



Third Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 7, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Maloway). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

* * *

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

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

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS fisheries are a vital resource industry in rural and northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS there are over 800 commercial fishermen netting some 12 million pounds of fish each year on Lake Winnipeg alone; and

WHEREAS the high costs of supplies and shipping fish to market are putting ever more pressures on the commercial fishing industry in this province; and

WHEREAS the provincial government reduced the Northern Fishermen's Freight Subsidy Assistance Program for commercial fishing by over \$90,000 in 1991; and

WHEREAS this subsidy is vital to the survival of the commercial fishing industry; and

WHEREAS restoring the Freight Subsidy to the level of previous years would make fishing in northern Manitoba more competitive and help ensure the survival of the industry.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) to consider restoring funding of the Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance Program to the level it was at in 1990-91.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Clif Evans). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS fisheries are a vital resource industry in rural and northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS there are over 800 commercial fishermen netting some 12 million pounds of fish each year on Lake Winnipeg alone; and

WHEREAS the high costs of supplies and shipping fish to market are putting ever more

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WHEREAS the provincial government reduced the Northern Fishermen's Freight Subsidy Assistance Program for commercial fishing by over \$90,000 in 1991; and

WHEREAS this subsidy is vital to the survival of the commercial fishing industry; and

WHEREAS restoring the Freight Subsidy to the level of previous years would make fishing in northern Manitoba more competitive and help ensure the survival of the industry.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) to consider restoring funding of the Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance Program to the level it was at in 1990-91.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Leonard Evans). 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: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr.

Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this morning from the Teulon Collegiate sixty-six Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Ed Masters. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

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

* (1005)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Assiniboine River Diversion Federal Environmental Review

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

Today, 30 environmental organizations are joining together to call on the federal government to have a federal environmental assessment of the Assiniboine River diversion project. These groups include the Sierra Club, farmers unions, naturalist organizations, student organizations, university organizations, a wide range of environmental citizens who have a call on the federal government to have a review. Every time we deal with this issue, we ask the Premier for a joint federal-provincial review, and he says it is up to the federal government.

We are now in receipt of a letter, which I will table in the House, from Jean Charest, the federal Environment minister, who now says that this decision to have the federal environmental assessment will go to the minister responsible for the decision-making authority, the present Minister of Agriculture.

Now, the present Minister of Agriculture is a Manitoba minister, but he also represents many of those same communities in his federal jurisdiction that are strong proponents of the Pembina Valley project and the diversion of this water.

I would now like to call on the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to take a leadership position on behalf of all Manitobans, all Manitobans who are in a dispute on this issue, Mr. Speaker, and call on the federal government to join the provincial government so we

can have a basin-wide federal-provincial review of the Assiniboine diversion project.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that the federal guidelines and the process under which they make a decision is one where they have a screening process to decide whether or not federal responsibility is being correctly dealt with.

They make a decision based on the guidelines that have been in place for quite some time, and let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, they have to take the responsibility for whichever way they decide to deal with this program.

They will be looking at the process that Manitoba has in place. We believe our process is full and complete, but ultimately whether they decide to join with us or have a separate process, that will be their decision. In fact, a separate process may well be their decision, but they have certainly not indicated to us that they intend to come in at this point.

Assiniboine River Diversion Federal Environmental Review

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it has been documented with the federal government with the Rafferty-Alameda project that initially when Tom McMillan indicated they would have a federal environmental assessment, that was cancelled due to political pressure from Grant Devine from the Conservative Party, Premier of Saskatchewan.

The same suspicions are here now in Manitoba where it goes to the federal Minister of Environment, and he moves it over to the federal Minister of Agriculture. He represents some of the very same communities that are proposing this project, and some people in Manitoba are starting to feel that the fix is in.

The way to solve this, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier to take a leadership position and stop the fight between Brandon and Winkler and Portage and Altona and Winnipeg and some other communities, stop the disagreement that is going on now, provide leadership and stewardship on our water and call in a federal-provincial environmental process today.

* (1010)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite is not clear on the way the process works. He should know that the federal

government, in its screening process, places the onus on PFRA which is the arm that would be responsible for this kind of work. They are, of course, under the federal Minister of Agriculture. That is why the decision comes under his jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, this matter will be handled by the book. From our perspective, we will apply absolutely no political pressure to keep them out. We encourage them to carry out their process and to ensure that they abide by it to the letter. We have said that time and time and time again. The entire process will be carried out as it should be in conjunction with our legislation and as it should be in conjunction with federal legislation, to the letter.

