



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALLOWAY, 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

Monday, March 22, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. George Hlckes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Brenda McBride, Alfred Coumont, Maureen Paskaruk and others, requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Dean Bird, Catherine Bird, Conrad Demetruk and others, requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

* * *

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of G.L. Goodrich, Laraine Topping, D. Burnshine and others, requesting the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) consider holding public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping throughout Manitoba before March 31, 1993, and requesting the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) hold the current law concerning Sunday shopping until public hearings are held and the Legislature approves changes to the law.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Helen Pydee, Yvonne Wall, Pete Letkeman and others, requesting the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) hold public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping throughout Manitoba before March 31, 1993, and requesting the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) uphold the current law concerning Sunday shopping until public hearings are held and the Legislature approves the changes to the law.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Dewar). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and

complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People with the theme "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

* (1335)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Jack Reimer (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as its Second Report:

Your committee met on Thursday, March 18, 1993, at 8 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the Annual Report of A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. for the year ended October 31, 1992.

Mr. Dale Smeltz, Chairperson, Mr. Ray West, President and CEO and Mr. Ken Robinson,

Vice-President, Finance, provided such information as was requested with respect to the Annual Report and business of A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd.

Your committee has considered the Annual Report of A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. for the year ended October 31, 1992, and has adopted the same as presented.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the report of The Trade Practices Inquiry Act and, as well, to table the report of The Insurance Act.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): If you are already past Introduction of Bills, could we have leave to introduce a few bills?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to revert to Introduction of Bills? [agreed]

Bill 19—The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I thank my honourable colleagues.

I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 19, The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour du Banc, de la Reine et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 20—The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 20, The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act (Loi validant un règlement d'application de la Loi sur l'aide sociale), be

introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 18—The Corporations Amendment Act

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 18, The Corporations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les corporations, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Aboriginal Friendship Centres Funding Reinstatement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, today we heard comments from a number of people, dealing with the Indian-Metis friendship centres across Manitoba, in front of the Legislature. People spoke passionately on a number of key points that may have been missed by the government in their decision last week. People spoke about the fact that the government has noticed and has sent out notices dealing with the United Nations Year of the Indigenous Peoples, yet they seem to be acting in a way contrary to the recognition of this proposal by the United Nations.

People spoke today about the fact that the aboriginal population, in the last census, has doubled in the city of Winnipeg, has gone up significantly all across this province, Mr. Speaker. The friendship centres are vital to deal with that changing population and changing demographics and changing challenges for those people.

People also spoke eloquently about the fact that the government did not understand their own criteria. The government stated that they were going to maintain support for organizations that were dealing with children and dealing with elderly who are vulnerable, yet the friendship centres that are dealing with children who may be dealing with the substance abuse challenge, or dealing with people looking for jobs, or dealing with people looking for housing, or dealing with elderly people dealing with health, that those people are being dealt with on the front lines by the friendship centres.

In light of that information so eloquently stated, Mr. Speaker, today by the people on the front lines, would the Premier now agree to reinstate the funding for our friendship centres, keep the 33 people hired across Manitoba, keep those vital services in place in this province and reallocate the money from some of the other programs such as Vision Capital so that people can be working with aboriginal people across this province? [applause]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I note that we have an unusually large number of visitors in the gallery here this afternoon. I would like to remind all the visitors that you are not to participate in any way, that even includes applauding. I would expect that from all the members of this Chamber.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I accept the question of the Leader of the Opposition, and I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that we are in unusually difficult times vis-à-vis the budget of the Province of Manitoba, difficult times that are being mirrored by the efforts of provinces right across the country to try and keep their deficit under control, to try and keep from raising taxes to the point that large burdens are not placed upon all Manitobans.

In those difficult circumstances, we have to make difficult choices, difficult choices that I might say are being shared by all governments across the country. I note, for instance, that in introducing reductions in health care, education and social services in the Province of Saskatchewan, Premier Romanow said, and I quote: We are going to make the tough choices for as long as it is required and hopefully get them out of the way as quickly as we can, so people can see they can be lived with and that they are not the end of the world.

* (1340)

I could quote from other First Ministers of Liberal persuasion, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that faced with incomes that are not rising, every government in Canada is looking at every avenue to reduce its expenditures, and no area can be spared. In those decisions that we have to make, none of which we relish, the easiest thing in the world for us would be to just say, no cuts, drive up the deficit, increase taxes, but for the future generations of Manitobans, we cannot do that because somebody has to pay for the services. We do not have enough money to pay for all the things that everybody would like to do.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would note in the Province of Saskatchewan they are not cutting the Indian and Metis friendship centres across that province.

Mr. Speaker, we had suggested last week that there are some alternative places to find the money, the \$7-million tax change that the government made that would have produced that revenue for training in our society for corporations. We had suggested last week the \$15 million in the Vision Capital Fund which the government has unfrozen for those kinds of grants. So there are some choices.

Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. This letter says, and I quote: I would like to know the criteria for selecting the programs that can be axed. It seems to me that the lower income people who are voiceless and powerless are the ones who are being zapped again and again.

This letter went to the Premier, and it further goes on to say: With the small amount of dollars involved, I cannot see you cutting this program. It will not save you any money. These extra dollars are needed for social assistance, health care, law enforcement, and a lot of pain and even bitterness are generated in the process. At the end of the process, you may be in fact spending more dollars and just shifting the dollars from one place to the other.

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier not find it in his ways to look at the long-term economic benefits of Indian and Metis friendship centres, the long-term economic benefits of social assistance training? Does it not make sense to have people working with people to get people working again, to give them jobs and give them opportunity, rather than having the short-term cuts which will create long-term pain for many thousands of Manitobans?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the sad reality is that the member talks in conflict. The area that he is talking about of training people so that they can be employed is exactly the area that he is asking us to cut. Those areas in which we allow firms to train people in lieu of having payroll tax payments, last year trained 22,000 Manitobans, and he is saying, cut out the training for 22,000 Manitobans. That is the most shortsighted thing that any government could do, and I just say that the Leader of the Opposition cannot understand what he is talking about if he would say that we should cut out training grants for 22,000 Manitobans. That is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Mr. Speaker, 22,000 Manitobans were trained under that program, and he is saying to cut that program out. I say that is misplaced priority to the greatest degree. I say that you cannot always be saying, well, cut out somewhere else.

Just last week the Leader of the Opposition condemned us for cutting \$10 million of highway construction. There is not an area in which we have reduced that the Leader of the Opposition agrees. Day after day, anything that is reduced, he says we should restore. How can there be any credibility, how can there be any sense or fairness when all he wants to do is argue against every reduction that is brought forward by this administration?

* (1345)

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that every other government in this country has made difficult choices. Every other one has made choices that affect health care, that affect family services, that affect education. New Democratic administrations, Mr. Romanow, all of the others have made the difficult choices, because those are the areas in which government spends its money, and we do not have enough money to spend on all the things we would like to do.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, all we are suggesting to the government is the training and orientation programs the corporations are responsible for, they will pay for it, so that we can put the money into people's training programs in the friendship centres, in the social allowance programs, in the Anti-Poverty Organization, and the people working with aboriginal and grassroots people right across our province. That is what we are talking about.

Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organizations Funding Reinstatement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government cut the equivalent amount of money from the Anti-Poverty Organization; some \$60,000 is exactly the same as the amount of money that they gave to Northern Telecom, which laid off 45 people last month, in terms of a training grant. The government has said it was first of all an advocacy body. Then it stated the services were provided elsewhere, but it relied on the statement that these advocate bodies must be closed down.

Mr. Speaker, the government has not cut the grant from the Consumers' Association. The minister stated last week the reason they are not

cutting the Consumers' Association but cutting the Anti-Poverty Organization—this is real work that I am talking about; I am talking about detailed work into legislation. In fact they helped us draft The Business Practices Act. Is this not true, that the government is cutting back the groups that are working in the grassroots area, like the Anti-Poverty Organization? Will the government treat the Anti-Poverty Organization the same way it is treating other organizations, and will it reinstate the money to the Anti-Poverty Organization so it can speak out for the most vulnerable people in our communities?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I repeat for the edification of the Leader of the Opposition, these are not decisions that any government, least of all our government, would like to make. We have, during the past five budgets, for instance, increased our spending on Family Services by an average of 10 per cent annually, increased our expenditures on health care by more than 6 per cent annually, increased our expenditures in Education by 5.3 per cent annually.

Mr. Speaker, we have done throughout the past five budgets everything possible to preserve our spending on the social safety net. We are at a stage where we cannot continue to justify all of the things that we have done in the past, because we simply do not have the money, and the alternative would be to drive up the deficit or increase taxes. We will not do that.

The Pas Friendship Centre Role

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): I would like to ask the First Minister a question.

Last week the Premier erroneously stated that friendship centres such as the one in The Pas did not provide services and were only being cut by 10 per cent when in actuality the cut to The Pas Friendship Centre represented about 35 per cent of its budget.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the First Minister: Does he now realize that The Pas Friendship Centre and other centres are not merely advocacy groups but in fact provide a wide variety of vital human services?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have said time and time again that we are faced with circumstances that have not been faced by this province ever in terms of the lack of growth in

revenues, the clawback of equalization payments from Ottawa and the necessity to try and preserve our health care, to preserve our education, to preserve all of those things that people—[interjection]

* (1350)

Mr. Speaker, the average of the provincial funding as a percentage of the budgets of our Indian and Metis friendship centres in Manitoba, from their 1991 annual reports, was 13 percent. I recognize that it varies from centre to centre, but the fact is that all of them do have other sources of revenue.

We recognize that everybody would like us to keep all of the expenditures of government up. We cannot. We have made difficult choices, and regrettably, those choices are the ones that we have put forward in the budget. We have said before we would like to follow the easy course; we could follow the easy course that has been followed by previous governments and just drive up the deficit—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The Pas Friendship Centre Meeting Request

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, there are 15 community organizations in The Pas, including the town council, The Pas band, the local RCMP, Swampy Cree MMF, the chamber of commerce, the hospital in KCC, which are going to be attending an event on Wednesday called The Pas Friendship Centre Day, which incidentally was declared by the town council and The Pas band.

I would like to ask the minister: Would he be interested in attending or sending one of his cabinet colleagues to attend that event in The Pas on Wednesday?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) was right last Monday when he indicated there were many difficult choices that have to be made in putting together a budget. I also indicated last week the tremendous increases in funding that this Department of Family Services has received over the last five budgets. Unfortunately, governments right across this land, whether they be municipal governments, provincial governments or the national government, have to make those difficult choices so that we can preserve the vital services—

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, our rules are very clear. Government does not have to answer questions, Mr. Speaker, but answers should be related to the matter raised.

The member for The Pas just asked the minister if he would attend in The Pas to maybe learn something about friendship centres. We would appreciate an answer from that minister.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would like to remind the honourable minister to deal with the matter raised, and it should not provoke debate.

* * *

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I think that in discussion last week, in answer to questions, we indicated that these difficult decisions were being made right across the country.

I will examine my schedule and see if I am available to do that.

Mr. Lathlin: I will even give him a ride to The Pas, Mr. Speaker.

The Pas Friendship Centre Funding Review

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): My question is again directed to the First Minister.

Given that the decision to cut funding to friendship centres was made without an in-depth review of the effects that that cut would have on the friendship centres, will the Premier now review the decision to cut funding to friendship centres?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have said before that these are difficult choices that are being made by governments right across the country. In response to a similar criticism, Premier Romanow said just a short while ago, and I quote: If anybody thinks you lie awake at night thinking of ways to hurt people, say in the budget, forget it. I lost a Minister of Finance who was lying awake at night trying to figure out ways not to hurt people.

The fact of the matter is, these decisions are not taken lightly. We do everything we can to try and preserve services to people, and we simply do not have enough money to do everything we would like to do.

* (1355)

Government Grants Public Service Definition

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, today we have heard the Premier say, these are difficult times; he has to make difficult choices; no decisions are taken lightly. So I would like the Premier to provide the House today with an explanation.

On the one hand, his ministers have chosen to cut Indian and Metis friendship centres, the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Association and the child care association. On the other hand, they have said that the Consumers' Association of Canada provides, quote, an invaluable public service.

Can he give us a definition of what "invaluable public service" is?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if members opposite realize that some of the comments they are making, perhaps not by intent, are maligning hundreds of volunteers who give freely of their time, with no recompense, to provide product information, for one example. This work that they do in countless ways helps, and I quote, lower income people who are vulnerable, voiceless and powerless.

If the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) would care to come, I would be pleased to have her do that, to go through the myriad list of activities that these hundreds of volunteers do, the work that they provide, in exchange for a very, very, small, small amount of money which pays for one part-time staff person.

They have done a number of things in terms of bringing down legislation and bringing down information for those consumers who are powerless if not protected, as the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) constantly tells me, that we need to do more to protect the consumer.

They are a valuable counterpoint, in fact the only counterpoint, between the interests of big business and big unions who are concerned with big profits and big wages. There is no one to work in an official way, except for this group, for the protection of consumers, who include the poor and the vulnerable.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, all of the words out of the minister's mouth supporting volunteerism are equally applicable to all of the agencies which this government has cut.

Aboriginal Friendship Centres Role

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): I ask the Premier for a definition of "invaluable service." Can the Premier tell us if he does not believe that the service that is provided to the people who seek service at the Indian and Metis friendship centres throughout this province, that they do not consider that work invaluable?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, there are a number of aspects to it; firstly is that the friendship centres get the majority of their funding from other sources. They do provide very much benefit to people. On the other hand, they also have other sources of revenue. So we have said, we have to look at all of these things with a view to the fact that we do not have enough money to do all of the things that we would like to do. In making those difficult choices, some of these things are matters that we, in lieu of raising taxes further, just simply cannot go any further in doing all of the things that people would like us to do.

Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization Role

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, maybe the Premier's logic would bear some telling factor if in fact MAPO, the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization, did not get two-thirds of its funding from this government, funding which it will now not get.

Can the minister explain to this House why the work that is done in advocating on behalf of the poorest of the poor is any less valuable than the work of the Consumers' Association?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, one of the criteria that we used within our department was to look and see what other advocacy groups are also providing the same service.

In terms of MAPO, the social allowance coalition of Manitoba has provided invaluable service, representing the community.

The WORD group have brought forward their concerns to the ministry, and we have made changes based on some of the information that they bring forward.

We have to, in these very difficult times, in the 90s, be able to fund those who provide direct service that

we want to maintain, whether it be in health, education or family services.

* (1400)

Aboriginal Friendship Centres Funding Reinstatement

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, since the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his caucus continue to claim wrongly that the friendship centres are an advocacy group, maybe they are not aware that friendship centres provide services for reconciliation, restitution, suicide prevention, crisis counselling, working with the children, working with the elderly.

Also, I wonder, of the \$7 million that was spent by Workforce 2000, how many aboriginal people were trained with those dollars? Because the Premier says that aboriginal issues, aboriginal concerns are very important to us, I ask the Premier, will he now review the funding to friendship centres in Manitoba?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): The funds allotted through Workforce 2000, through which business, industry and labour do make application for, also must meet a certain criterion for as well, I would remind the member, is also a cost-shared training program. As I said the last time we spoke about this, Mr. Speaker, governments across Canada have been looking to this particular model that we have in Canada. Over 43,000, in total, Manitoba workers have been trained through the Workforce 2000 program.

Mr. Hickes: Mr. Speaker, as usual, we never got an answer.

Aboriginal Friendship Centres Meeting Request

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I would like to ask the Premier—it is so obvious, to us people who have been in friendship centres, the important services that they do provide. It is obvious that the Premier has not met and stepped foot into those friendship centres to look at the programs and support services they provide, not only to aboriginal people. I was informed this morning, and from living in Thompson, I know, that the friendship centre in Thompson gives services to at least 50 percent of nonaboriginal people. It is not—

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

Mr. Hickes: Will the Premier agree today to meet with the friendship staff to look at trying to help them to get some funding to continue this valuable service to all Manitobans, not only aboriginal people?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong in his preamble. I have visited friendship centres throughout the province in the past.

Dauphin Friendship Centre Funding Elimination Justification

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about and what the issue is here today is one of wrong decisions and wrong choices by this government. They talk about choices. This is a wrong choice.

Now the Minister of Finance—and we cannot let him off the hook; he has played a small role in this. The Minister of Finance, on March 15, put out a news release saying that priority will be given to organizations providing key human services. He mentions the frail, elderly and child protection, and then he proceeds to slice the heart out of the Dauphin Friendship Centre, which provides services to youth, counselling, meals, the frail, elderly, those suffering from elderly abuse, Mr. Speaker, and many other essential services to disadvantaged people in society, in the communities in the Parkland region.

