Canadians or Manitobans.

We have had the full impact of the free trade vision, we have had the Tory agenda, the so-called neoliberal agenda for the continent and the hemisphere. I say, Mr. Speaker, it is a vision which is not in keeping with the best interests of this country and of this province.

As I indicated, the real significance of the free trade, NAFTA agenda is that it supersedes our ability as a nation to determine our own destiny. For example, if we believe that a sustainable agricultural sector is an essential component of our vision of future development, we must accept that NAFTA restricts our ability to design national programs and policies, it restricts our ability to design provincial agricultural programs and policies. We must be subservient to this agreement.

Secondly, it restricts our ability, federally and provincially, to deliver programs which best meet our needs, the health and welfare programs that our people want and deserve. We will be restricted. Our efforts there will again be subservient to the economic interests of the marketplace.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, if we as Canadians or as Manitobans try to protect our rich natural resources and access to energy in an environmentally or economically sustainable manner, we must accept that NAFTA guarantees other countries equal rights to our resources.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) will have six minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Tuesday, March 16, 1993

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