We will not conduct ourselves, Mr. Speaker, like the New Democrats did—because they wanted to force through the development of the Limestone Generating Station—when they did not have any public hearing process, any complete environmental assessment or review process. That will never happen under this administration.

Mr. Doer: I find it rather curious for a former Minister of Environment to talk about the lack of environmental assessments in the '80s. Perhaps if the Premier had passed an environment act when he was minister, there would have been the same kinds of assessments that are required under The Environment Act that the New Democratic Party passed in the '80s.

Assiniboine River Diversion Federal Environmental Review

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a document from the federal Department of Fisheries that talks about an analysis of the proposed Assiniboine diversion project. It talks about the total lack of information, something that the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) has raised, the former member for Portage has raised, Brandon has raised, Selkirk has raised, Winnipeg has raised.

It also goes on to say that there is a risk in terms of the water flow for this river which is not considered by the present environmental assessment of the project. It goes on to talk about the impact on fish, on water flows: The degradation of water quality could be an important factor in the future viability of this proposal.

It goes on to say that the project will alter, significantly, the water flow in many river systems, and the Department of Fisheries believes that the assessment does not fully identify and assess the potential impacts on fisheries in that river system, and it does not provide the best information in terms of that material.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in light of the fact that Charlie Mayer is now responsible for proposing to have an independent federal assessment in his own backyard and that we have all these communities disagreeing about the process right now, will the Premier go further than just encourage the process of a federal-provincial basin-wide review? Will he ask the federal government directly in writing to join and have a federal-provincial review as our provincial legislation allows and as the people of Manitoba, I think, believe would be fair and reasonable under the circumstances?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition likes to choose his quotes rather selectively. Let me read from the letter that he just tabled. It says: "Under the EARP Guidelines Order, the Minister with the decision-making authority for a proposal must ensure that the environmental implications of the proposal have been assessed before any irrevocable decisions are made."

The federal government will make that evaluation. They will decide whether or not they want to come in on a federal EARP or whether they believe, as it says in the third paragraph following that, as to whether or not any potential adverse effects can be mitigated.

They will make their decision. They will be responsible for it, and pending that decision, we will make sure that our policy and our assessment is clear, open to the public and, without question, make a decision that is based on the facts.

Economic Growth Employment Decline

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

It seemed as though the Manitoba economy was finally slowly turning around, but today we have unemployment figures from Ottawa which show that Manitoba's unemployment increased by nearly a full

point in April over March from 8.6 percent to 9.5 percent.

Mr. Speaker, this is the largest increase in the unemployment rate of any of the Canadian provinces. At the same time, our labour force has dropped from March, while the Canadian labour force has increased.

Will this minister now acknowledge that Manitoba has not realized an economic recovery, but that we continue to have a serious economic recession in this province and that unemployment indeed is the No. 1 problem?

* (1015)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the member for Brandon East was able to move up on the roster, his Friday morning roster. Quite often he is left to the end by the Leader.

I would like to indicate to the member that, as last month, he did not bring forward a question at the time when the numbers, of course, were very encouraging and very supportive of government policy. Today, he, of course, likes to again bring the selective numbers forward.

I would cite for him, and I know he knows this, that Manitoba's seasonally adjusted employment growth has averaged 489,000 for the first four months of 1993, up 1.4 percent from the same period last year. This is the fifth best in Canada, nearly double the national rate of 0.8 percent.

Now, in the subsequent question, I am sure the member will want to ask about manufacturing, and we will also share some decent news with respect to manufacturing growth, given, Mr. Speaker, the proper time frame. Again, selective quoting of statistics, month over month, is for the opposition to do, but let us put it over some decent trend of time.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, it seems that the answer is based on very selective statistics, as well. The fact is the economy is stagnating.

My question to the minister is: Will the minister acknowledge that we are again losing jobs in this province? We lost 8,000 jobs between April and the previous month of March. The fact is we are going backwards.