How can this Minister of Finance justify taking a position, when he on the one hand talks about these key human services, to cut \$101,000 out of the Dauphin Friendship Centre, which represents 73 percent of their programming budget?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am not asking to be left off the hook, to use the member's words. When I made that announcement, I indicated fully and clearly that given the state of the finances of the Province of Manitoba, I would practise fairness to every extent possible. That will become abundantly clear when I bring down the budget on April 6, because at that time, I will clearly indicate—indeed the documents of expenditure that the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) is so badly wanting will make it very clear that we as a government, with respect to the decisions that we have made, have spread around the hurt fairly. Indeed every Manitoban will feel some hurt with respect to that budget.

Mr. Plohman: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the most vulnerable in society will feel comforted by those words.

Human Resources Opportunity Centre Parkland Office Closure

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Can the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) justify the closing of the Parkland Human Resources Opportunity Centre, which she has just now become responsible for, has closed it down, with 10 employees being thrown out of work, the Parkland Human Resources Opportunity Centre which provides key human services, to use the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Manness) words, acting on referrals from probationary services, for single parent job access and other agencies which refer people who are attempting to break the cycle of poverty, crime, substance abuse, hopelessness and despair? How can this minister justify the cutting of that essential service in the Parkland region?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has just indicated, there are many very difficult decisions that cross all departments of government. I challenge the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) to indicate areas within Family Services where they would make some recommendations for savings. This department has seen a constant increase in spending every year. In order to preserve many of the vital services that we want in Health, in Education and Family Services, we have to make some downsizing in other areas of these departments.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I want the minister to justify the cutting of this essential service. Stand up and justify it.

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

Mr. Gillehammer: Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that governments across this country are facing is to rationalize the training programs that we offer to Canadians, and Manitoba is no different. We are making some consolidation of training programs within the Department of Education, and the human resources centres and human resources programs is one of these changes.

Government Grants Fairness

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister talks about fairness and that everybody is going to share the burden.

Can the Minister of Finance explain to this House today why some grants were eliminated—not cut—but absolutely and totally eliminated? Where is the fairness in immolation?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I do not know the term that the member uses, Mr. Speaker, but let me say that the answer provided by the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and indeed the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gillehammer) still holds.

Again, Mr. Speaker, today the Province of Manitoba was placed under a credit watch by Dominion Bond Rating Service, not a credit watch, but under review. The fact is that the members across the way, they can say that we are making wrong judgments, but the fact is somebody has to make management decisions. We, indeed, are making those decisions. We will be held accountable.

I also say to the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), I say to her very clearly and concisely and in the general thrust behind the decisions, that those agencies where the grants were going to advocacy, Mr. Speaker, we sensed that during these very, very difficult times that that money for a period of time, maybe a year, maybe two years, could be held back. That was the basis of the decision.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, that does not make any sense.

Consumers' Association of Canada Funding Justification

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Let me tell you that the mandate of the Consumers' Association is that it is an advocacy group, that it is a lobby group, the very definition that this government has used for the elimination of cuts to organizations like the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. Now either they have that definition or they do not.

Why does that definition apply to some but does not apply to others?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, we try and bring the best judgment possible forward. Now the members today have taken issue with the grant that we provided the Consumers' Association of Canada. I would say, when we made the decisions at Treasury Board with respect to providing that level of grant, we did so on the basis that the knowledge had come to us that that organization is doing an awful lot of research work in support of legislation that ultimately is going to be for the well-being of consumers in the country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we did not provide that, then obviously we would have to hire the resources in government to do that same type of research for the development. That was the reason in that case why the grant for the Consumers' Association was maintained at last year's level. So we try and bring forward the best criteria possible to, first of all, set into place a decision-making process, and after that, we take all the information and ultimately we make our decision.

* (1410)

Government Grants Fairness

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House today why the decision was made to cut entirely the grants to some organizations that provide advocacy work and the maintenance of others that provide the same advocacy work? Why was the decision not made, in fiscal responsibility, to cut everyone, as the letter they sent out in November from the Family Services ministry would lead people to believe, that everybody was going to take a cut?

Why was it decided that in some cases it would be eliminated altogether?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Firstly, let me correct the record, Mr. Speaker. The Consumers' Association is not a straight advocacy group. More importantly, the depth of our financial difficulties today would not allow us to make a decision based on everybody sharing at a 2 percent or 4 percent level.

We have practised that, more or less, over the course of the last four or five budgets, but just as other provinces in this country, particularly those that have brought down budgets to this point in time, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland—a new approach

had to be taken. In some cases, total programs have had to be dealt away.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the member, if she would just wait until the full Estimates package is tabled, she will see that we have had to make difficult decisions, not on blending or diluting across-the-board cuts of 2 or 4 percent, that indeed, in some cases, after program evaluations, we have taken out entire programs. That is happening across the breadth of the land.

Aboriginal Friendship Centres Funding Reinstatement

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that earlier the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did not have the time to go and speak to people on the front steps of this Legislature and has yet to agree to meet with friendship centre representatives.

I would like to ask if the Pages can deliver from northern Manitoba, petitions with several thousand names from communities such as Thompson, Garden Hill, Gillam, Split Lake, Cross Lake, Lac Brochet, York Landing, Ilford, South Indian Lake, Pikwitonei, Wabowden, Norway House, Lynn Lake, The Pas, Nelson House, Chemawawin, Gods Lake, Gods River, Leaf Rapids, Thicket Portage, Oxford House, Pukatawagan, Moose Lake, Churchill, St. Theresa Point, Shamattawa and Shoal River.

I would like to ask just one question, Mr. Speaker, of the Premier: Will the Premier just take the time to look up in the gallery, look in the faces of the people—since he would not take time earlier today to do that—he is cutting, the people he is laying off, the boards that have worked hours and hours to provide the needed services offered by the friendship centres?

Will he have a heart, look in their faces and reverse the cuts to the friendship centres in Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, our government has said that we do not relish having to make difficult choices, and only when you are in opposition can you have the irresponsibility to say to people, we would give you all the money you want. Only then, when you do not have to raise taxes because you do not have to do anything, can you say that.

His colleague Premiers, the New Democrats such as Roy Romanow, are reducing expenditures on health care by four percent, on universities, on all of

these areas, because they have the responsibility to face the people.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to be in a position of mortgaging away the futures of the children of Manitoba by virtue of raising the taxes and committing the expenditures to a future generation.

Mr. Speaker, these are difficult choices. We have done what we have to do in order to preserve our health care, our social services, our education for the children.

Aboriginal Friendship Centres Funding Reinstatement

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the Premier and then the Finance minister talked about the difficult decisions that they are facing. The decisions they are facing have been more difficult because of five years of economic failure on the part of this government—five years of putting people out of work, five years of cutting services.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the First Minister is: Will he now acknowledge that the friendship centres in Flin Flon, Lynn Lake and in other northern centres and other centres across this province are providing vital services? Will he acknowledge that he has mismanaged this economy, and will he now agree to find the funding—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, when the member for Flin Flon took office in the government of Howard Pawley, the annual interest costs in Manitoba were \$104 million annually. When he left office they were over \$450 million, six and a half years later. That was an increase of \$350 million per year that had to be spent on interest costs.

If we had that \$350 million per year, we would not have to make any cuts. Thanks to their spending, they have put the government of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba in a hole.

Health Sciences Centre Emergency Ward Closure

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

Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, March 21, the emergency ward at Health Sciences Centre was forced to shut down due to lack of beds available. Is the minister aware of this? Is he aware that the ward may be forced to close again today? Will he

now admit that it is due to his bed closures with no resources in place in the community?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend's connection of events is inappropriate. From time to time, across the whole system, from Concordia and other hospitals, occasionally they are overloaded with emergency cases. To make the connections my honourable friend makes would be an inappropriate analysis and conclusion.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, the Health Sciences Centre emergency ward has closed three times since the minister announced his bed closures.

Will the minister now undertake to do what the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) called for, what the task force called for, what his own action plan called for, and that is to put in place resources in the community so that these kinds of measures do not have to take place in the future?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, surely my honourable friend is not suggesting that emergency wards, which presumably deal with patients who need admission to hospital, can be dealt simply with community-based services. I would suggest that is an inappropriate health policy analysis that my honourable friend has made.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement, please?

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

Mr. Pallister: It is with great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, that I announce an important sports accomplishment in my community today. Our Arthur Meighen High School basketball team has just captured the Provincial AAA Basketball Championships in Brandon this past weekend.

This was due to the successful and dedicated efforts of a number of players from our community. I would like to list them. Catherine Peters, Christy Erickson, Jamey Gumowsky, Melanie Young, Kristina Bradford, Sherry Diggle, Carol Oldford, Bonnie Hiltz, Rochelle Lequier, Kirsten Quigley, Amy Lequier and manager, Dana Human, coaches Jim Lehman and Cheryl Buczynski. It is only through the efforts of the dedicated volunteers, the

coaches, and through the strong efforts of all the players, that successful teams like this can come to be.

I would like to again congratulate this team and reaffirm the fact that, of course, Portage la Prairie is Manitoba's sports centre. I offer my congratulations and the congratulations of our government and, I am sure, the colleagues opposite. We are proud of you and congratulations.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before Orders of the Day, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources that was previously scheduled for Thursday, March 25 at 10 a.m. to consider the 1991 Annual Report of the Workers Compensation Board and the 1992 Five Year Operating Plan will be cancelled and rescheduled for a later date.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable government House leader for that information.

* (1420)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Messages

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I have a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor. Everybody rise.

Mr. Speaker: To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

I have been informed of a proposed bill, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993, which will provide interim authority to make expenditures from the Consolidated Fund effective April 1, 1993, pending approval of The Appropriation Act, 1993.

The bill will also provide for payments against certain liabilities accrued and unpaid as of March 31, 1993, and will provide a portion of commitment authority and borrowing authority required for the 1993-94 fiscal year.

I recommend the proposed bill to the Legislative Assembly.

Dated at Winnipeg, this 19th day of March, 1993.
Signed His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, Yvon Dumont.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of

Justice (Mr. McCrae), that the said message be referred to the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that the said message be referred to the Committee of Supply. Agreed?

Point of Order

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): No, it is not agreed, point of order.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that we do not have a Committee of Supply in this particular Chamber at the present time and that, therefore, this motion cannot be moved to the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would like to remind the honourable member that I am informed that this has been the way that it was set out for us. There are many, many instances where the procedure, as described to us here as we are looking at it today, has been the way that has been done in the past.

For whatever reason it has been done this way I am not aware of, but it is the way that we have traditionally done it here in the House. Therefore, I must rule the honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Now we do have a debatable motion. The honourable Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs), is this on a point of order?

Mrs. Carstairs: Just a point of clarification, if I can have a point of clarification.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, you can.

Mrs. Carstairs: When I was presented with the procedural information from the Clerk's Office last week, I was told that the motion that was introduced was a motion to establish the Committee of Supply. If that is correct, then how can we now be referring a matter to a Committee of Supply when the motion to establish that Committee of Supply is still on the Order Paper?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable government House leader (Mr. Manness), on the same point of order.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) most likely asks a very good question. I, too, conferred with the Clerk last week and had it indicated, at least to me, that normally when we enter into the process of setting up the Committee of Supply that this is the process that is followed.

The Leader of the Liberal Party reminded me all last week, and all Manitobans, that I was stepping out of the normal process, and I acknowledge that. Part of stepping out of that normal process was to try and set up a Committee of Supply by way of motion, which I did try to do and have failed to do at this point in time. I acknowledge that.

Today, I am trying to bring in Interim Supply, as I said I would two weeks ago, following the process that this House has used for 30 years or more. Mr. Speaker, I am following the Rules, parliamentary precedent and democracy, and I cannot see how there can be a point of order.

Mrs. Carstairs: I did not ask for this to be a point of order. I asked for it to be a point of clarification. Very clearly, that is what I asked for it to be, and I am still looking for that clarification.

In other words, I want to know if we, in fact, now establish a Committee of Supply, have we, in fact, negated the motion that we were debating Thursday and Friday of last week, and if we have, how can we do that?

Mr. Speaker: To clarify for the honourable Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs), our records indicate to us that we have consistently done it this way, for whatever reason. That is the way it has been set out in our Rules. [interjection] Order, please. She simply asked for clarification.

We have a debatable motion before the House. It was moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that the said message be referred to a Committee of Supply.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to put a few words on the record.

Mr. Speaker, once again, we see a government demonstrating very clearly to Manitobans that, in fact, they do not have the ability to be able to bring forward a plan, at least a strategic plan, that will work. [interjection] I think if the Minister of Finance checked parliamentary procedure, that particular word might be ruled as being somewhat

unparliamentary. It is a good thing I have thick skin, so I am not going to be overly concerned about what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says, because I know that this is a sensitive issue for this government.

An Honourable Member: Look up. Look up.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, the government caucus seems to have a fixation on the press gallery. I do not believe that fixation is something that necessarily they should be focused on. What they should be focused on is what we have before us.

I want to talk about procedure, because this is what the government is talking about when they are suggesting that we now go into—or send a message to the Committee of Supply. I have a number of words that I would like to say on this particular issue. I know that the government has been feeling somewhat frustrated as of late, frustrated because they have been trying to accomplish something that has not been done in the history of this Chamber. In fact, in Canada, it has been unprecedented. Even the minister himself talks about it.

Mr. Speaker, what we are asking—

An Honourable Member: It is irrelevant.

Mr. Lamoureux: The member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) should be somewhat patient and he will see how relevant it is.

What we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is to send something to the Committee of Supply. I am telling you, in particular for the member for St. Norbert, why it is that we should not even be going into the Committee of Supply, because as the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) articulated through clarification, I believe that we have, and we should not be going into the Committee of Supply. The moment that we go into Committee of Supply, what prevents the Minister of Finance from bringing in the Estimates of a department prior to the Main Estimates being tabled? There is no assurance.

Once we enter into it, the minister can then choose to call in the different departments, as he has indicated he wants to do. For us, as an opposition party, we believe that the tradition of this Chamber should be adhered to, much like the government House leader said that he is not breaking tradition by bringing in this particular motion at this point in time because it has been done in the past. Mr. Speaker, it is that same sort of tradition that we are talking about when we are saying that we should not be talking or going into

debate on certain departments prior to having the overall picture, the Main Estimates, itself, before us.

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to go over parliamentary tradition and some of the things that have been going on. I could nowhere near speak as thoroughly, as eloquently as the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) has done over the last couple of days in terms of parliamentary tradition. I do know that there were a great number of people who were listening to what it was she had to say, because what the Leader of the Liberal Party was talking about made a lot of sense.

I think that even in the backs of their minds, they too believe that what the government is doing is not right, that in fact the government should be thinking twice before they plow ahead and try to get what they feel they are entitled to.

Mr. Speaker, I know when we had the first motion, when we first heard that what the government was wanting to do was to split up the departments and to introduce them prior to the Main Estimates, they introduced a motion in which the minister or the government did not even want me to speak on.

Mr. Speaker, I felt at that time it was somewhat unfortunate because it provided me the opportunity to be able to go into commenting on the budget in all different aspects, all the different lines and so forth. But the government intentionally made a decision not to allow me the opportunity to speak on that particular day.

I find that somewhat unfortunate. It is something that has not been done previously to the best of my knowledge. I know I have sat inside the Chamber over the last four and a half years and I have seen individuals who want to be able to speak, were allowed to speak, that the debate was not necessarily adjourned for the sake of not allowing another member to speak.

Mr. Speaker, this is something in which we saw relatively minutes later—and it was not even five o'clock and the government was wanting to call it five o'clock. So what it does is it clearly demonstrates, even if you peruse through Hansard, that they did not want me to be able to speak on that particular motion.

So when the government tries, and it did try, to bring about discussion about debate or at least allow for us to slip into the debate on departments—they were Highways and Family Services—prematurely,

once they felt frustrated that they were not going to be able to do that, then what do they do? Then they tried to form the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker, when they tried to form the Committee of Supply, their intentions at that point in time—and that would have been last Monday evening when the government introduced going through step by step, and tried to get us into the Committee of Supply in hopes that no members would stand up. In fact, I believe that they had departments outside of the Chamber ready to come into the Chamber because they believed that they would be able to slide us right through.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on where it is that you are coming from in this particular debate, the government failed in accomplishing what it was hoping to do on that particular evening, because we did stand up and we did start to debate the issue of tradition inside this Chamber and the importance of abiding by that tradition.

As the week went on, what we saw was the government was quite content to start calling some bills, all the bills except for what was potentially the most controversial bill, that being Bill 16.

Now, the government, once we went through those bills, would then call upon the resolution that would have seen us going into Committee of Supply, at which time the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) had the opportunity to be able to articulate and articulate well on why it is that we should not be going into the Committee of Supply at that point in time.

Now, here we have the government that wants once again for us to go into the Committee of Supply in order to deal with Interim Supply. Well, if the third party, the Liberal Party, allowed the government to go into the Committee of Supply—you know, I guess the government can argue you have grievances, but grievances are very limited—what prevents us from allowing the government to bring in a department?