So are you going to continue to ignore this matter, or are you going to take some action?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the action has been taken in the budget. As the Premier (Mr. Filmon)

indicated the other day, the Conference Board of Canada and other people recognize that through the budgetary moves and the taxation moves in this province, rather than attacking disposable income in the pockets of people, we have chosen deliberately to leave a greater portion of people's earnings for the area of disposable income. Indeed, we are receiving acclaim for that across the land.

So I say to the member, you cannot have it both ways. I know in opposition, he likes to have it both ways, but the reality is you cannot, and we are leaving, through our taxation measures, a larger proportion of the public earning ability with Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, that is auguring well. Our retail sales tax vis-à-vis other provinces, although not increasing at significant amounts, still in comparative terms, it is relatively well positioned.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, this government—we have fewer people working today than when they were elected. There are fewer jobs today than when they were elected.

Let us talk about the number of unemployed. Why is the number of unemployed increasing in this province, up from 5,000 from March to April? We are up to 51,000 seasonally adjusted. We are up to 55,000 on an actual basis. We have more people unemployed than we should have.

So, again, I ask this government to ask this minister: Will he re-examine his policies, take some action and give a little hope to those thousands upon thousands of Manitobans, including young people—

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

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed, again, that the member resorts to selective statistics.

Why can the member not recognize that Manitoba's recent job growth has been in full-time employment? I know that has been a concern with the members opposite. Why does he not say that for the first four months in '93, there have been 13,000 more Manitobans employed than for the same four-month period a year ago? Why does the member not dwell on the positive?

Mr. Speaker, the member refuses—he is a doomer and gloomer, and he refuses to dwell on the positive. He just wants to wallow away in negative news, and I say to him, he is doing a disservice indeed to all

Manitobans and certainly to the youth in our galleries today.

* (1020)

James Phillip Bridson Investigation Update

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

A very serious tragic circumstance has gripped the community of Flin Flon. It continues to in our province, and as we all are aware by this point, it has already claimed the lives of two and threatens another two. There is an ongoing investigation which I know the Minister of Justice has been involved in and is aware of.

I am wondering if the Minister of Justice today can tell members the progress of that investigation which has caused very serious concerns throughout that community and indeed the province. I wonder if the minister has an update for members of the House at this time.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The honourable member is certainly correct when he refers to the tragic nature of the circumstances in this situation in the Flin Flon area. Our first thought, of course, is to the grief, the horror and the shock that the families involved and the community involved in this tragedy must surely be feeling, and I am sure the honourable member and all honourable members would join me in extending sympathy to all of those who are so deeply affected by this incident.

In terms of an update, basically the investigation is ongoing. A search is still being conducted, and I have nothing further than that at this point to report.

Mr. Edwards: Of course, we look forward to further information and hopefully the successful conclusion of that investigation.

James Phillip Bridson Education Department Involvement

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My further question is for the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker.

As I know the minister will be aware, and others in this House perhaps, this family, the Bridson family in Flin Flon, has a long history of relationship with government officials and, in particular, the Minister of Education. I know that the minister did her best

over a considerable period of time to deal with this situation.

My question for the Minister of Education is: Did she confer with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the course of this investigation and this dealing with this family to determine whether or not that department or other departments could have taken a more proactive approach? I simply ask that because we have had other tragedies in this province, and oftentimes have had government involved for a long time, and then it results in a tragic incident.

I wonder if the minister can give us an update as to what was done with this situation and, in particular, in relationship to the Department of Family Services.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): I join with my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and, I know, the members of this House in expressing sympathy to the people of Flin Flon and to the young people who are today trying to deal with the tragedy and the loss in their community and are trying very hard to understand the issues that are affecting them.

We are looking at the matter, and I will be more prepared to discuss this when some of the issues in the Flin Flon area have been brought to a conclusion.

Government Departments Service Co-ordination

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Well, Mr. Speaker, finally, for the Minister of Family Services then: There has been a lot of discussion in these last few years about co-ordinating services within government to deal with these types of situations. There has yet to be a report issued, and there is a committee, I believe—Family Services, Education, Justice and Health are involved in that.

When can the people of this province expect a report on the co-ordination of services? We have a lengthy relationship with this family. I am wondering if there is some indication as to when government might be able to pull these together in a more effective way which has been promised for some time now.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I think we have an investigation ongoing in this community. I think it is

not responsible to speculate and discuss this case at this particular time.

I would say that on the issue of co-ordination, our work on that is ongoing.

Flin Flon, Manitoba Community Trauma Support

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying I appreciate the comments of the Attorney General and the expressions of sympathy from both himself and the Minister of Education with regard to the incident in Flin Flon early Thursday morning.

Members in this Chamber, I think, appreciate the difficult circumstances that exist in Flin Flon and the surrounding communities as a result of economic circumstances and economic difficulties, as well as the pressure that this brings to bear on families. Mr. Speaker, this tragedy is just that, a tragedy, and no one may ever know the exact determinants, the root causes of this tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, we have to look forward, and it is not the time to begin making recriminations with respect to this incident. However, we do know that the community of Flin Flon is in crisis. The mayor and other community leaders have been asking for assistance in dealing with the next 12 to 18 months.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer). Will the minister now agree to co-ordinate the activities within his department, within the Mental Health Division of the Minister of Health's (Mr. Orchard) department, perhaps bring other resources to bear, to ensure that existing personnel in the school division in Flin Flon, in the community, are prepared to deal with what is going to be a traumatic aftermath to this event, but also to deal with the next 18 months of trauma for the community as it adjusts to the new reality of fewer jobs and difficult circumstances?

* (1025)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, if I might assist my honourable friend with the legitimate concerns he expresses on behalf of the community of Flin Flon facing such an obvious tragic set of circumstances, I might indicate that within my ministry, we are preparing and making efforts to assist the community through my Mental Health Division.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time my ministry has been involved in such a community event, and

we will attempt to provide the kind of support to the community, to the school system in Flin Flon, so that the difficulties faced by that community will not be faced alone, that we will provide them with support from within the Mental Health Division.

Flin Flon, Manitoba Community Trauma Support

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my subsequent question is to the Minister of Education.

I know—and I want to thank the minister's staff for already responding to the incident in Flin Flon and allocating a staff person to the community. My question would be, however: Will the minister also consider the trauma that has been inflicted on the elementary school and the junior high school which is adjacent to this family housing complex, as well as the students who are affected in the collegiate, who knew the victims?

Mr. Speaker, will the minister be prepared to send a team of counsellors and child psychologists, early childhood specialists, to Flin Flon to deal with what will be several months of trauma and adjustment for the students, the staff and the families in the community of Flin Flon?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I have spoken with the principals of both schools this morning and have had an opportunity to talk with them about the needs of some of the young people in the school, and also the staff. We have already sent, as the member has said, a member of our Child Care Branch into Flin Flon, who is currently now working with both schools.

I did speak with the principals who also spoke about the community support team which they are currently working with. We will most certainly have a look at the needs of the young people in those schools in the coming months.

Flin Flon, Manitoba Family Dispute Services

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): My final question is to the Minister of Family Services with respect to the issue of maintaining some services to the families and the community with respect to abuse and potential abuse, sexual abuse, other abuse that appears to be a continuing problem in the region.

Will the Minister of Family Services be allocating additional support through the department's Family

Dispute Services to the community of Flin Flon, as well?

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): My senior staff have been in touch with the regional office there and will be lending any support that we can to assist in the situation along with staff from the Mental Health Division and the Department of Education.

* (1030)

Ostomy Program User Fees

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, last year in a letter the Minister of Health sent to the Ostomy Association, he stated, and I quote: This program is unique in Canada and is justifiably envied outside and beyond the borders of Manitoba.

Not anymore, Mr. Speaker, not since this government introduced user fees on the ostomy program.

Will this minister reconsider his decision to charge user fees on the ostomy and the other supply program?—because these people have no choice in their illness, and they have no choice but to have these supplies.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the decision, as I have explained earlier to my honourable friend, was to have those Manitobans who have been availing themselves of ostomy supplies internally to now contribute half the cost of their supplies up to a maximum of \$300 per year.

In arriving at that decision, as I have explained earlier to my honourable friend, it makes us quite consistent and probably at least as supportive as other provinces with which we made comparisons. I think we are favourably positioned. Although it is requiring a contribution from these individuals, it still positions us as having one of the more generous programs in this area of support in western Canada and possibly all of the nation.

Mr. Chomlak: My supplementary to the minister: Mr. Speaker, we have user fees on northern transportation. We have user fees on supplies. We have user fees. Even the association wrote back to the minister indicating that these are user fees.