After a bill or Interim Supply is, in fact, passed, there is nothing there if the government changes its mind on April 6. Nothing prevents the government from bringing in a department.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the government will try and do that. If they are not ready, they in fact will try to do that. We know that because the government has already attempted to do that. It does not matter what tradition this Chamber or other jurisdictions have, whether it is in Ottawa, whether it is in other

provinces throughout Canada, even to some degree, throughout the British Commonwealth.

It does not matter what we have practised over hundreds of years for this government. They are quite content to try to accomplish what they feel is in their short-term benefit without any respect for what has taken place through the years in the province of Manitoba.

One would like to believe that what we have is a government that is just trying to accomplish its responsibilities through administering and going through the process of passing a budget, of bringing forward legislation that they want debated and passed where there is a majority of individuals in this Chamber who would support it. But as much as I too want to see the government fulfilling their responsibilities, there is an onus on us to ensure that those responsibilities are being fulfilled through the rules of this Chamber.

This is where, I believe, that we are starting to set dangerous precedents. You know, we have Beauchesne's. There is Erskine May. These are rule books that ensure that the rights of opposition members, the rights of all members of this Chamber are, in fact, protected. So we should be upset when we see a government that is trying to go around the rules or break tradition. We need to respect those rules and traditions.

It was interesting I know when we had a vote just recently with respect to the rules or tradition, that the dean of the Chamber the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) was very hesitant in getting up to his feet in supporting what the government was doing. I believe that the Minister of Natural Resources is very sympathetic to what it is that the third party in this Chamber is doing, because what we are doing is fighting for a principle of parliamentary tradition.

* (1440)

Point of Order

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I gather the member for Inkster is attributing some motives to the Minister of Natural Resources and the manner in which he votes, and I think he is also—because the member for Lakeside, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), rises to vote just before his vote is registered, he practises an old tradition of this House that the member for Inkster would not be aware of, he is trying to imply to this House that that is a reflection

on some sort of support for the third party. I can assure him that the Minister of Natural Resources has no sympathy or support—

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

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat interested that the deputy government House leader is so sensitive on that particular issue. I have stood inside the Chamber or sat inside the Chamber and listened to many different members of this Chamber comment on actions of what members do within this Chamber. I find it somewhat unfortunate that he would take offence to it. Well, it is not necessarily too bad for me. It is too bad for the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) if his patience has gone so thin on such a parliamentary issue such as this.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that what we have to do is to ensure that the government does behave in a responsible fashion when we go into the Committee of Supply, that it would not be responsible to allow the government to be able to break the departments and then bring them into the Committee of Supply prior to the Main Estimates being tabled.

As I say, it has been very clearly demonstrated, through a number of different speakers from our caucus, as to why it is that we need to see the whole picture before we can go into the line-by-line questioning of a particular department. That is something that is not new. This is something which we believe as a principle should be adhered to. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the government can provide mechanisms that would allow us to enter into the questions and answers so that we could ask questions of the different departments. Interim Supply is in fact one of them.

The concern that we have about the Interim Supply is that we need to have an assurance from the government that once we are into Interim Supply that the government is not going to try to bring in a separate department prior to the Main Estimates. I do not believe that is an unrealistic position for us to take in terms of saying, before we can see this government go into Interim Supply and the questioning of Interim Supply, because ultimately we want the civil servants to be paid and so forth. But before we do that we need some sort of an assurance from the government that they will not

continue to want to violate a parliamentary tradition that we have been following throughout the years.

Mr. Speaker, I look to the government and anxiously await the government House leader (Mr. Manness) getting in contact with me, with respect to how it is we can deal with this particular issue that we have before us, because I do believe that there is a way in which we can get out of it.

We have been responsible in terms of saying: Here, there is an alternative for the government to consider or some options. One of those options is to recess. If the government is not prepared to bring forward or to table the Main Estimates, why do we not recess the Chamber and come back when the government is prepared to table that document?

I read an article that was in one of the papers, and it made reference to the cost of this Chamber every day we sit. Mr. Speaker, that is in fact a cost that could be saved. I fail to realize why it is that we have to be able to sit today, or tomorrow, if in fact the government's agenda is to debate and to talk about the budget.

I can understand why the government might want to eat away some of the 240 hours that are out there that have been designated for the Estimates. I can understand why they feel it is important to a certain degree that we stay and continue to sit.

I look at the Order Paper, and I see that we are already on Day 31. I realize that once we get close to that 90-day mark, there is an additional pressure for us to recess—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order, I think there are some impugning of motives in terms of the legislative session.

I am from the city of Winnipeg, and I have never yet heard a rural member mention the 90 days as a reason to extend or not extend a session. I think it is very important that we collectively protect the integrity of all our members, rural and urban, because we are all out to fulfill the public, and I do not like any impugning of people's motives.

I do not live in rural Manitoba, but I know members that do live in rural Manitoba, and I can tell you, they put on more hours than I ever will travelling back and forth to a constituency. I respect the job they do, and they have never said, end the session because it is 90 days. I think it is really, really unfair.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

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Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am intrigued with the remarks from the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer). I do treat it very seriously, and for him to stand up and say that on the record, I am somewhat surprised. I know that there have been some discussions that have been ongoing, as well as he knows, in terms of some of the other pressures that are there.

If he is not prepared to be able to say what is actually going on inside this Chamber, that is not my problem. If he feels that the public does not have a right to know in terms of what is going on, that is not my problem; it is his problem.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must remind the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that the question before the House is the government has asked that we move the referral of a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor to the Committee of Supply. That is the question before the House, at this point in time, and I am having great difficulty attaching the remarks of the honourable member for Inkster to the said question.

The honourable member for Inkster, kindly keep your remarks relevant to the question before us at this time.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was making reference to the need of why it is I believe that we should be recessing, and it was the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) who stood up and brought in the rural versus city of—

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: On a point of order, again, Mr. Speaker, the issue before this Chamber is moving into the Committee of Supply process to deal with Interim Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, not an issue of recess or anything else. There is other business before the House. I wish the member for Inkster would state the topic at hand.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I have already cautioned the honourable member for Inkster.

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Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, what the government is doing—and I am going to continue on this line even though members apparently are very sensitive to it, why it is that we feel this government has an option. That option is to recess.

This government can save dollars, if that is what they want to save, by recessing and coming back into this Chamber when the government has its act together. The government does not have its act together. The official opposition can try to prop up the government all it wants, but the bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, that this government does not have its act together, is not prepared to be inside this Chamber at this point in time.

If they wanted to do the honourable thing, Mr. Speaker—

* (1450)

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, again, the question is the formation of the Committee of Supply, which is a matter that always arises at this time of the year as we end the fiscal year of the province. There is plenty of business before this House to deal with.

If the member could stick please to the issue of whether or not this House should create Committee of Supply to deal with Interim Supply.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would like to remind the honourable deputy government House leader that I believe the remarks coming from the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux)—he is giving the government an option at this time. I believe the honourable member for Inkster, at this time, is being relevant.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Labour's edification, there is an option. We do not have to go into the Committee of Supply. Does that now make it relevant for the Minister of Labour?

Mr. Speaker, if the government had that plan and was prepared to go into debate and was prepared to have a budget, or at least a Main Estimates like every other Legislature has done through the years, then in fact we could be inside the Chamber going into the Estimates process, going into Committee of Supply to deal with Interim Supply and so forth.

What we see is a government that does not want to be able to address the issues that are before us.

This is the reason why the government has decided to try to go into the Estimates prematurely. I say prematurely because if, in fact, the government was ready it would have the Main Estimates there for us which would then allow us to thoroughly ask questions, debate and so forth the different departments.

Mr. Speaker, I have to ask myself the question why it is that the government does not take the option of recessing. There are a couple of things that came to mind. The first one was because they want to whittle down the 240 hours. By doing that, towards the end of the session you will see that after the 240 hours has come to an end the Chamber tends to speed up in terms of its process. That is one.

Another suggestion, and I am sorry that it is so sensitive amongst the other members, is the question of that 90 days. Now, the 90 days, it is not something that has just been around for one or two years. I can say, first as acting House leader and as a House leader, that in fact that does have an impact.

So I am concerned that the reasons why we have not recessed is all for the wrong reasons, that in fact we can, if the government does not have the Main Estimates ready to be debated or ready to be tabled, that there is a valid argument to recessing and not in fact continuing through this charade.

Now having said that, Mr. Speaker, I realize that the Interim Supply does have to pass in order to have the paycheques in the mail, if you like, for the civil servants. We are willing to co-operate in terms of ensuring that Interim Supply does in fact pass but, before we can do that, I think that there is a responsibility that we have to ensure or at least we have to seek some assurances from the minister, from the government House leader, that once we go into the Committee of Supply to deal with Interim Supply that we not deal with departments after Interim Supply has been dealt with, that we do not go into the Department of Family Services or the Department of Highways without having the Main Estimates being tabled.

This is the reason why we have to be very cautious with what we do and what actions we take, because, Mr. Speaker, there are only seven individuals in this Chamber who recognize the importance of a tradition that we feel has to be adhered to. What assurances are the government going to give us that if in fact we sit down and we

allow us to go into Interim Supply, that the government is not going to bring in those other departments? What assurances are there? There have not been any.

If the government was wanting to deal with Interim Supply and to be able to get out of the Chamber—you know, there was some talk about having a recess, a spring recess and, if in fact we are going to have that spring recess, well, then what we need to do is we need to have the assurances that we would not go into the departments prior to the Estimates being tabled.

Once we have had that assurance, Mr. Speaker, then I am sure that we will see the Chamber go into the Committee of Supply, as I am sure we will, whether we are actually into the Supply or debating the motion or asking the questions or prior to passing the motion at the end of Friday or sometime early next week, but we as a caucus had decided that we have to follow the principle of the issue that we have before us of parliamentary tradition.

I know that the Department of Education, the Department of Housing, all of the departments, have to be dealt with through Estimates, and we need to be able to know what the different ministers are doing in each and every department. How can we tell if in fact the government is being fair in the different departments if we do not know what some departments are doing?

The other day, the government House leader (Mr. Manness) heckled from his seat that if he supplied us, the Liberal Party, with a summary of the expenditures, would we be happy with that as opposed to tabling the Main Estimates. I soon found out what the Minister of Finance was referring to was a two-page or a three-page document which is a far cry from the Main Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I think that at least we see some movement, and if the government was willing to move on allowing or giving us that assurance, then we could go into Committee of Supply to deal with Interim Supply, which is something I am sure all of us want to do. I do not think there is anyone inside this Chamber, at least I hope not, who wants to stop the government from being able to issue out cheques to all the different programs that are out there, all the different individuals who are on salary.

In fact, we are quite prepared to sit right up to March 31 and allow Interim Supply to pass at that point in time, unless, of course, the government is able to give us the assurance that it will not enter

into a department prior to us having the Main Estimates being tabled.

Now, I know that through the Clerk's Office, we are all provided a sheet which goes through the step-by-step procedure of Interim Supply. I have seen it, or I have been inside the Chamber where we have seen us speed through those steps. The government does not need to fear because the government knows full well that when there is co-operation within the Chamber, we can speed through it and we can get things done.

* (1500)

We, as a caucus, are not asking for much other than that we respect the traditions of this Chamber, and we will continue to ask for that.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is an onus on all members of this Chamber to debate, when we can, on moments such as this. Once we go into Interim Supply, if we have different questions—one of the wonderful things about Interim Supply is that it does allow us to ask unlimited questions of the different ministers on the many different departments. That does provide for us the ability to be able to ask not only on one department or two departments, as I know that the members of the opposition would like to be able to do, but in fact all of the departments.

Through that, we can still respect the traditions of the Chamber once we do get into that stage of Interim Supply, that we are allowed the opportunity to ask each and every department the questions that we feel are necessary, or where we feel maybe somewhat frustrated because of Question Period and the answers that we have received, because you have a different format and the ministers are allowed much more time to answer a question, and the opposition members are given that much more time in order to pose a question.

When we pose a question, Mr. Speaker, it is good to be able to explain yourself in detail so that the minister knows in terms of where it is that you are coming from. I know quite often in a Question Period forum, we are only given a very limited, very small supplementary, very small preambles, to be able to explain the questions that we want to ask of the minister. So the Interim Supply does allow us to ask those questions in as detailed a way or manner in which we decide to forge ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this would even alleviate some of the concerns that the official opposition has,

because I know that they, too, would like to get into the questioning of the ministers on specific departments. This is something that would allow them to do that, but it would allow us to ask—and because we have more questions than just one or two departments, it would also allow us in the Liberal Party as opposition members to ask questions of all the different ministers. I know offhand that I do have concerns if in fact we are going to proceed ahead dealing with the education issues, dealing with rural Manitoba and dealing with other departments that are equally as important, because I want to get a sense of direction in terms of where the government is going.

You know something, Mr. Speaker, you might listen to me and you say, well, why is it then would the member for Inkster stand and decide to talk on this particular bill at this time as opposed to allowing it to pass and then going into committee where I could ask all these questions that I say are important? The reason why I feel that it is so absolutely necessary is because, as I have talked about earlier, it is a question of maintaining tradition inside this Chamber.

The concern is that if we do not get the assurances from the government that once we enter into Committee of Supply to deal with Interim Supply, and Interim Supply passes, and the government decides not to table the budget until after April 6—even though I find it would be very hard for them not to do that—but what prevents the government next year from coming in and saying, well, we are going to be tabling the Main Estimates in May, but we will go into this department and this department and so forth.

This is the reason why you have to look at the broader picture of tradition inside this Chamber, and that is really what concerns me. That is why I feel that we need to talk on or debate this particular motion at this point in time, because if we in fact allow it to go into committee, how then do we get that assurance that we are not going to go into the different departments? Can the Speaker of this Chamber give us the assurance that will not happen? Mr. Speaker, you cannot do that. You cannot give us that assurance.

If we allow it to slip by this time and we say, well, you know the government is in an awkward position, what prevents the government from next year doing the very same thing? There is nothing that does that, Mr. Speaker. In fact, they will be able to stand

up in their place and say, well, it has been done before.

Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared—and I do not think it is in the best interests for us to allow that to occur. That is the reason why, even though as much as I would like to go instantly into the Committee of Supply and start asking questions of the ministers, I need to get some form of a comfort level coming from the government saying that the government will not pursue trying to bring in the Estimates into the Committee of Supply, the Detailed Estimates of specific departments.

Mr. Speaker, the committee—Interim Supply, as I say, will be dealt with—

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

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, I just want to briefly reiterate where we are coming from on this particular motion, because I am not going to suggest that we remain at this particular level of debate for any length of time. I think all of us would like to get into Interim Supply, and we would like to debate with the ministers the processes of their budgetary decisions.

Mr. Speaker, what we have watched over the last week or so, I would suggest to you, is an attempt on the part of the government to thwart the meaning if not the letter of the rules of this Chamber. We have watched them introduce motions on two occasions now. Then they have withdrawn those motions, in essence, with the introduction of yet another motion. That surely is the issue here.

Are they taking the attitude that they are going to get their way no matter what, no matter what the rules of this Chamber, or are they going to try and work with opposition members in order to achieve the flow and ebb which we understand is part and parcel of this particular Chamber?

We have a situation in which we had a motion about a week and a half ago now, which asked us to suspend the rules. When that motion did not work, Mr. Speaker, we had another motion that said let us go right into the Committee of Supply. When that motion was thwarted, then we found ourselves with yet another motion, the one that was presented this afternoon. What this really means is that they are prepared, by whatever measure that they can use, to make their way through this legislative process their way and only their way.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of questions to be asked in Interim Supply. We will ask those questions. I want to give fair warning that those questions will not stop on Friday unless we get agreement from this government that they are prepared to back off their original desire to go into the individual Estimates of departments without the Main Estimates book.

* (1510)

None of us want to do that. Members of this Chamber have travel arrangements. They want to spend time with their children. I think that is valid. I think they should be allowed to do that.

If that is the case, then they also have to meet what we think is a fundamental requirement from our side of the issue too. That is that we are not prepared to debate Estimates until we have the Main Estimates book.

They do not need Interim Supply until March 31. I will guarantee here in the House they will have it by March 31, but I will not guarantee it before that.

If that means keeping the members in this Chamber and away from their vacation plans, then so be it, because there is a matter of principle here, and it is a matter of principle that I intend to adhere this government to as long as I possibly can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House was that the said message be referred to the Committee of Supply. Agreed?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

DEBATE ON PROPOSED MOTIONS

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), that this House, at this sitting, will resolve itself into a committee to consider of Ways and Means for raising of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair, and this House resolve itself into a committee to consider—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The motion has been presented by the honourable deputy government

House leader. I would remind the honourable deputy government House leader that we still have another motion which is on the Order Paper that this House at this sitting will resolve itself into a committee to consider Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. Praznik: I am not following Mr. Speaker's instruction or comment?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. For edification purposes for the honourable deputy government House leader, the procedure as set out, and I believe the honourable deputy government House leader has that same procedure where you, I believe, are looking at No. 7 at this point in time.

Mr. Praznik: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Right. Between Nos. 5 and 6. It is not on your paper because it is already on the Order Paper, the Committee of Supply motion for the committee, to set up the committee. So it would be very difficult for us at this point in time to move that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of Supply when we do not have a Committee of Supply at this point in time.