Will the minister not reconsider his tax on the sick? Will he not reconsider that these people have no choice? The money could easily come from Connie Curran's \$3.9 million.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, from the luxury of opposition, New Democrats decry decisions that governments make when they are not New Democratic governments. However, from the reality of government, New Democrats in Saskatchewan and New Democrats in Ontario who are faced with the challenges of governing are making decisions consistent with this. They are charging for services in the same areas that we are charging in.

Now my honourable friend is wanting, of course, to make out that New Democrats in opposition in Manitoba would be different, yet I have never heard my honourable friend commit that he would reinstate any of these programs beforehand. All he is doing is holding out the promise that this is wrong and will mislead the people into believing they would do better should they be government.

The example of that, Sir, is evident in Saskatchewan and Ontario, and I reject the narrow politics with which this foolish man is making a mockery of democracy.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to reinstate this program if we commit that we will fire Connie Curran and her \$3.9-million contract to pay for the minister's tax on the sick?

Mr. Orchard: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, when my honourable friend has the luxury from opposition of finding fault with every single decision of this government, would my honourable friend care to consider at some point in time as the new critic for Health, setting out the policies of the New Democrats should they ever, God forbid, govern this province, would my honourable friend, in one simple sentence at one simple time in the next six months, care to tell us what he is in favour of instead of always what he is against?—because what he is against in this province, Sir, New Democrats in Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario are doing as government policy and I reject his hypocrisy.

Emergency Room Physicians Patient Safety

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

We are into the 10th day of the strike by EMOs, Mr. Speaker, and patients are very concerned and we are all very concerned that the quality of health

care may have been compromised over the past 10 days.

I will ask the minister: Can the Minister of Health tell us if there has been a major disaster for the last 10 days?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, no. As I have indicated to my honourable friend, that despite the constraints of emergency services not being available for a three-day period of time at Grace while they were moving to the newly opened emergency area and that Seven Oaks had not provided services, the 24-hour service available at Misericordia Hospital plus the two teaching hospitals have been coping with the circumstance. I have not been advised as of nine this morning of any tragedies, as my honourable friend is asking about.

The system, clearly, is coping but one has to understand, as I have said before, that in circumstances where you have a strike and withdrawal of services, those remaining who are providing services naturally are under increased demand and level of service requirement, and some of the less urgent individuals presenting at emergencies may have to wait a longer period of time.

That is less than optimal. That is why we hoped to have this circumstance resolved. That is why we have called in a mediator to try and bring a resolution.

Negotiations

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health give us an update about the negotiations between the EMOs and the government of Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I think probably as we speak, the hospitals and the MMA are using the skills of Mr. Wally Fox-Decent to try to resolve the issue. I understand that they are still in the process of discussion, and I have no progress reports. They have decided, as part of the process, that they would not engage in any statements, and I think that would be an appropriate thing for me to likewise comply with.

Patient Safety

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, we are approaching another weekend. Can the Minister of Health tell the people of Manitoba that there will not be any major difficulties and what kinds

of plans they have put in place to ensure that quality care is being provided?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that the planning and the contingencies that are being put in place for the weekend may well not be required. In other words, I am hopeful that we can achieve a resolution even today.

In the event that may not be achievable, Sir, I indicated in an earlier answer that Grace Hospital had closed their emergency for three days at the first of the week, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, to move to their new facility. To assist in a weekend of potential continuation of the strike, Grace Hospital will be having their emergency department open from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday, in an attempt to take evening pressure. The ambulance services, in co-ordination between the hospitals, will advise as to any other contingency plan changes from the other community hospitals.

Repap Manitoba Inc. Negotiations

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the First Minister.

Mr. Speaker, four years ago, the Premier and his government announced a takeover of Manfor, promising some 500 new jobs for The Pas and a billion dollars of new investment. Neither of those promises have yet to materialize.

A year ago, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) announced that the original development plan was going to have to be restructured, and a deadline of summer and then September of 1992 was then struck. That deadline passed, as did others, Mr. Speaker.

Last October, the Minister of Finance announced again that negotiations were not proceeding on schedule, and he was getting frustrated but he was now going to get very aggressive on these negotiations. Since then we have heard less on those negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, could I ask the First Minister to again advise the House today as to the status of those negotiations?

* (1040)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member for The Pas, who has never really taken a position as to whether or not he wants to have the

ownership of that pulp and paper mill and lumber operation under the hands of Repap—I might say that his predecessor did support that, the former New Democratic member for The Pas.