Mr. Praznik: I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the answer would—is Mr. Speaker suggesting then that the appropriate mechanism to deal with Interim Supply would be to call the current resolution on the Order Paper for that debate? Then I would so ask that he do so.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable deputy government House leader—

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, can we clarify this by having, at step 7 of Interim Supply—and this is just a comment—that the Committee of Supply for the purposes of Interim Supply? Would that make it then a different motion and therefore enable Interim Supply, leaving my original motion that I am debating to remain on the Order Paper?

Mr. Speaker: On the suggestion by the honourable Leader of the second opposition party, that would be a totally different motion to propose to the House.

At this point in time, the honourable deputy government House leader has called a motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) 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 Leader of the second opposition party. We have to set up that committee first. So now we are calling that one.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate. The Minister of Finance, the House leader, and the deputy House leader are in the Chamber at the present time. I have no difficulty, at this point in time, in going into Interim Supply. I am not, however, prepared to go into Supply for the purposes of debating the Estimates.

That seems to be the dilemma that is presently before us, because in order to get past that Committee of Supply I want to have a guarantee from the Minister of Finance that he will not use this Interim Supply to go into a debate on the Estimates. If he is prepared to give us that kind of guarantee, then I am prepared to immediately go into Interim Supply this afternoon and to debate Interim Supply until it comes to its logical conclusion, which is the granting of Interim Supply. Presumably, since that is not the desire of the minister at this particular point in time, then I am prepared to continue to speak on the original motion.

Mr. Speaker, last time I spoke on this motion I mentioned that the presentation of Estimates is not an easy presentation on the part of any government, no matter what their political stripe. I would like to read from Norman Ward's book, Dawson's The Government of Canada.

I am quoting, Mr. Speaker: "After their troubled passage through Treasury Board, the Estimates are approved by cabinet (where a disappointed minister may take a last stand for a larger appropriation), and are recommended to the governor general for his approval"—in our case this would be the Lieutenant-Governor—"which is given as a matter of course. They are then transmitted to the House of Commons early in the parliamentary sessions and are at once referred to the relevant standing committees"—in our case, the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker, what is clear in this particular quotation is that there are certain processes which are done in the committee of the Treasury Board, a committee of the ministers of this government. The Treasury Board does not do them individually. The Treasury Board deals with them as a package. It is that package that then goes to the ministers, all of the ministers together, i.e., the cabinet, in order to make the relevant decision as to whether they are approved or whether they are not approved.

Mr. Speaker, if indeed they are not approved, then what we have is a situation that there appears to be, in this government, the approval of some ministers to their departments, but there is not the approval of other ministers to their departments. I find that very strange, because what the problem is here is that if one reads Mr. Ward's book, he says: "where a disappointed minister may make a last stand for a larger appropriation." So what are we to believe, that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), have given up the ghost, that they are prepared to accept whatever appropriations this government chooses to give them? They are not prepared to fight for their own particular departments, but that the other ministers, some 15 in number, are prepared, because they still have not been approved. Well, perhaps that is one case scenario.

* (1520)

The other scenario, of course, Mr. Speaker, is that they have been approved, that it is not just those three departments that have met the approval of Treasury Board and have met the approval of cabinet, but it is all departments that have met with the approval of Treasury Board, and it is all departments that have met with the approval of the cabinet. Now, if that is the case, then there is absolutely no reason why we cannot have a Main Estimates book.

If, indeed, the departments have all been approved by Treasury Board, and if, indeed, it is appropriate that they have in turn all been dealt with by cabinet, what are we waiting for? Why are we still left in this dilemma that we are being asked to go to Committee of Supply where we only have three Estimate books? We do not have the Estimates of all of the other departments.

I find it inconceivable to believe that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has not been able to advocate on behalf of his department for the kinds of cuts which have been made to his department. Mr. Speaker, we know of massive amounts of cuts that have been done to the Minister of Family Services' budget. Most of the cuts that have been announced, at least in terms of grant levels that are to be reduced, are grant levels reduced to the Department of Family Services. If those grant levels are reduced to the Department of Family Services, is it fair to say that the other

departments have not yet had to deal with their grant level reductions? I find that inconceivable.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) stood in the House today, and he said, we will be able to prove that there has been fairness. Well, how can he prove that there has been fairness when, according to the information that we have been given as members of the opposition, only three departments have been approved? If more than three have been approved, then where are they? Why are they not available to us?

Is the Minister of Family Services expecting us to believe that the grant of \$105,000 which was eliminated completely for the Association for Community Living, that the grant to the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization of \$63,000, the grant to the Manitoba Child Care Association of \$60,000, the grant to the Manitoba Foster Family Association of \$373,000, the grant to the friendship centres which amount to \$1.3 million, that those are the only grants that have, to this point in time, been cut with the approval of Treasury Board? Well, I think that is highly unlikely.

I find it is inconceivable to believe that those grants have been cut and yet grants to other departments have not been cut in the same way. Yet that presumably is what we are to believe when the Minister of Finance tells us that he has only three sets of Estimates ready, that he does not have any of the other Estimates ready, and that it is not that he is not willing to give us the other Estimates, it is that they are not ready.

That leaves me with the only conclusion that somehow or other the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) were prepared to bite the dust. They were prepared to say, that is it; I am not prepared to fight any longer for my particular department; I have no grounds for pushing this government any further.

If one is to read this well-known work, it says, in essence, that when they are approved by cabinet, this is the time, and I quote again: where a disappointed minister can make a last stand for a larger appropriation.

Well, that last stand for a larger appropriation has presumably been taken by the Minister of Highways, the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Family Services.

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

One presumes it has not been taken by any of the other ministers because if it has been taken by all the other ministers, then we should have a Main Estimates book, and we do not have a Main Estimates book.

We presumably have three ministers who have given up on their departments, have given up on the ministers of the Crown, have given up on the Treasury Board, and have said, that is it; we do not have any more fight left in us; we are going to roll over and play dead.

Well, the tragedy of that is that Family Services, and the Ministry of Family Services, is the department that deals at the bottom level with those in genuine need of support, those in genuine need of help, those who are among the most disadvantaged in our society.

When one looks at the Department of Family Services, one looks at line after line which goes to vulnerable people. It does not take very careful examination of those Estimates to recognize that this is the department that deals with the most vulnerable people in our society: Rehabilitation, Community Living and Day Care, vocational programs, Adult Services, Children's Special Services, the Manitoba Developmental Centre, Child Day Care, the Seven Oaks Centre, Child and Family Support, Family Conciliation, Family Dispute Services, Vital Statistics, Residential Care Licensing, Income Maintenance Programs, Income Supplement Programs.

There is no question that this entire department deals with vulnerable people, poor people. It deals with children who have been abused. It deals with those who have been victimized by this society. It deals with those who have been physically handicapped. It deals with those who have been born with mental handicaps or have suffered mental handicaps during their lifetime. It deals day after day with those who are in their role usually through absolutely no fault of their own. I find it inconceivable that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has said, I do not have any fight left. I am not prepared to ask Treasury Board for any more work on my department.

Yet, if one believes that logic, the Department of Education is still fighting for its appropriations. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is still fighting for his appropriations. The Seniors minister (Mr. Ducharme) is still fighting for his department. The Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs.

Mitchelson) is still fighting for her department. The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) is still fighting for his department. The Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) is still fighting for his department, but the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) have said, we are no longer prepared to fight for our departments. It is inconceivable that they have decided that they can do that kind of thing.

I want to deal, Madam Deputy Speaker, with the whole concept today of why I am taking the stand that I am taking on this particular piece of activity before the House, because it is a motion. If one is to listen to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in the press scrums outside of the House, he refers to it as ego run wild. One is not supposed to impute motives, but that is the way it is on certain days and certain occasions.

The bottom line is that, if any of this Chamber had been observing my activities since the 5th of November, they will note that I have asked fewer and fewer questions, that I have made fewer and fewer speeches in this Chamber, and the reason for that is because of the announcement that I made on the 5th of November. I made the announcement that I was going to retire. I was looking forward to a session with a lighter load, quite frankly, a session in which I would not feel that I had to make the same kind of long speeches that I had made in the past as the Leader of the second party in the Chamber and would give those Question Period times and those longer speech times to members, some of whom are vying for my leadership position and some of whom are supporting those particular individuals.

I do not need this particular aggravation, I should suggest, at this particular point in time. I have other things that I would much prefer to do with my time, things that I would prefer to spend my time doing than standing up in this House as I have now on two different occasions, this being my third, and speaking to this particular motion. It is not that I do not have an ego. I think everyone of us has an ego. I would suggest to the members of this Chamber that if we did not, we would not find ourselves in these positions. It is a very difficult concept for many people, not only to stand in this Chamber, but to stand before an electorate and to seek electoral support. You have to have a relatively good

self-image if you are going to go out there and sell yourself to the public.

Lynne Axworthy, my campaign chairperson, ruefully puts it that being a member of the Legislature or being a politician at any level is one of the few occupations in which 300 or 400 people go out and work for you so that you get a job. I think that is a pretty fair reflection on the fact that most of us have hard-working volunteers who struggle very hard to assure our election to these Chambers, no matter what our political stripe. They work very hard to see to it that we get elected.

* (1530)

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

The purpose of my debate on this particular motion is because I think what the government is doing is very dangerous. I think it is a very dangerous precedent, and I am not prepared to sit back and allow that precedent to be undertaken without fighting it to the very best of my ability. That is the reason why I have stood here on two occasions, this being my third, and why I will continue to stand here in order to press upon this government that this is not simply a move to thwart their activity. I want us to get into a debate of Main Estimates, and if the Main Estimates book was in this Chamber today, we would be in Committee of Supply and the debate of Estimates.

If there was some procedural way the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) can work out so that we can get into Interim Supply today, I would be delighted to get into Interim Supply today. But I am not prepared to allow us to go into a debate on Estimates before the Main Estimates book has been tabled, and this is one of the few ways that I have left to me as a member of this Chamber to prevent that activity from taking place.

The powers of the opposition are very limited. I would like to read to some of the members from a book called Parliamentary Government in Canada about just how limited the powers of the opposition are, and therefore sometimes it seems necessary to take advantage of the very few powers that we have.

The opposition—this article says, and again, I am quoting—must have the right to criticize the government openly and the ability to make that criticism felt. In Parliament, the government explains and justifies its action or inaction not to an audience, sympathetic and anxious to offer assistance, but to an organized, institutionalized

opposition bent on demonstrating the inappropriateness and inefficiencies of government policy.

Though it may never have the votes necessary to defeat the government, the opposition is nonetheless charged with ensuring that the responsibility of the government to the House of Commons or to the Legislatures is more than a formality. As John Stewart has put it: It is this public testing of governance with the government and the opposition as institutional adversaries that is the hallmark of contemporary responsible government.

The eye of opposition was not always so compatible with parliamentary government. Parliaments in Britain were originally meetings of nobles called to offer advice to the king, and it was hoped to support the Crown in its most military ventures. Although an offer of advice often implied criticism, outright opposition could easily be construed as treason. In the 17th and 18th Centuries, by which time Parliament had made good its claim to supremacy, the idea of opposition in parliament was still resisted, this time by those who saw it as divisive and expression of greedy factionalism. But by then efforts to create governments composed of the best men had failed, and observers had come to recognize that while opposition to the government might be denounced as factional, the government itself was a party.

Parties, moreover, might prove advantageous if they could be used as a bulwark against the danger of concentrated power. This bulwark would take the form of a recognized and legitimate opposition eager to secure office.

With the government facing the opposition in parliament and two teams of party leaders struggling for support in the electorate, have we at last defined the essence of responsible government? Defined, perhaps, but this system has to work before anyone can feel completely satisfied and there are several obstacles to its effective operation.

First, the opposition in Parliament, because it is not in control of the parliamentary agenda, cannot insist that pressing issues be addressed immediately on the floor of the Commons. Because of this, and the demands of government business, many issues of general concern are not debated in parliament for weeks or months after they have come to the attention of the public. Thus, for instance, the Ocean Ranger tragedy was never

properly addressed in Parliament, and the McDonald commission on the RCMP received no statement from ministers or any debate until months after its report was tabled.

Too often, Parliament appears to be very ponderous, unable to react quickly or to act at all as a forum for serious debate of important public issues. Yet it is in this environment that the opposition must do the work assigned to it under the Westminster model.

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

That is exactly, Madam Deputy Speaker, what I am trying to do. I am trying to do my role as a Leader of a second opposition party in order to thwart the government from introducing a precedent which is dangerous and which can have effects well beyond the particular measure that is being taken by this government, because the impact of their decision is not only to establish a precedent in this House with respect to Supply, but to establish a precedent with respect to Supply which can impact future generations in this Chamber but also impact on decisions made by other parliaments, not only in this nation at the provincial level but at the federal level and, indeed, any other government that has a parliamentary tradition.

Second, and I am now quoting again: The opposition must compete with other bodies capable of offering compelling criticism of government policy. The C.D. Howe Institute, the Economic Council—unfortunately, now no longer—The Fraser Institute and the Canadian Labour Congress are all capable of supplying policy analyses that are more stimulating and informed than those produced by the opposition.

Opposition can use these studies, but in spite of over a million dollars allocated to caucus research units—certainly, considerably less here at the provincial level—opposition parties have been unable or unwilling to generate their own economic analysis. They are without the information and expertise the government is able to marshal on virtually any specialized subject, and they appear to be convinced that the resources they do have ought to be used to exploit short-term partisan opportunities.

I think we see that fairly daily in the Question Period, that it tends to be short-term opportunism for whatever parties are in the opposition at any particular point in time.

I would suggest to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the particular motion to which I am standing has nothing to do with opportunism. This is not an issue that is affecting the six o'clock news. This is not an issue which is garnering us a lot of ink. It is not that kind of bread-and-butter issue. It is an issue of precedent, it is an issue of rules, it is an issue of procedures, but it is, having said all that, a very vital and significant issue of procedures. That is why we are debating this particular motion on Supply.

Let me return, quote: Nowhere is the irreverence of opposition criticism more apparent than in the realm of federal-provincial relations. For instance, because provinces own and control the development of most natural resources, debates on the floor of the Commons about the price of oil have the quality of a side show, compared to the negotiation and debate that take place between the federal government and the producing provinces. The major issues of centralization and decentralizing in the Canadian federation are also debated outside of Parliament.

In Canada, it is possible for First Ministers to meet behind closed doors and present the opposition with a constitutional fait accompli such as the Meech Lake package, to which no amendments are permitted. In these cases, opposition to federal policy emerges from the governments of the provinces. They become the counterbalance on which the Westminster model depends.

But here we are in a unique situation with respect to the Supply bill, but we are in danger of doing it the opposite way. Not will federal government establish a precedent for the provinces, but we, by doing what we are doing in this particular time in this Chamber, could set a precedent on Supply which would go the other way and which would find its way in the journals of Beauchesne, and Erskine and May in perpetuity because this government has chosen to act in a way which is clearly outside of the parliamentary tradition.

Quoting again from Parliamentary Government in Canada: The third problem faced by the opposition in Canada is that of achieving policy distinctiveness. The institutionalization of opposition in Parliament was originally premised on an agreement among all participants not to question the foundations of the parliamentary system. Opposition parties have added to this their tacit agreement not to question the fundamentals of the social and economic order. Securing power, therefore, has become a matter of

piecing together a coalition consisting of regional and linguistic interests sufficient to produce a majority of seats in the House of Commons.

For the greatest part of Canadian history, the opposition has been comprised of those elements left out of the governing coalition. With little to unite them other than their antipathy towards the government, both the Liberal and Conservative Parties in opposition have experienced wrenching divisions over policy and leadership. They have seized opportunities such as the Free Trade debate to distance themselves from government policy only to experience strong pressures for conformity once the debate was over.

* (1540)

Only the New Democratic Party has succeeded in supplying an ideologically consistent critique of the governing parties but, ironically perhaps, at the expense of appearing unnecessarily rigid and uncompromising.

In Canada, an opposition committed to the present means of distributing economic resources to the existing system of representation to the preservation of linguistic duality and the structures of federalism faces an electorate deeply divided on regional linguistic grounds.

Achieving policy distinctiveness under these circumstances is understandably an uncommon occurrence and one that is fraught with electoral dangers. Yet, without policy innovations the opposition begins to surrender to interest groups and provincial governments the task of offering creative responses to government policy.

Bernard Crik (phonetic) has described Parliament as ideally a permanent election campaign. But to make Parliament work that way requires the capacity to find acceptable alternatives, a capacity that Canadian parties in opposition have not had in abundance.

Finally, what strength the opposition in Canada possesses is derived primarily from the fact that the government cannot ignore it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me read that sentence again, because I think it is highly clear that this is exactly what I am trying to do in this particular motion.

It says: Finally, what strength the opposition in Canada possesses is derived primarily from the fact that the government cannot ignore it.