Mr. Speaker, I might say that the member opposite, I know, may take a very narrow perspective on this, but members on this side of the House have to be able to watch what is happening in the pulp and paper industry throughout North America to find that every company that is in pulp and paper throughout North America is in difficulty. They are losing billions of dollars.

In fact, they are closing down pulp and paper operations right across Canada. Many of them have been closed down in Ontario. Now, if the member opposite is suggesting that we move precipitously and close down that operation and put hundreds of people out of work, I disagree with him, Mr. Speaker. I disagree with him.

If he is suggesting alternatively that the government of Manitoba take over ownership again and run it as they did in the last recession, when it cost as much as \$30 million a year to the taxpayer, I disagree with that, Mr. Speaker.

If he wants to have the jobs preserved for The Pas—

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne is very clear that answers to questions should relate to the matter raised and be brief. All I am hearing from the Premier is: if the member is saying this, if the member is saying that.

The member is asking a very straightforward question. What is the status of the negotiations? I would ask you to bring the Premier to order.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister, to finish his response.

Mr. Filmon: If it had been a straightforward question, it would not have required three minutes of preamble.

The fact of the matter is if he is suggesting that we take it back and own it and operate it as the New Democrats did, it cost the taxpayer as much as \$30 million a year to run it when the New Democrats were owning and operating that. We do not—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Redevelopment

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier is a little bit sensitive on the issue of Repap because it represents a lot of broken promises—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will remind the honourable member this is not a time for debate. The honourable member for The Pas, with his question, please.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, my last question to the First Minister is: The mill manager, Paul Richards, it is his last day in The Pas today. He is going to New Brunswick.

How much longer will the residents of The Pas and the surrounding areas have to wait before they start seeing some results of this redevelopment plan and that stability he instilled in the minds of those people who are living in The Pas? How much longer do we have to wait?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am not at all sensitive about this issue. I just want to ensure that the member for The Pas has a lesson in what is going on in the pulp and paper industry in Canada, because he obviously has no idea of what is going on in pulp and paper in Canada.

I think it would help him in his discussions with his constituents if he had a little understanding of what is going on in the pulp and paper industry in Canada.

I can assure him that this government will continue to work with Repap to ensure that not only do we have the things there that we do have, but that Repap has invested in the total cleanup of the environmental pollution and damage that was done under the New Democrats. That has been cleaned up. Millions have been invested in that.

Not only have they improved the operations and made them safer, and made them, in fact, more productive, Mr. Speaker, but we know that in the future, if we continue to have negotiation with them, with the turnaround of the pulp and paper prices in North America, that indeed they will make the further investment that will improve that even further for the constituents of The Pas.

Intertribal Christian Communications PST Collection

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Premier.

I would like to table a letter from a Mr. Tim Nielsen, who is the general director of a nonprofit organization called Intertribal Christian Communications at 188 Henderson Highway.

Now, this nonprofit mails 25,000 magazines a month to subscribers, and they received circular 9353 from the Taxation department on April 28, giving them only three days notice of the 7 percent PST that had to be collected on their subscriptions. Also, this amounts to a \$10,000 tax increase—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member, with his question. Time is extremely short.

Mr. Maloway: In addition to that, they had to pay PST—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Maloway: Could the minister tell the House why circular 9353 was not even printed until April 19 and was not received by this business until April 28, three days before?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to take that as notice on behalf of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, since most periodicals need at least a month's notice about tax changes in order to raise their rates, why did the minister make the tax effective May 1? Why did he force them to absorb the 7 percent for the first month?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will take that as notice, as well, on behalf of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is that on May 1, leases of aircraft are now exempt, while baby bottles—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have half a minute left. The honourable member for Elmwood, kindly put your question now, please. Question.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the minister: How fair is this? How many new small businesses will now have to fill out these new tax forms?

Mr. Filmon: I will take that, as well, as notice on behalf of the Minister of Finance.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would ask if you could please call for continuation of debate on second reading, Bill 28, and then the bills for debate

on second reading as they appear on the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 28—The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Wellington, I must advise the House that I have been informed the honourable member for Wellington will be the designated speaker on behalf of the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), who has unlimited time.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I have been given by my Leader the privilege of being given unlimited time to speak on The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act, and I will be taking advantage of that unlimited time to put a fair number of comments on the record about this act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to briefly summarize the order of my comments and then get straight into the meat of the discussion, or the debate, I should say.

I would like to speak first on the background of The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act as it relates to the history of Canada and the history of Manitoba and the more recent history that led to The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act being implemented in 1983, the act that this current piece of legislation will repeal, should it be passed.

Then I am going to spend a fair bit of time on the accomplishments of the Manitoba Intercultural Council in its 10-year history. I think it is very important that those accomplishments be put on the record in some detail, because it puts a background and a framework around the debate about the repeal of The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act.

I would like then to talk about the accomplishments of the Manitoba Intercultural Council in two main sections. The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act has been in existence for

10 years. It sort of nicely divides itself into five years under the New Democratic Party and five years under the Conservative Party. In researching the accomplishments and the achievements of the Manitoba Intercultural Council in its 10-year history, it was very interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see that there is a major difference in the calibre and the quality of the co-operation between the government and the MIC, in the first five years as related to the second five years. I will be spending a bit of time on that, because I think it also reflects very much on the background and the discussions about Bill 28.

* (1050)

Then, Mr. Speaker, I will be spending time on the current situation that we are dealing with, a more recent history, in particular, the Blair report, and how it has had an impact on the Manitoba Intercultural Council, ethnocultural relations between groups and the government in this province and how it has led directly to Bill 28.

Then I will be concluding my remarks at some point in the future with, where do we go from here and what our recommendations would be in this context.

Mr. Speaker, with those brief introductory remarks, I will begin my speech on The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act, Bill 28.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is any surprise to any member in this House, nor should it be to actually any Manitoban, that Manitoba is a multicultural community. It, like Canada as a whole, has been built on immigration and on the contributions that people and groups have made who have come to Canada from around the world.

They have come to Canada from around the world for very legitimate reasons. They have come to Canada for a range of reasons. They have come to Canada, beginning, I should say, historically, with the aboriginal peoples, who, by definition, are the first people of the province of Manitoba and of Canada as well.

The aboriginal peoples, to the best of our knowledge—and regrettably, our history of the aboriginal settlement and time in Canada, in Manitoba in particular, is much less complete than it should be, due in no small part to the reprehensible conduct of the second nations, if you will, the settlers who have come after the aboriginal people.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has had a very long history with not only aboriginal peoples but with new

Canadians, as all of us except the aboriginal peoples are, in Manitoba and Canada. It is in many ways not a very positive history.

I started off by saying that many people have come to this province and this country for good and sufficient reasons. That is correct, but I think that we need to take a step back and look originally at the earlier history of the contact between the aboriginal peoples in Manitoba and with the first groups that have come to this country and to this province. I have stated, Mr. Speaker, it is not in many ways a very pretty story.

It also, though, frames our discussion in our history about the whole concept of multiculturalism. In effect, and I guess in as succinct a terms as possible, Bill 50, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act, which was brought forward by the NDP Government in 1983 establishing the Manitoba Intercultural Council, is one vision of multiculturalism in this province. It is one vision of how the government and the ethnocultural communities deal with each other in this province.

At the other end, 10 years later, we have Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act which we on this side of the House and many groups in the community feel is almost an antithetical vision of multiculturalism in our society in Manitoba today. Throughout my comments, I will be referring to those different visions of what multiculturalism is.

I would like to begin again, Mr. Speaker, by commenting fairly extensively from the green paper for discussion put forward by the task force on multiculturalism in Manitoba in October of 1987, entitled: Towards a Meaningful Policy on Multiculturalism for Manitoba.

The reason I am going to comment quite extensively from this report is that I think it encapsulates much of the history and much of the background and framework that will provide the basis for our debate on this bill.

In the introduction of the green paper, it says, and I quote: Multiculturalism meaning that Canada always had numerous ethnic groups is a fact, but multiculturalism meaning a policy that officially acknowledged Canada's multiethnic reality was a long time coming.

In effect, that discusses the history of Manitoba up until fairly recent times. Before the settlers or the first wave of immigrants came over to Canada, the aboriginal peoples in the province of Manitoba were

not just one group of aboriginal peoples. They were many aboriginal peoples, many distinct societies and many distinct linguistic groups. I would like to state again, Mr. Speaker, that I think it is a tragedy for all of us that so much of that rich history has been lost. I think it is a remarkable feat that so many of the aboriginal people in our society today are doing all that they can to recapture their history. We welcome that and wish them all the best.