They cannot ignore it. They may sit in their seats and chat with one another. They may leave the Chamber. They may do what they want in terms of listening. That is completely up to them and well within the rules and the authority of this Chamber, but they cannot ignore it, because the very fact that I am on my feet speaking to the motion means that the government of the day has to be cognizant of the fact that they cannot proceed unless they come to some agreement.

Parliamentary Government in Canada goes on to say: Ministers may make announcements and speeches outside parliament, much to the consternation of the opposition, but it is Parliament that must eventually approve legislation and appropriate funds.

This is what the minister wants to do today. He wants to appropriate some funds, but he cannot get that appropriation of funds until he can shut down the opposition, and he cannot shut down the opposition until he comes to his senses, I would suggest, and recognizes that what he is trying to do is unprecedented, which he has already admitted to, that it is unparliamentary, which he has already admitted to, and that it is simply not going to proceed if I can manage to prevent its achievement.

In the course of doing so, opposition members engage in lonely debates. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is certainly what I am doing at the present time. I am engaged in a lonely debate.

It goes on to say: In the hope that their ideas and reservations will be communicated beyond the Chamber to an alert and interested public.

In this case, I would have to say that it is not that I am interested in allowing this to be heard by an alert and intelligent public because I do not think that, quite frankly, they are particularly interested in this issue. They are not interested in this issue because it is not a bread-and-butter issue. It should be a bread-and-butter issue, because what we have is announcements by this government of cuts to particular departments, three in particular, announcements of budgetary lines for three particular departments. We have the Premier (Mr. Filmon) standing at his place today talking about fairness. We have a Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) talking about fairness. We have the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) talking about fairness, saying the cuts have been broadly based, that they have been spread across the whole range of government

departments. We would know that if we in fact had the Main Estimates book.

My argument has been all along, that how can I as an individual member of this Chamber reasonably and rationally debate Family Services, for which I am the critic, until I know that there has in fact been fairness? I already know, in light of the announcement made by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, that she thinks it is entirely fair to give a grant to an advocacy group, a lobby group. That is its definition. It is in its opening mission statement that it is a lobby group. The Consumers' Association of Canada, Manitoba Division, is an advocacy group. It is a lobby group.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs says it is perfectly logical, perfectly reasonable, perfectly fair for them to get a grant at the very same time that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) is saying it is not logical and it is not reasonable to believe that the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization is doing good advocacy work; that it is not, according to the Minister of Family Services, reasonable to assume that the Indian and Metis friendship centres are delivering services; that it is not logical, according to the Minister of Family Services, that the Manitoba Foster Family Association is providing service to foster families; that it is not reasonable to assume that the Manitoba Child Care Association is providing valuable advocacy on behalf of its clientele. It is reasonable, according to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, to think that the Consumers' Association of Canada is providing reasonable, rational advocacy.

It is very difficult for us to comprehend that it is fair to cut one but it is not fair to cut the other. Where is the rationale, the reasonableness? What is the definition of valuable that this government has? To ignore that debate, I think, is one which is unacceptable.

Let me repeat that, Madam Deputy Speaker. In the course of doing so, opposition members engage in lonely debates in the hope that their ideas and reservations will be communicated beyond the Chamber to an alert and interested public. Is this a reasonable expectation? Is electoral choice influenced by the performance of the opposition on the floor of the House of Commons? A strong, affirmative answer is impossible. In spite of the televising of Parliament, which is selective in content and distribution, there is no evidence that

the electorate has an improved awareness of opposition policies and attitudes. The press gallery persists in concentrating on spectacular developments, scandals and human interest stories, while election campaigns continue to be contests among party leaders not alternative ministerial teams.

Opposition parties exacerbate the process by resisting the creation of a small and stable shadow cabinet in favour of balancing regional claims to positions of prominence on the opposition front benches. These objections and the opposition in Canada should not be interpreted simply as criticisms of opposition parties, the government or the media, whatever their shortcomings may be. The point is that the Westminster model of parliamentary government requires a great deal of the parliamentary opposition. Yet this opposition must work under severe institutional and political constraints, not at all anticipated by the model.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the severe institutional restraints that this government would like to impose upon us at the present time is debating the Estimates in vacuums, debating the Estimates of certain departments before we have seen the overall picture of the government of the day, and that is an unacceptable option. That is why we are debating this Supply motion, because it is an unacceptable option. It is not something to which we are going to agree.

In summary, and I quote again: The Westminster model promises decisive governments, political accountability, the open debate of legislative changes, spending decisions and controversial government actions.

* (1550)

The Westminster model promises decisive government, political accountability and the open debate of legislative changes and spending decisions.

Well, that is what Estimates are all about. Estimates are the means by which we can openly debate spending decisions, but how can we openly debate spending decisions when we do not know what all of the spending decisions of this government have been? How do I know if the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has cut back on his staff? I would like to think that perhaps the Premier has cut back on his staff, but I am not going to know that until I get the Estimates of the Department of the Executive Council.

In going through past indications, this particular Department of Executive Council, I find 45 staffpersons and I find 11 staffpersons with salaries over \$50,000 a year. My question is that if there are 11 people, perhaps more this year, on the Premier's staff, \$50,000 each, then surely one of those staffpersons could have been cut. The money for that particular staffperson could have gone to the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization in order to keep that poverty organization alive and active, an advocacy on behalf of those who are the poor in our community.

I mean, we have staff salaries. I am quoting from '91, because unfortunately I could not find '92, so I know they are even higher, of staff salaries of \$68,711. That is staff salary for Barbara Biggar. I know it is higher, because I have seen subsequent materials. That staff salary is \$5,000 higher than the grant to the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization.

I see another one at \$88,608. That grant is \$25,000 almost, well, \$25,000 exactly, actually, larger than the grant to the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. One at \$57,000, one at \$103,000, another one at \$68,000, another one at \$56,000, another one at \$51,000, another one at \$51,000, another one at \$65,000—45 staffpersons—[interjection]

Well, you know, it is interesting. The member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) asks how many staff I have, and that is fair. Perhaps he does not know how many staff I have. I have three staffpersons in the Leader's office, the Leader of the Opposition. Excuse me, I have two staffpersons. The Leader of the official opposition has three staffpersons. The Premier has 45 staffpersons. Ministers of the Crown have special assistants and they have executive assistants. I do not have an executive assistant; I have a special assistant. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) has a special assistant; he also does not have an executive assistant.

So the two Leaders of the opposition parties work with less staff than any minister of any department, no matter how small the budget. I am suggesting that, as we have accepted staff cuts—we have in my office and in the office of the Leader of the Opposition and in our caucus offices and in our salaries and in our access allowances—before I make judgments, I want to know where other cuts have been made, because I think that is a legitimate debate and discussion. [interjection]

If I had the Main Estimates book, as the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) seems to point out, that we should have that valid and good information, then I would be able to make those value judgments. I would be able to say whether, in fact, this was a legitimate cut, because I have to suggest that there were cuts announced by the Finance minister last week that I have full support for the Finance minister in making.

I can see absolutely no rationale, let me be perfectly clear, to The Manitoba Teachers' Society getting a grant in times of restraint. I see no justification for that whatsoever. I see no justification for the principals' association getting a grant. Those are cuts which I think are legitimate, should be appropriately made and should, in fact, have been done by this particular government in times of restraint. It is fair. It is legitimate. But when the government also cuts advocacy groups that are out there defending the poorest of the poor then, no, I cannot justify the elimination of their grants. I could perhaps even justify a cut in the grants.

I met with the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. They had been warned last November that there was a possibility that their grant would be cut. They were expecting a cut in the grant. They would not have been happy with a cut in the grant, but they were expecting it. They were expecting to perhaps be taken from \$63,000 down to \$60,000 or even down to \$55,000, or one of them even said to me, even down to \$50,000. They were even expecting that. They knew it would have meant tough times for them. It probably would have meant their laying off one staff person, but they were prepared to accept that the government was in tough financial difficulties.

They were prepared to accept that these were very difficult times, and that is why I specifically put the question today to the minister which was, why were these grants totally eliminated? Why did you choose to wipe them right off the face of the Earth? The Indian and Metis friendship centres were totally eliminated. They were not cut; they were eliminated. The grant to the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization was not cut. It was eliminated. The grant for the Manitoba Foster Family Association was completely eliminated. The grant to the Child Care Association was completely eliminated. They were not cut. A 5 percent cut I think most of them

would have understood. It is tough financial problems. We are all in it.

You know, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) likes to talk about what Mr. Romanow did in Saskatchewan. Well, I do not have all the details of his policies. I mean, it was obviously a tough crunch, and tough decisions are being made in Saskatchewan, but I did not hear him eliminating grants outright. I did hear about him cutting them. I also heard him talking about a compensation package for the more vulnerable within his society.

I am not going to justify the decisions made in Saskatchewan because I do not know them all, but I do recognize that because of the announcement, there seems to be a little bit of fairness and equity in what they were trying to do out there. This government came along and completely eliminated grants to organizations which service the most vulnerable within our society. That, I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that part which I find the most disagreeable and the most indefensible.

I want, Madam Deputy Speaker, to now get into a debate and a discussion of the history of Supply. I took the members last week through a somewhat detailed account of the evolution of responsible and representative government both in Canada and Britain which of course is where we get our political tradition from. I want to deal now very specifically with the notion of Supply itself, because this is what this motion before us is in fact debating—where does Supply come from, why is it critical, and how it has evolved.

I am quoting now from a book called, The Canadian House of Commons, and anything which is applicable to the House of Commons, I would suggest, is equally applicable to the Legislature of this province. Already we have noticed that in 1867, the Canadian House of Commons adapted a standing order under which the House would not deal with any request for Supply or taxation until that request had been considered in a committee. Under the standing orders in effect before the 20th of December, 1968, each request for Supply, the Main Estimates, Interim Supply and any Supplementary Estimates, was considered, then approved or disapproved by a particular Committee of the Whole House, namely, the Committee of Supply.

* (1600)

Is it not interesting that in this particular reference to the operations of the Canadian House of

Commons, it only makes reference to Main Estimates. It never makes reference to individual Estimates, only Main Estimates. That is nub of the issue here, Madam Deputy Speaker, because we have a situation in which this government would like to separate Main Estimates from individual Estimates, and that is where we have a true dilemma because it has never been done before, and we would suggest that it is a very dangerous precedent that it is going to be done now.

Under the standing orders in effect before the 20th of December, 1968, each request for Supply, the Main Estimates, Interim Supply and any Supplementary Estimates was considered and then approved or disapproved by a particular Committee of the Whole which recommended to the House that the Supply request be granted. If the House had concurred, the members went into the Committee of Ways and Means, where they resolved that the money should be appropriated from the fund.

This is the dilemma we are faced with right now, because all we need from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), in order to proceed with Interim Supply, is his guarantee that he will not then use that motion in order to get us into the Estimates. If he is prepared to then return to the Estimates debate and the motion to go into Estimates Supply and we can again debate this issue, he can have his Interim Supply bill and motion, and he can have its debate, but he is not prepared, at least to my knowledge at the present time, to give way on this particular issue.

Then an appropriation bill passed on that resolution was introduced. Here then was one of the main Supply proceedings, the consideration of Supply votes in the Committee of Supply, Supply votes which are never differentiated from the Main Estimate book.

The other main proceeding used in Supply business before the 20th of December, 1968, was the Supply motion: If the members having met as the House are to take up work of a kind that is only done in the Committee of the Whole House, they must cease to be the House and become a committee. What signals this metamorphosis is the departure of the Speaker from the Chair.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is why I will not allow the Speaker to move from the Chair, is that the Speaker do now leave the Chair was always debatable and amendable and always could be moved.

The result, especially after 1906, was that the members often got into the Committee of Supply only very late in the day and sometimes not at all. In other words, the principle of grievance before Supply was taken so seriously and the members found that they had so much about which to grieve that consideration of the Estimates was pushed aside as secondary. Then at the very end of the session, the Estimates would be rushed through a few long sittings.

In 1913, the standing orders were changed so that on Thursday and Friday, the Speaker would leave the Chair without a motion, if the business ordered for that sitting was Supply business or Ways and Means business. However, the Committee of Supply was not to consider any proposed vote unless it had been first seized of it on one of the other days of the week; i.e., every vote had to be entered into consideration on a day when the opposition or any private member could mount an attack on the government in relation to its conduct or policy in the field or fields to which the votes to be entered that day related.

This new arrangement a) retained the constitutional right of the members to state and publicize their grievances, great or small, before they dealt with the Crown's request for money, but b) assured that the Crown's request for money would be considered on at least two days of the week. These Supply motion debates dealing with a motion to change the House into the Committee of Supply came to be of great importance.

When the government sought to have the members turn to Supply business by moving, other than on a Thursday or a Friday, that the Speaker do now leave the Chair, the House could react in four ways. The members could let the motion carry without debate. Second, they could debate the motion with each member free to raise his own grievance or topic because of the procedural nature of the motion. Third, an amendment which did not raise the question of confidence could be moved. In that case, the debate had to be relevant to the topic of the amendment until the amendment had been disposed of by the House. Fourth, the amendment moved could be to the effect that for a stated reason, the House did not have confidence in the government.

In 1927, the standing orders were changed so that a relevant subamendment could be moved. Thus it became possible for a third party to seek, by moving

a subamendment, to put its own special edge on the amendment. The importance of Supply motion debates was enhanced by the fact that after the motion for an address and reply had been dealt with, Supply motions provided the opposition with its chief opportunities to initiate debates on topics of its choice.

In 1955, another important change was made in the standing orders. Thereafter Supply motions were to be moved only six times in each annual session. The group of proposed votes to be entered into the Committee of Supply and each of the six occasions was to be specified in advance, and the debate on each of the six motions was to be limited to two days. The main motion was to be moved as the first Order of the Day on a Monday, and the questions on any subamendment and any amendment were to be put to the House on Tuesday evening at 8:15 p.m.

If such amending motions were defeated, the House would debate the main motion with the members free to raise diverse grievances until immediately before the hour of adjournment when the question was put on the main motion. If it carried, the Speaker left the Chair, the list of votes were taken up cursorily by the Committee of Supply. The committee then rose. The Speaker resumed the Chair, and the House adjourned for the day. When next the Committee of Supply met, it was free to deal extensively with the votes that had been entered in this way. Although the government almost always voted against any amendment, it was free to support an amendment.

The first session after Mr. Pearson became Prime Minister affords an interesting example. On February 12, 1963, the Minister of Finance moved that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair. The Progressive Conservatives moved to replace after all the words THAT—so that the amended motion would read—THAT this House condemns the government for its failure to carry out the spirit of co-operative federalism and for its neglect to consult with the provinces before announcing or undertaking programs which fall wholly or partly within the provincial jurisdiction. The NDP proceeded to move that the amendment be amended by substituting the words, urges the government to carry out more fully, for it condemns the government for its failure to carry out, by deleting the words, for its neglect, and by substituting the words, to any extent for wholly or partly. The

Pearson government decided to vote for the subamendment which was carried by 128 Yeas to 60 Nays. Then the Progressive Conservative amendment as amended was carried by 187 Yeas to zero Nays.

The Diefenbaker government had not been so fortunate. Earlier in the year, on Monday, February 4, 1963, the honourable George Nowlan, Minister of Finance, moved that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into Committee of Supply. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Pearson, moved that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after THAT, and substituting other words so that the motion as amended would read, THAT this government, because of lack of leadership, the breakdown of unity in the cabinet and confusion in the decision in dealing with national and international problems does not have the confidence of the Canadian people.

The Leader of the Social Credit Party, Mr. Robert Thompson, then took advantage of the right to move a subamendment. He moved to delete all the words in Mr. Pearson's amendment after government and to substitute the following, has failed up to this time to give a clear statement of policy respecting Canada's national defence and has failed to organize the business of the House so that the 1963-64 Estimates and budget could be introduced, and has failed to outline a positive program of follow-up action respecting many things for which this Parliament and previous Parliaments have already given authority and does not have the confidence of the Canadian people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, is this not fascinating? This was a Supply motion that actually resulted in the fall of the government—a Supply motion. All that Mr. George Nowlan had done was to introduce a motion that the House go into Committee of Supply. That motion for the House to go into Committee of Supply led to a nonconfidence motion.

* (1610)

Pursuant to standing orders, at 5:15 on Tuesday, the 5th of February 1963, the Speaker put the question of a subamendment. It carried by 142 to 111. Mr. Pearson's amendment as amended then carried by the same vote. The next day Parliament was dissolved. The government was defeated on a Supply motion because the opposition parties said, you are not ready to go into Estimates, you are not ready to go into the budget. Therefore, we are going to bring down the government. And they brought

down the government in an amendment to a Supply motion, the very Supply motion that I am debating in this Chamber and the very same issue. They are not ready for Estimates—only three. They are not ready for the budget, and yet they would have liked us to go into Committee of Supply—dangerous precedent, Madam Deputy Speaker, very dangerous precedent.

By 1965, both these Supply proceedings were under strong criticism from all sides of the House. Let us begin with Supply motion debates. First, one result of the change made in 1955 was that each of the six motions became the occasion for what generally amounted to a nonconfidence amendment. The official opposition, regardless of its own wishes, felt obliged to move an amendment because, if it did not, one of the third parties would grasp the role of the opposition. Second, if the six debates came on in a period of a few weeks in the late winter and spring, as they would if the Supply business was dealt with in an orderly way, the government was immune from nonconfidence attacks throughout much of the rest of the year. Third, since no notice was given of the opposition's motion to amend the Supply motion, the House did not know what the topic of debate was going to be until the debate was underway. Fourth, the crucial vote came on so early on Tuesday evening, the value of the debate on Tuesday was reduced sharply, especially if the routine proceedings had been long.

Criticism of the work of the Committee of Supply was even stronger. From about 1945 the view had grown that even when the committee was at its best, for various reasons its operations were an ineffectual exercise in tedium.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have to suggest that I have sat in this Chamber on many a day and while the Estimates debates were going on, while I listened to a minister of either the present opposition or the now government pat himself or herself on the back ad nauseam, it is a pretty tedious debate. There is no question about that.

It was too large a body to be effective. The Chamber was too large a setting. The meetings were dominated by the same small group of members who monopolized the time of the House. In addition, only ministers and parliamentary secretaries, not deputy ministers and other public servants, could answer questions about proposed

expenditures, which of course is still true in this House.

The inadequacy of the procedure was made manifest by the practice of allowing a minister to bring one or two department officials into the Chamber. They sat at a small table on the floor of the Chamber to prompt him or to give him answers which he then relayed second-hand to the committee. Sound familiar? The work in short was done poorly and it was done in such a way that all members, save those few who saw themselves as the star performers, were bored. Moreover, since there was no limit on the time the committee could take for its work, since the House could not sit and do other business while the committee was at work and since the committee met in the Chamber in the full glare of publicity, the committee had ceased to pay much attention, if any, to the spending proposal and had become a cockpit in which the opposition parties waged a war of attrition against the government. I think we are fairly used to that kind of Supply debate in this Chamber.

From the ministerial viewpoint, Supply business had become a wearisome ordeal, which I am sure most of the ministers would concur with. It dragged on for months, but rarely had the government any reason to fear that the members would turn their attention to the policies behind the Estimates.

The special committee on procedure, 1967 to 1968, outlined all of the major features of a fully reformed Supply business procedure. In the fall of 1968, its successor, the Special Committee on Procedure, drew up and recommended to the House a new standing order is required to bring in the reforms.

On the 20th of December 1968, both standing orders were accepted unanimously by the House but not before they had undergone harsh criticism from some members of the opposition. Indeed, it is doubtful that they would have been accepted short of the use of closure if the opposition had not concentrated its main attack elsewhere on the proposed Standing Order 16(a), a time allocation rule that the Trudeau government was prepared to jettison.

The new procedure is designed to produce four effects:

(a) to give the members an opportunity to examine the Main Estimates early and thoroughly—again, absolutely no reference to individual Estimates. Every time it is addressed in

any of the documentation that I have been able to read it always makes reference to the Main Estimates. It is the Main Estimates which is the reason why I am on my feet today and the lack of those Main Estimates having been properly filed in this Chamber before this government chooses to put this entire House into Committee of Supply for the purpose of debating the Estimates.

So the new procedure was supposed to accomplish just what I want to accomplish in this House, that we be given the Main Estimates, the opportunity to examine the Main Estimates early and thoroughly.

(b) to give the opposition opportunities less ponderous and more numerous than the old Supply motion debates, to elaborate a complaint or charge against the government and perhaps subsequently to test the confidence of the House and the government.

(c) To give the government some certainty as to when the House will decide whether or not to grant Supply.

(d) To provide a reasonable structure for annual sessions of Parliament.

All reasonable goals, all reasonable objectives, all reasonable ideas, but none of it can take place before the government has tabled the Main Estimates book. That is what is required. It is not just precedent of this Chamber, it is precedent nationwide, it is precedent in the House of Commons, it is precedent in Britain, it is precedent in other Commonwealth countries

We are choosing in this Chamber to change the precedent and, I would suggest, for absolutely no good reason and with serious jeopardy to the authority and power of members of the opposition, both the official opposition and any other third-party opposition in our democratic system throughout this nation.

The basis of the reform was the view that the examination of the policy and details of the government program, on the one hand, and the highly institutionalized and publicized contention between the opposition and the government on the other are distinct operations, and that under the old procedure, neither was successful because the two were badly confused.

It was hoped that by separating the operation, each could be made more effective. That is not to say that under the new procedure, the opposition

cannot raise in the House matters first approached during the examination of the Estimates. Indeed, as we shall see, the new procedure was contrived to make it very easy for them to do so.

It is assumed that about the middle of February, the Crown will present the Main Estimates for the fiscal year to begin on the first day of April. They would have the Main Estimates books for six weeks was the proposal—six weeks. They would be able to examine those Main Estimates in detail before the detailed examination of those procedures were going to take place. Let us compare that with what was happening here.

We were not even given copies of partial Detailed Estimates until Question Period of the day the minister wanted to go into Estimates. We were not given the rest of them until two or three days later. We were not given Detailed Estimates of any of the other government departments. We were not even given their Main Estimates, and yet we were supposed to debate with some reason, some rationality and some logic the plans and the policies of this government.

* (1620)

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I have sat with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the past doing Family Services Estimates. I have done Family Services Estimates back all the way to 1986 when I did them with the then Minister of Family Services for the party that now sits as the official opposition. I have done Family Services Estimates probably three or four times, but I have never been asked to do Family Services Estimates without being able to compare the expenditure of that department with the expenditure of other departments.

As I said once before in comments not in this particular motion but in a point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker, I take my duties as a critic of one of the government departments very seriously. If anyone wants to look at materials which I have kept since 1986, they will see that in areas that I do not critique, I have checked percentages, I have looked at grants, I have looked at where the government has chosen to cut here or where it has chosen to give there, because that, to my mind, is the only way that one can delve into priority setting. If the government stands, as it has now in four budgets in a row, and says, our priorities are Family Services, Health and Education, and I do not see those priorities reflected

in the budget, then that becomes the basis for my debate and my discussion and the questions that I may ask.

So I do not do it in isolation, and I do not like to think that any reasonable member of this Chamber does, that you do not go into a debate of Agriculture Estimates—and I have also done Agriculture Estimates—without looking at what is happening in other departments, either related to Agriculture or, quite frankly, not related to Agriculture.

I have not done the Highways Estimates. I must admit, that is one I have managed to avoid. I do not have a great deal of interest in Highways, and I always felt there were others that were more interesting, but you know, I see a capital line in the Highways budget, because I have those Estimates, going up by 5.3 percent—I grant you, primarily because of money from the federal government—but it is going up by 5.3 percent, but I do not have the capital budget for Education. I do not have the capital budget for Health. I do not have the capital budget for Government Services. I do not have the capital budget for Housing. What am I supposed to compare that 5.3 percent with? Is it a valid capital budget, or is it an invalid capital budget? Is it reasonable? My critic for Highways, the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), is it reasonable for him to go into Estimates and lambaste the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) for perhaps not having a large enough capital budget, or is it unreasonable?

Maybe he has ended up getting the highest capital percentage budget of any government department. I do not know, because I have not seen it. What I do know, according to the book which I read earlier into the House, Ward's book, Norman Ward's book, Dawson's The Canadian Government, he says, these two have given up. He says that the Minister of Family Services and the Minister of Highways gave up, that they no longer were willing to fight in Treasury Board, and that is why they allowed their Estimates to be tabled. That is not my opinion.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Sharon, Sharon, Sharon.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, the Minister of Highways says, Sharon, Sharon, Sharon, because he obviously finds what I have just said very distressing. I find it very distressing, but as I quoted earlier and I will quote again: After their troubled passage through the Treasury Board, the Estimates—not one Estimate, not two Estimates, not

three Estimates—but the Estimates are approved by the cabinet, where a disappointed minister may make a last stand for a larger appropriation.

Well, presumably, if we have three Estimates that have been approved, they have given up fighting. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) literally gave up the ghost, but the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), the minister for the city of Winnipeg (Mr. Ernst), the Minister for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme), the Minister for Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), they have not. They are still in there scrapping, apparently, because if they are not then one can only assume that the entire Estimates have been approved, and if the entire Estimates have been approved, then there is absolutely no reason why we should not have the Main Estimates book.

That is not my opinion, and I remind the Minister of Environment that this is Norman Ward, Dawson's The Government of Canada, 6th Edition. It is considered to be the foremost text on the Government of Canada. I refer him to page 132. He seems to have maintained the fight, but the other three ministers have, for whatever reason, given up the ghost.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is assumed that about the middle of February, the Crown will present the Main Estimates, present the Main Estimates, the Main Estimates. I cannot repeat that often enough, because this is the nub of my entire position on this. The Crown will present the Main Estimates. It is also assumed that Supplementary Estimates may be presented during the ensuing months, and that a set of final Supplementary Estimates will be presented shortly before the end of the fiscal year to enable the Crown to finish the year without unpaid bills. In addition, it is assumed that the Main Estimates will not have been dealt with before the end of the first pay period in April so that the Crown will require an Interim Supply to cover expenditures during the first part of each new fiscal year.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, this is the point. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), we know, would like to go into an Interim Supply motion. He would like to have this Chamber debate Interim Supply, and I think the debate of Interim Supply is worthy. [interjection]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. Could I have those honourable members who are trying to carry on a conversation across the

way go to the loge and carry it on so that I can hear the honourable member for River Heights.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Acting Speaker, it is interesting that the Minister of Finance would like an Interim Supply bill. We know why. He needs the appropriation, and he needs it before the 31st of March, and that is fair and that is legitimate, but it is also very clear that either it is presented in isolation or it is presented as part of a Main Estimates package, but it is not presented as we are presenting it in this Chamber, as a group of single Estimates, and then we want an Interim Supply bill, when we know about some changes but we do not know about all changes.

The standing orders now provide that on or before March 1, all proposed votes in the Main Estimates are to be referred by the House to appropriate standing committees. These committees are to complete their examination of them before the 1st of June. Any Supplementary Estimates are to be referred to a standing committee immediately, they have been presented to the House, and that committee is to report then to the House not later than three sitting days before the last sitting day for Supply business in the current period.

In this way, provision has been made for the performance of the work formerly done by the Committee of Supply. Consequently, that committee has vanished. Instead of the old arrangement, under which the opposition brought on debates in the House by moving amendments to Supply motions, a total of 25 days in the House has been put at the disposal of the opposition in each annual session.

On those days, they are referred to variously as allotted days or as opposition days. As Supply days, the opposition, after having been given 24-hour notice, may move motions relating to any matter within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada.

The 25 days are divided into three groups, five days during the period ending on the 10th of December, seven days during the period ending on 26th March, and 13 days during the period ending on the 30th of June.

* (1630)

It is the kind of thing that I know that our House leaders are debating along with the caucus participation about changing rules in this House so that there will be opposition days, a concept which

I very much approve of, to get us rid, hopefully, of the acrimonious debates sometimes on Matters of Urgent Public Importance.

At that very moment, at the very end of the sitting, on the final allotted day in each period after the motions put forward during the period by the opposition have been dealt with, the House is asked to decide all questions relating to requests for Supply and subsequently for the appropriation of money then before the House.

In short, the House does not vote to grant or to refuse Supply until the opposition has had opportunities to demonstrate to the House and to the country why Supply should be refused.

There was disagreement in 1968 as to whether the total of 25 days would be too few or too many for the purposes of the opposition. From the viewpoint of a government, the number of days makes relatively little difference as long as the work of a session can be completed in seven or eight months, but some of the Liberals held that an opposition ought not to be expected to initiate too many debates under conditions requiring that those debates be well planned, well conducted and noteworthy. Otherwise, the records would appear trivial or ill-tempered and Supply days would lose their importance.

In the fall of 1968, the Liberals suggested that 15 days would be enough. This was met by a suggestion from the Progressive Conservatives that there should be 35 or 40 days. Predictably, the figure finally agreed upon was 25 days.

So we have, therefore, in our parliamentary tradition, a clear evolution of the concept of Supply and the concept, very clearly, that in Canada and in our Chambers, as well as in Great Britain, that the Main Estimates are absolutely essential to Supply. We cannot go into Supply, according to present Rules, without the Main Estimates book. That is what we do not have, Mr. Acting Speaker. We do not have a Main Estimates book. That is the whole basis for this debate.

I think it is important also to go and look somewhat further at some of the basis upon the Supply motions and where it has caused real problems for governments when they have chosen to break with tradition and to try and introduce Supply motions that, quite frankly, are not considered acceptable to members of the opposition.

Although unhappiness with the procedures of the House of Commons was quite prevalent among the

members during the last years of the war and throughout the postwar years, little of their criticism was aimed at the way the House dealt with public bills. For the most part, the complaints related to the maintenance of administrative responsibility. The heavy reliance on rule by delegated power during and after World War II, together with the vast increases in the amounts of money voted annually, aroused and sustained a gnawing dissatisfaction.

The feeling was that the House had allowed itself to become only an observer, indeed, at best, merely a half-blind observer of the activities of the government. The great criticism was that as long as the procedure by which the House approved the Estimates remained obsolete, the government's administrative activity, its use of the power conferred on it by the statutes and by common law, would remain largely concealed from the House. Almost inevitably, the proposed solutions involved a greater use of the committees.

From 1908, even before the British House introduced its sessional committees on Estimates, complaints were voiced in Ottawa about the inefficiency of the Committee of Supply, and requests were made for the establishment of a small committee that would be able to examine selected sets of Estimates efficiently and thoroughly. But the idea that it would be proper for the government's spending proposals to be dealt with anywhere but in the Committee of Supply was resisted staunchly by many members as a kind of heresy, a motion that could be flirted with at Westminster where the purity of the constitutional faith was beyond question, but was to be eschewed at Ottawa where every innovation was feared as heretical. Yet, over the years because of innovations made to meet special situations, the idea lost its scandalizing novelty.

A beginning was made in 1924 when the House appointed a sessional committee to examine the financial circumstances and requirements of the railways and shipping lines taken over by the Crown. Thereafter, that committee, for years referred to as the committee on railways and shipping—and I find that interesting, and I will digress for just a minute, because there is actually a railway committee room in Ottawa. It has wonderful murals on the walls having to do with our early transportation modes in this country. It was only when I actually read this section that I realized why we have a committee room on railways in the Parliament of Canada, but this is why. It became known as the Committee on

Railways and Shipping, and so of course mural depictions of rail lines, trains and ships on the walls were quite appropriate.

So for years after, it was referred to as the Committee on Railways and Shipping, owned, operated and controlled by the government, but after 1958, the Committee on Railways, Airlines and Shipping, owned and controlled by the government, was established annually. To it were referred those items in the Estimates relating to the corporations operating the services. Clearly, a foremost purpose of this innovation was to make the corporations assume some of the burden of justifying their demands on the public purse.

In 1950, the Estimates of the CBC relating to its international short-wave services were referred to a Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting. In 1952, the votes relating to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation were referred to the Committee on Banking and Commerce.

In both those instances, as in the case of the nationalized transportation companies, members were being put into direct contact with agencies not under the administrative responsibility of a minister. In each instance, the motion referring the items made it clear that no derogation from the power of the Committee of Supply was intended. The smaller committees were to examine the Estimates, but each vote would have to be carried later in the Committee of Supply.

More significantly, because an ordinary department of government was involved, the Estimates of the Department of External Affairs were referred to the new Standing Committee on External Affairs in 1945 and in subsequent years. Here again, there was a special reason.

The Committee on Industrial and International Relations had been a dismal failure insofar as international relations were concerned. One reason for this was that the committee rarely had anything related to external affairs before it.

By referring the Estimates of the department to the committee annually, the government sought to interest the members and the public in its bold initiatives in the field and to recruit support for them. Again, the Estimates had to go later to the Committee of Supply, but, Mr. Acting Speaker, they could not even go to these committees until the Main Estimates book had been tabled.

Yet another special reason for referring Estimates to a small committee was exemplified in 1951, when

a vote to provide assistance to unemployable, pensioned veterans was referred to a Special Committee on Veterans Affairs. Since the committee was composed of veterans and others keenly concerned for the well-being of that particular group, the reference at once gratified the committee, demonstrated the solicitude of the government for war veterans and enlisted the support of the committee for the government's efforts. In this instance, too, the rights of the Committee of Supply were saved explicitly.

During World War II, when the money to wage the war was appropriated without Estimates, the House had appointed a Special Committee on War Expenditures at each session. The work of that committee met with general approval. Against this background, after 1945, several leading Progressive Conservative spokesmen revived the early criticism of the Committee of Supply as a body high unsuitable for detailed inquiry into administrative activity even in peacetime. The sound work of the Committee on External Affairs, they argued, was convincing evidence that a standing committee could do that kind of work better than a Committee of the Whole House.

* (1640)

Satisfaction with the work of the Committee on External Affairs led some of them to propose the creation of a standing committee system paralleling the departmental structure of the government so that most of the Estimates could be examined by specialized committees. Later, they shifted back to the idea of one standing committee, a committee modeled after the British sessional committee on the Estimates, as recommended by Speaker Fauteux in a report and procedure in 1947. Such a committee would have only one duty, namely, to study in an intense way each year the Estimates of two or three departments.

By 1955, the Liberal government, which over the years had felt uneasy about the propriety of sending Estimates to committee, at least committees operating as suggested by the official opposition, was all ready to make a timid attempt to meet the constant complaint about the uselessness of the Committee of Supply.

It proposed the establishment of a sessional committee on Estimates. The committee was appointed in 1955, 1956 and 1957. However, to the great annoyance of the opposition, the committee was not given the power to send for persons, papers

and records, nor did the government allow it a free hand in deciding which departments it would study.

The way in which the standing committees were employed after the Diefenbaker victories in 1957 and 1958 was predictable. The main emphasis was on parliamentary control of expenditures. The Prime Minister never had had much use for the committees. Either the majority party would make the committees serve the government's purposes or, alternatively, the committees would come to challenge the government's right to make decisions and to lead. Yet Mr. Diefenbaker had denounced the Liberals unceasingly in the elections of 1957 and 1958 for arrogant contempt of Parliament, and had promised that under a Diefenbaker government the rights of Parliament would be revived. Is this not fascinating?

Many of the government benches, of course, consider Mr. Diefenbaker to be an authority on parliamentary tradition. Mr. Diefenbaker very clearly said: The job of Estimates is the job of the Committee of Supply. The job of the Committee of Supply is to receive a Main Estimates book, and then the debate on Estimates can take place until the Main Estimates book has been tabled.

He had colleagues with high hopes for the committee system. Naturally, said the government House leader, the Honourable Howard Green, one way of making the House more efficient is to give every private member, no matter to which party he may belong, the greatest possible scope in taking part in the government of the country.

That is a Conservative that said that, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is a Conservative defending the right of parliamentarians to give their greatest possible scope in taking part in the government of the country. That is what we in the third party are urgently recommending, that they be allowed to do just that.

This is something that should have been done by the former government and why they were not bright enough to see the need for it, I never could understand.

About his own attitude, the Prime Minister was candid: As a matter of fact, defending the more extensive use made of committees, I speak as one who was not a very good committee man. Over the years, I have more or less cast out in the efficacy of the committee system. However, others whose experience is wider as committee members than is my own were able to convince me that the

committee system could indeed be incorporated into our system without borrowing anything from the constitutional position of the Congress of the United States.

Before 1958, the examination of the Auditor General's report and of the Public Accounts by the Public Accounts committee was not regarded as one of the regular sessional activities. Ordinarily, over the years, the opposition had little interest in the committee, unless there were accusations to be made against the government. That is not unlike what happens in this Chamber as well.

I want to focus all of my comments today on the Committee of Supply. Therefore, I am not going to get into the Public Accounts debates, but I will just reference that it would be very difficult to debate Public Accounts in this province if we did not have the Public Accounts books. I do not think any minister of this Crown, or at least I would think there would be no minister of this Crown who would be prepared to call a meeting of Public Accounts before indeed the Public Accounts had been tabled. Yet that is exactly what they are asking us to do in terms of the Estimates. They are asking us to debate Estimates of three departments even though we have yet to see the Main Estimates book.

Let me continue with the history of the Committee of Supply. Before 1955, the Committee of Supply normally dealt with Interim Supply requests and with Supplementary Estimates with great dispatch. These items raised few policy questions. A request for Interim Supply ordinarily took less than an hour and a set of Supplementary Estimates about a day. The committee moved slowly only when the Main Estimates were under consideration but on even that business its pace became faster and faster as the prospect of escape from Ottawa approached.

Not unlike what happens here, and I know that some of the members did not particularly like the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) comments, but I think it is true that as we get farther and farther and farther into the session, Estimates go faster and faster and faster. Some do not get debated at all, we have to do that in the concurrence motion, but in the first few Estimates that hit the Order Paper, there always seems to be weeks and days to give to those particular Estimates. As the crunch comes down and summer holidays approach or the 90-day rule comes into effect, we see a movement towards more and more speed.

This pattern changed with the intensification of the political contention in 1953-54. Then and thereafter the members in opposition, when required to do so by party strategy, were prepared to spend extra days, even weeks in the summer and fall on the Main Estimates to prevent the House from advancing controversial government measure, to vent their hostility to the ministers and to create the impression among the electorate that the government of the day was all chaos and inefficiency.

Mr. Acting Speaker. I remember spending the summer of 1959 in Ottawa with my father and my mother because Estimates were still being debated and therefore the Senate was still sitting. They could not get away for summer holidays because of the Main Estimates debate. In some years, sets of Supplementary Estimates were treated in the same way. Moreover, once the Main Appropriation Act had been delayed, the total number of days taken on Supply business ceased to be the most important consideration. In that circumstance the government had to return to the House for additional Interim Supply when the Main Appropriation Act was very late. It had to return repeatedly and since there was no time limit on the committee in dealing with such requests, each request would bring on a crisis.

On the other hand, if the government was to carry on without an election, it had to get the requested Supply before its deadline, generally the date of which the mid-month or end-of-month pay cheques had to be available for the public servants. That is exactly the dilemma the minister finds himself in this week. He wants to break for spring break—I think we all do, he needs to get an Interim Supply bill. We are prepared to let him take the Interim Supply bill, but we are not prepared to allow him to go into the Detailed Estimates. Until he makes it clear that he is not prepared to go into the Detailed Estimates, once we grant him permission to go into an Interim Supply, then we are simply not going to give him permission to go into Interim Supply. It is very simple.

If he grants our request that we will wait until after spring break or he will present the Main Estimates—I mean, he has several choices here, and let me make it absolutely clear what those choices are. He can file in this House tomorrow the Main Estimates book. If he does that, we will go into Estimates as soon as he wants. If he is not prepared to file the Main Estimates book, then let us go into Interim

Supply. Let us pass Interim Supply, and let us adjourn until the 5th of April. It would only be a one- or two-day adjournment anyway, because I am sure the Interim Supply bill is going to take us all Tuesday and Wednesday.

If he wants, he can even do condolence motions on Thursday. He has been wanting to do those for some time. He can discuss bills on Friday if he wants to do that. We are agreeable to anything he wishes to do, with the exception of debating the specific Estimates of specific departments without the presentation of the Main Estimates book.

So there are options. Let the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) know clearly, as the House leader, that he has options, and we will be most co-operative if he uses some of those options that are available to him.

* (1650)

Let me continue: On the other hand, if the government was to carry on without an election, it had to get the requested Supply before deadline, generally, the date on which mid-month or end-of-month pay cheques had to be available for the public servants. Just when the deadline would be passed, the date on which the Crown became insolvent was kept a secret.

We do not know when this government is going to be insolvent. We can only assume, since he desperately wants an Interim Supply bill, that he feels he is going to be insolvent relatively soon.

Thus, the tension in the committee was heightened by uncertainty. On the other hand, the opposition could argue that, constitutionally, it was obliged to use these occasions, unlike Interim Supply requests made at the beginning of the fiscal year, as opportunities to appraise the conduct of the government. The question of how long all the annual Supply business, Main Estimates, Supplementary Estimates and Interim Supply would require always remained important. Frequently, it was shaded by the far more dramatic question, whether the opposition would permit the current request for Interim Supply to come to a vote or whether it would talk beyond the deadline, thus plunging the government into an election.

We are not proposing this, Mr. Acting Speaker. We are proposing that we get on with Interim Supply, but under certain circumstances.

During the period of procedural reform that began in 1955, the newspaper headlines were dominated

by the battle over defence production powers, 1955; the pipeline debate, 1956; the Coyne affair, 1961; the controversy over atomic weapons, 1962-63; the flag debate, 1964 and various scandals, 1964, 1965 and 1966 and the unification of the armed services, 1966 and 1967.

As is inevitable under our Constitution the basic question throughout was whether or not the circumstances created by those divisive issues, the government of the day, with or without a majority, could obtain from the House of Commons the money to meet the commitments of the Crown, because without that money we can do nothing.

This meant that the rules of the House governing the Supply business were crucial to the political developments. Year after year, the question of whether or not there would be an election at a time fatal to the government depended on the rules.

Table 12, covering the period from 1952, before the adoption of the rule that all the Main Estimates would be entered by six Supply motions, to the 20th of December 1968, when the Committee of Supply was abolished, shows the number of days taken on Supply business in the House and the committee during each session.

What is noticeable is the close relationship between the intensity of political contention and the total time taken by Supply business. The committee moved far more slowly when highly controversial measures, i.e., the Pipeline bill in 1956; the flag motion in 1964; and the armed forces unification bill in 1966 were to the fore and when the members of both sides of the House were making ready for an election.

The attack by the Progressive Conservatives and the CCF on the St. Laurent government in 1955 was focused mainly on the Defence Production bill, and in 1956 on the Pipeline bill, but in both years it found expression also in the prolongation of the work of the Committee of Supply.

In the former year, two requests for Interim Supply were dealt with in the usual expeditious way at the end of May and June, but the Main Appropriation Act was not law until the 28th of July of that year.

In 1956, Parliament provided an Interim Supply for the months of April and May. The pipeline debate ended on Tuesday, the 5th of June, and the main business for the rest of that week was the debate on the motion of the Leader of the Opposition, George Drew, to the effect that the House no longer had confidence in the Speaker.

On Friday, the 8th of June, Prime Minister St. Laurent indicated that on Monday the government would seek an Interim Supply for June. It was clear that unless the House acceded quickly to this request, the government would have to bring on an election or resign.

Evidently, it was the intention of Mr. Stanley Knowles of the CCF, now the NDP, and Mr. E. D. Fulton of the Progressive Conservatives, who together had conducted the defence against the Pipeline bill, that those two parties would continue their resistance to the St. Laurent government to the end by delaying Supply beyond the date and the government would run out of money.

On Monday, the 11th of June, the Leader of the Opposition informed the House that the official opposition would consent in the usual way to Interim Supply. Mr. Knowles went along almost reluctantly. The Supply requested for June was granted immediately. During the next few weeks, two more one-month Supplies were granted. The Main Appropriation Act was enacted on the 14th of August.

If Mr. Drew had not drawn back early in June, if the government had been forced to dissolve, and if the election outcome had been the same as it was in 1957, Mr. Drew and not Mr. Diefenbaker would have been Mr. St. Laurent's successor as Prime Minister.

In 1960, the Liberals and the CCFs, sensing that the popularity of the Diefenbaker government was waning rapidly, extended the work of the Committee of Supply so that the Main Appropriation Act was not enacted until the 10th of August 1960.

As a precaution, Prime Minister Diefenbaker started the next session in the fall of 1960, but by the 13th of July 1961, when James Coyne, a good Winnipegger, finally resigned as the Governor of the Bank of Canada, the mood of the House was far from conducive to the dispatch of business. Consequently, he had the House adjourned from the 13th of July until the 7th of September.

The Main Appropriation Act for 1961-62 was not enacted until the 29th of September 1961.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

In the following session, during the winter of 1962, the opposition, in preparation for the forthcoming election, the election of the 18th of June 1962, spent 27 days on two sets of Supplementary Estimates.

The implication of prolonged deliberation over Interim Supply requests came to be appreciated fully during the session of 1962-1963. Prior to the dissolution of Parliament on the 18th of April, 1962, two Interim Supplies had been granted to cover the requirements of the first seven months, April through October, of the fiscal year 1962-63.

The Diefenbaker government, a minority government after the election of the 18th of June, did not meet the new House until the 27th of September, 1962, and then failed to press ahead with main Supply business. The House granted three Interim Supplies: one for the month of November, one for December, and one for January.

Over the years, as we have noted, Interim Supply requests coming at the beginning of the fiscal year as they did ordinarily had been dealt with by the Committee of Supply. The consequent bill had been dealt with by the Committee of Supply, and the consequent bill had been passed in less than a hour.

The opposition saved its criticisms, questions and condemnations until the votes in the Main Estimates were before the committee. The first Interim Supply request in the fall of 1962 was dealt with in less than two hours. The story does not end there.

On February 5, 1963, for the first time in the history of Canada, a Supply motion was amended to declare that the House had no confidence in the government. Parliament was dissolved the following day. From a constitutional viewpoint, there was nothing remarkable about this.

Since the 18th of June, 1962, the Diefenbaker government had been in a minority position, but if the defeat of the 5th of February had not occurred, a distinct possibility, as we now know, Mr. Diefenbaker probably would have been forced to the country by the Liberals. All that they would have had to do was to prevent the request for an Interim Supply for February, Interim Supply for the 11th month of the fiscal year which was then before the House, from coming to a vote.

Moreover, either the small opposition parties could have done the same thing at that time or during the previous fall. As it was, the defeat on the 5th of February removed the need to obtain yet another Interim Supply.

* (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 10—Lockport Bridge

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that

WHEREAS the Lockport Bridge will lose its status as a safe bridge on January 1, 1993, and will therefore be closed for repairs; and

WHEREAS the Lockport Bridge is a vital link in the communities of Selkirk and Lockport; and

WHEREAS as many as 200 full-time jobs will be affected by the closure of the Lockport Bridge, with direct and indirect economic loss to the entire region estimated to be between \$8 million and potentially as much as \$17 million; and

WHEREAS residents, local businesses, the town of Selkirk and Lockport as well as other affected organizations such as the Triple S Business Development corporation all need to be kept informed as to developments on the repair of the bridge; and

WHEREAS the level of ambulance and school bus services to Lockport residents will be greatly affected by this closure.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the governments of Manitoba and Canada to quickly resolve their differences over the repair of the Lockport Bridge and inform the public as to the timetable for construction and alternatives planned for residents affected; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly request the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) to take immediate action in order to minimize the economic dislocation suffered during the closure by considering increasing support for tourism in the Selkirk region during this period.

Motion presented.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak on this particular resolution, a resolution that has serious implications to residents of Selkirk and Lockport, St. Andrews and individuals on Highway 44 East, a resolution that calls for the two levels of government to resolve their differences over the issue of the Lockport Bridge and calls upon the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism to begin a campaign of tourism promotion in that particular area.

Like, I believe, a few of the members opposite, I attended a number of different meetings in the Lockport area related to the potential closure of the bridge and the effects that it would have upon the community. Mr. Speaker, the Lockport Bridge, as members know, has spanned the Red River in Lockport for over 80 years. As a matter of fact, on a personal note, if anybody is travelling across the bridge from the east side to the west side you have to take an abrupt turn when you reach the bottom of it. Apparently, according to my mother, the reason you have to make this abrupt turn is that at one time that land at the base of the bridge on the west side was owned by my ancestors. These particular ancestors were very reluctant to sell the property to the government, and so instead of expropriating the property they simply diverted it around their land and hence you have noticed the curve in the bridge itself in that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, the bridge itself and the closure has been well documented by groups in the Selkirk area about the negative impacts that this will have upon the community. The Triple S Business Development corporation in Selkirk conducted a survey of affected residences and businesses, and they had serious economic impacts associated with the bridge closure. They have estimated that 85 to 150 direct jobs within the local community of Lockport could be lost, and I know after the initial closure, I believe it was January 4 or 5, there were immediate and negative effects to the local businesses and this, of course, to businesses on both sides of Lockport.

Only the west side of Lockport is in my constituency. The eastern side of Lockport is in the constituency, I believe, of the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay), who attended some of the meetings, one of the meetings anyway. It also hurts the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) and his community, because a number of his constituents use the Lockport Bridge as a means of crossing the Red at that particular location.

Mr. Speaker, again dealing with jobs, it has been estimated that 150 to 250 direct and indirect jobs are at risk in that particular region. The economic loss to the local community is estimated to range between \$5 million and \$10 million. In broader implications to the entire region, the direct and indirect economic loss could go up as high as \$17 million. These are all estimates by the Triple S investment corporation in Selkirk based upon a

survey of all the businesses and other residents in the area. Of course, I think they said 86 percent of the businesses and residents surveyed are very concerned about the closure of the bridge—fairly obvious. They feel that the Lockport community will deteriorate. The sense of community and sense of place within that community will be negatively hurt. We know that the level of ambulance and bus services to Lockport will be directly affected.

I believe the RCMP stated that it would take an extra five to 10 minutes to attend to the needs of Lockport residents because of the closure. They now will cross the bridge at Selkirk and go north, Mr. Speaker. I do want to publicly thank the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) for his department's fine work on the Selkirk Bridge. I know that once before he was angry because I did not officially recognize his support. [interjection] Well, the Liberals do not care about the Lockport Bridge, of course. That is why they have no rural members. As a matter of fact, the former member for Selkirk, I believe, was actually interested in issues related to Lockport, and I think the current members should do likewise.

For one thing, when the Selkirk Bridge was closed there were some serious concerns about how this would impact upon the community of East Selkirk, but they had the opportunity to travel a few miles north and they crossed the river at the new bridge at St. Peters, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite are very aware of that fine link between the No. 9 Highway and the No. 59 Highway. It actually links the constituency of Gimli to the constituency of Lac du Bonnet. So as members opposite made some disparaging comments about that structure in the past, it does link those two communities, and I know that many residents find it very useful. As I recall, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) had a press conference on it in '88 and he made some really ridiculous claims about the bridge, and the mayor of Selkirk and the reeve of St. Clements and the reeve of St. Andrews disputed his claims. Unfortunately, the Minister of Health was incredibly embarrassed by his claims.

There is a debate here, of course, as to who actually has responsibility of the bridge, and I understand and I appreciate the provincial government's concern that it is a federal structure. The federal government is responsible for dams and locks, Mr. Speaker, and this is why their M.P. in the area—I was the one who approached his colleagues in Ottawa and was able to receive funding for the

structure. I have attended a number of meetings in the Lockport area on this particular issue and his absence was noted by myself, naturally, but one meeting where the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) was at, it was quite a comical event as he tried to outdo me in our put-down of our member, which is quite amusing, indeed, considering that the Minister of Labour actively supported our M.P. in the area.

He supported him by his money. Of course, the most fundamental support that a politician seeks is electoral support and the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) more than adequately supplied his electoral support to the M.P.

Actually, the M.P. of the area wrote a letter—it has been published in our local paper—where he says: In early October the provincial ministers publicly stated that the province would not negotiate. Regrettably, however, the province has now indicated it no longer wishes to discuss accepting its responsibility for the bridge, but rather is of the opinion that even though highways are a provincial responsibility, that the federal government should have responsibility for this bridge.

* (1710)

I am convinced that both the federal and provincial governments have responsibility in relation to this structure. The federal government is to fix it up, as legally it is the property of the federal government. We have accepted this responsibility. The province, however, after spending the last two years indicating otherwise, has chosen not to accept their responsibility, putting in jeopardy all the work done to accommodate their conditions.

I will continue to strive to ensure that the Lockport Bridge will be repaired. This is my responsibility to my constituents. It is unfortunate that others have ignored theirs. Yours sincerely, David Bjornson, M.P., Selkirk, Red River.

It is a shameful comment, but that was only one issue. Now, of course, the bridge closed; some of the demolition work has now taken place. The tenders, I believe, will be going out at the end of this month. We are not certain exactly when repairs will begin. The concerns of residents are still compounded by inaction of the federal government, and as Mr. Bjornson clearly indicates, there is a responsibility, as well, placed upon the provincial government.

If that is the case, and it is very obvious that the provincial government does have a clear

responsibility in tourism promotion here in Manitoba. Actually, I questioned the Minister of Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) on December 1. He replied that the honourable member—referring to myself—did not listen to the answer from the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger), as it relates to the prospect of the bridge closing. I had questioned him later, and I said, well, is the bridge going to close or not? He said, well, that remains to be seen.

They did not even know that the bridge was going to close. He indicated clearly to me that he thought that the bridge would not close. Clearly, they were not aware of the issue, how it relates to the Selkirk area, but we are again actively here today mentioning and bringing this issue forward, so the Minister of Tourism will begin tourism promotion of the Selkirk area, the Lower Fort Garry area, the Lockport area to develop a plan. I understand there is some work being done now which is fine, we accept that, to again actively promote this particular part of Manitoba as a tourist destination to help some of the businesses which will be negatively affected by the closure.

The other issue, of course, and the final issue I would like to raise is the potential for a link to be developed between the two areas, so we can link east Lockport to west Lockport over the summer months. They had an ice road which basically allowed traffic to continue between the two areas, and it was relatively successful I am sure. I had the chance to use it several times, and I know that merchants in the area were very satisfied with that particular link, and it worked out quite fine. Now they are looking at the potential of a ferry or a barge to link the two areas. I just received a call from someone on the weekend who is involved with the marine functions in Selkirk, and they have a barge that they are interested in offering, of course for a fee, to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) to maybe utilize and maintain this link between these two areas.

There was some talk about a cable ferry linking the two areas. I understand that the Minister of Highways has within his department a number of these in northern Manitoba, so I would urge him, if that is the case, to bring the ferry down into the Lockport area to allow us to link those two areas, to help continue to maintain the businesses in that particular area, allow traffic to go over the area in the summer months, Mr. Speaker, to maintain the

tourism development that this area has been renowned for.

Well, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I know that the government, I know that the opposition, the second opposition party will be very eager to support this resolution.

Thank you.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments on the Lockport Bridge issue, but one regret I have is that the member for Selkirk, in bringing forward this resolution, did it more of trying to get some politics out of it than actually addressing the problem.

I wish that during his comments, and he still had some time left, that he would have maybe wanted to correct some of the things in the resolution which was obviously drawn up many, many months ago. Many things have happened since that time, and he should have maybe tried to make an effort in correcting some of the things that are on the resolution either by amending the resolution himself or by clarifying the changes that had taken place since that time. Seeing as he has not done that, I will be making an amendment at the end of my comments.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to go into a little bit of the past history of the Lockport Bridge, and it is an unfortunate thing. I have never made any bones about the criticism that I have directed towards Public Works Canada, the federal government, in terms of how the process was handled.

Over the many years, and I think it probably could even go back to beyond the time that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) was the Minister of Highways and Transportation, efforts were made by the federal government to try and see whether they could offload that facility. That was part of the policy that the federal government had, that certain public works structures, they would try and offload them to the provinces. That conversation surfaced about two times during the time that I was minister until ultimately things got serious.

My criticism has been all the time with Public Works Canada that, realizing the condition of the structure, they did not do preparatory work beforehand. It is a federal responsibility, and they have them all across Canada. The past history shows that this was a lock and dam that was built, not a bridge. Initially, that is how it was built, and

then ultimately a bridge was built over it, totally a federal responsibility.

It deals with the Navigable Waters Act, the control of the level of the water. Things have changed, and when Public Works came forward asking for us to accept responsibility for it, we had put out certain conditions specifically some time ago as to when we would give consideration, if we would give consideration, because we felt we had an obligation to the ratepayers of Manitoba in terms of financial responsibility. This was a federal responsibility. There was an offload considered. We said you bring it back to 50 or life in terms of lock and dam as well as the bridge and offer us some operating money and we will consider that. We thought this was a good first approach. Mr. Speaker, this never happened, and ultimately in very short notice all of a sudden we find that they have done inspections—engineers—and they say that the bridge is not safe and that as of the beginning of January it will be closed.

Our normal approach—and I just want to illustrate that this summer I opened up the bridge going to East Selkirk which had been closed for quite a period of time. Months, in fact, years before we started talking with the community and the people involved, the councillors involved, and gave them an impression of what was going to happen, the impact of it. We tried to alleviate it as much as possible, work with them. There was concern. Naturally there was concern, Mr. Speaker, because it is a very active thoroughfare, the East Selkirk Bridge. We managed to do it in such a way that there was no big hue and cry. We thought we acted responsibly. Everybody knew what was coming. We tried to escalate it as fast as we could and, ultimately, we opened it last summer. The people were so happy at the time that we had a big parade that day. It was a grand opening. The town of Selkirk capitalized on it with a big merchants' participation. It was great, and I think that is how it should be done.

* (1720)

Invariably when you close a bridge, Mr. Speaker, there are going to be people hard done by it. In this particular case, the same thing happened, and the merchants, realizing that this was coming down the line, organized. I have had many meetings with them. Initially, when we had the discussions with the federal government in terms of whether we should accept the offload or not, we put our conditions forward—[interjection] The member for

Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), if he does not know, then obviously his people in Lockport do not have much confidence in him. He should have known the process of what we went through. I do not know whether they really communicated with him that well. He has been trying to stick-handle around an issue in this area, but I do not think they ever gave him the confidence that they really had confidence in him. [interjection] That is another thing. They had a federal member there.

However, what happened, Mr. Speaker, they were rightly pushing us and saying resolve it. It is government, we do not care whose responsibility it is, federal, provincial. Resolve it, because it is going to have an impact. We had put our conditions forward. We were not making much progress.

An Honourable Member: What year was that?

Mr. Driedger: That was last year, and then December 2, Mr. Speaker, actually something happened. The federal government, Mr. Mazankowski, made an economic statement at which time the lack of a—the announcement for a national highways program, but there were certain conditions put in there where they were going to refurbish two bridges in Quebec totally at the cost of the federal government.

That raised our hackles up, and right the next day I had conversations with Jake Epp on the matter, the representative member for Manitoba. He said that we would be treated the same way as Quebec and then accepted the full responsibility by the federal government of the Lockport Bridge, the full restoration of the lock and dam on the bridge. To us that was a very substantial step. We then started pushing and saying—we were at death's door in terms of closing it—where are your plans? We brought in Public Works Canada people and tried to establish exactly the time frame of what should happen.

The feeling was it does not do the merchants any good, but for Manitobans at least it was an acceptance by the federal government of their responsibilities. They started outlining the timetable. We know basically what is going to happen. It got closed on January 4, I believe. It is now closed. They have taken out the west approach because that was where the main problem was. They will be letting a contract very shortly. The member is correct in that. At that time, the bridge should be refurbished to the point where

we can open it up in November sometime, or they will be opening it up in November sometime.

Mr. Speaker, many meetings took place between my department and some of my colleagues and the people from Lockport Bridge. In fact, we flew down, three ministers and two members from the Lockport Association flew to Ottawa to meet with the then minister—who was it? The federal minister—

An Honourable Member: Kim Campbell.

Mr. Driedger: No, we met with Jake Epp, and—

An Honourable Member: Did you go or not?

Mr. Driedger: Yes, we did go—the Minister of Public Works.

We took these people along, and they finally had an insight into the difficulties in terms of dealing with that. The commitments were made at that time by the federal minister that they would accept their responsibilities, and then it waffled again. So it has been a very tough convoluted process that we have gone through.

Mr. Speaker, the bridge is closed. The resolve was there, the responsibility of the federal government to repair the bridge, and it will not be until November.

What the community is facing right now is a very difficult summer, for tourism reasons. I would beg to question some of the figures that the member has here, because they are not an isolated community. They have access on both sides. They just cannot access community to community, but there is access on both sides. So the impact of \$17 million on the community, without having actual figures, I think is a stretch, and 200 jobs at stake, I think that is maybe a stretch as well.

There will be an impact on the community. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we have encouraged the community to try and do their promotions in such a way that it will have less impact. They are working with I, T and T. They have an application in there.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, they came up and said, we want an ice road across there. The implications of my doing it, I could not get the approval of my engineers at that particular site to do it in a safe manner. Not only that, we would have to deal with the environmental people, as well as the Navigable Waters Act. What the community did was they took it on themselves and they made a winter road, which basically I think is on the verge of maybe not operating any more. With the mild

weather that is coming it is not going to take very long.

They have to be a little careful in terms of the liability aspect of it if they encourage it and somebody is going to go through driving too long, so I cautioned them, and I talked to them about it, that they better close it at the time appropriate so there is not going to be any life at risk.

Subsequent to that, Mr. Speaker, we also met again, because now the community has come forward and said, well, during the summer there is going to be an economic impact; we would like to have a ferry. We met just the other day. The conclusion of the meeting was that I would get more information for them, but I was not prepared to take and make a commitment to have the ferry that we have up north brought down here, because the problem that we have is again, where do you put this ferry? As a provincial government, we are going to be subject to the environmental considerations, federally and provincially, and it is private property. There are many—

An Honourable Member: Just temporary. By the time they catch up with you, you will be finished.

Mr. Driedger: Well, Mr. Speaker, I suggested to them, by the time I get all the necessary approvals—

An Honourable Member: You just run that back and forth. By the time they figure it out it will be over.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I mentioned to the group. By the time we go through all the process as a province, because we have to do it much more meticulously than anybody else, by that time the bridge is going to be open.

An Honourable Member: Well, just give it to them for a dollar for the summer.

Mr. Driedger: The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is giving me all kinds of advice. These are all considerations that we have been looking at.

I just want to raise some of the concerns here. In terms of doing it, if you have a cable across the river at an angle—and also I have to deal with my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), where they want to take and put an access road through his park. I can see major concerns developing there.

The other areas, if you do not do that, you have steep banks, if you are going to start cutting down the banks, you are now dealing with the federal government on the environmental issues, the

Navigable Waters Act, and by that time the whole process is through.

The problem with the little ferry that they have up north, it will cost me \$30,000 to fix it up. It will take four to six vehicles at a time. If you consider the time it would take, most people will not stand and wait half an hour to take a ferry because they can whip around either way, by way of the Perimeter or by way of Selkirk, in 20 minutes and be there.

We have had these discussions with them. One thing, my colleagues the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) and myself have always tried to work with them. We try and be as reasonable as possible in terms of the impact that it will ultimately have on the community. Even now, there are various proposals that we are looking at with them.

I repeat again that I think the big victory was when finally the federal government accepted the responsibility that this structure was their structure and they would repair it. I think they have handled it in a very, very shoddy manner in terms of the way they dealt with the community.

I just wanted to basically bring these issues to light to some degree, because perception sometimes, especially the way the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) left it here, I do not think it is quite accurate, so I wanted to put my information on the table.

Mr. Speaker, based on the misinformation that is there, I want to move an amendment.

I move, seconded by the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay),

THAT Resolution 10 be amended by deleting all words following the first "WHEREAS" and replacing them with the following:

WHEREAS the St. Andrews Lock and Dam and the Red River are federal responsibilities; and

WHEREAS the federal government has closed the St. Andrews Lock and Dam for safety reasons as of January 4, 1993; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has worked with the community to impress upon the federal government the need to schedule the repairs to the structure in a manner so as to minimize the impact on the communities on either side of the lock and dam; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has assisted, and will continue to provide assistance where possible, in developing a community

marketing effort to promote Lockport and the surrounding area as a tourism destination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Government of Canada to proceed expeditiously with the renovation work in order to avoid any unnecessary inconvenience and impact on the local community.

* (1730)

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to see that the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) in fact has moved a motion which we could support. I wanted to underline just a couple of points prior to sitting down. The first is just to re-emphasize the importance of the bridge, again, to the communities that will have an impact because of the closure. It is good to see that, in fact, the minister was successful in getting the federal government to live up to its responsibilities in getting the bridge taken care of.

An Honourable Member: It was the people there who did it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, all those who were involved in ensuring that the federal government lived up to their responsibilities should be commended for their effort, because in fact it is a responsibility that the federal government was responsible for, and they are doing it. That is the most important thing.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, it would have been good to see a bit more in terms of discussions prior to towards the end of '92 to have lessened some of the concerns, because I know that there is a number of questions that were out there and have been there over the last couple of months, one dealing in terms of construction, why it had to be done during June, July, August, the peak months. There were a number of questions that were there as to why it was that there was no indication coming from any level of government addressing the need to see this bridge, in fact, refurbished.

It was positive to see that we did get the government onside, and the commitment is there to have it finished by November. We trust that what can be done will be done to minimize the impact, the negative economic impact on the local communities, much like when a bridge in the city of Winnipeg needs to be repaired or a road needs to

be resurfaced, that there are businesses that suffer, unfortunately, as a direct result. What government can do is to ensure that that damage, that economic damage, is minimized by providing certain things. I understand that the minister is in fact looking into other possibilities to minimize that damage, and we look forward to hearing from the minister as to what those plans are to minimize it.

Having said those very few words, Mr. Acting Speaker, it would have been good to have had this particular discussion prior to January, but failing that, we do support the amendment and congratulate all those involved in getting the federal government to live up to its responsibilities. Thank you.

Mr. Dewar: I would like to put a few words on the record dealing with this particular amendment. As a matter of fact, it caught us quite off guard. It was not the usual type of amendment brought forward by this government on our resolutions. As a matter of fact, we on this side of the House support the amendment, and I urge all members to do as well.

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Laurendeau): The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) to Resolution 10:

THAT Resolution 10 be amended by deleting all words following the first WHEREAS and replacing them with the following:

WHEREAS the St. Andrews Lock and Dam and the Red River are federal responsibilities; and

WHEREAS the federal government has closed the St. Andrews Lock and Dam for safety reasons as of January 4, 1993; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has worked with the community to impress upon the federal government the need to schedule the repairs to the structure in a manner so as to minimize the impact on the communities on either side of the lock and dam; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has assisted and will continue to provide assistance where possible in developing a community marketing effort to promote Lockport and the surrounding area as a tourism destination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Government of Canada to proceed expeditiously with the renovation work in order to avoid any unnecessary inconvenience and impact on the local community.

All those in favour of the amendment.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Laurendeau): All those opposed.

The amendment is accordingly passed.

All those on the resolution as amended, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Laurendeau): All those opposed.

Carried.

Six o'clock? The hour being six o'clock, I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at eight o'clock.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 22, 1993

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