Back to multiculturalism as a policy, an officially acknowledged policy rather than the reality, the report goes on to say that attempts to formulate multicultural policy, which parenthetically is very recent in our history, was preceded by a history of official ethnocentrism, prejudice, racism and discrimination, especially towards people who are perceived to be incapable of being assimilated. Now this is the sad part of our history, Mr. Speaker, and it is certainly not a history that has not been shared by all of North America, but in the context of Manitoba we are dealing with it now.

European migration to Canada commenced in the 16th Century, almost 500 years ago, with the arrival first of the French and then the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. The Germans and Dutch followed then, although in lesser numbers than the British Isles immigrants, and that northern European influx of immigrants preceded the arrival of large groups from the rest of Europe and parts of Asia.

In the last 25 years, we have seen a major change in the country of birth of immigrants to Canada and to Manitoba. We continue to have immigration from the British Isles and the European continent, but we are also now expanding and receive people from all of Asia, South and Central America, the West Indies and Africa. As a matter of fact, the latest immigration statistics show that the new Canadians and new Manitobans are mostly now from southeast Asia and Central and South America with a goodly number from the continent of Africa.

The reality is that Canada has been settled over its several-hundred-year history by immigrants, resettled by immigrants who in virtually all cases displaced the aboriginal peoples—as I have stated before, a history of which none of us can be proud. The reality has been, throughout all of our history, that we are a multicultural society, whether we are from the aboriginal multicultural society or the later multicultural society as brought forward by the European and the rest of the immigration that has taken place in the last 100 years.

* (1100)

Up until the last 25 years, however, our official policy on immigration has been very biased. It has not been a policy that accurately or adequately reflected the nature of the immigration waves that have come into our country; nor was it a policy that acknowledged the positive benefits of the new Canadians to our communities; nor was it a policy that welcomed them with open arms. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, our official immigration policy up until the last few years has been exactly the opposite. As stated before, it has been full of prejudice, racism and discrimination.

Until about 25 years ago, government policy was clearly biased to favour those who were seen to be more easily assimilated into the dominant British and French groups. I do not think there is any—there should not be any quarrel with that statement.

In the late '50s—and I parenthetically was astonished to read this, and horrified, but not surprised I guess—immigration officials—now this is Canadian immigration officials—were still defending exclusionary measures against visible peoples on “scientific grounds.” It was seriously argued, for example, that blacks must be excluded because it was scientifically proven that they were unable to survive in cold climates. I do believe it is an example of how far we have come in the last 25 years, Mr. Speaker, that virtually all Manitobans would see that statement for the racist and discriminatory comment that it is. I would say virtually all Manitobans, because there do remain individuals and groups in our province who are unable or unwilling to allow all peoples to live in harmony or attempt to have all peoples to live in harmony in our province and in our country.

Similar scientific arguments were offered to exclude Chinese, Japanese, South Asians and even Jews. As I have spoken of before, our treatment of the aboriginal peoples is something that is repugnant and disgusting and something of which we must all be very ashamed.

The whole concept of assimilation, which is another way of saying the melting pot concept, is one that has led to major problems in the United States. We all have examples in very recent times of major difficulties arising, not exclusively but at least partially because of the concept of assimilation in the United States. The way that plays itself out is that you assimilate to the dominant culture.

Because of the nature of the waves of immigration in Canada and the political and social and economic history of Canada, that dominant culture, up until very recently, in numbers as well as in power and influence, has been driven by the British and the French experience, not even equally the British and French experience in the country of Canada, as we all know the problems that have faced bilingualism and two founding nations and two solitudes, all the concerns that we have and issues that we have gone through as a country and are continuing to grapple with. Basically, the dominant culture in every aspect of Canadian history until very recently has been generally based on the British and, in Quebec, the French experience.

Our laws, our politics, our social mores, our religions, our economic and financial institutions have all been framed by the British and the common law and the northern European experience. That is reality, Mr. Speaker, and it is one that has had problems over the centuries.

Another major group that has been horrendously affected by this whole concept of assimilation is the aboriginal community. Our treatment of the aboriginal community sort of covers the range of negative behaviours that we as dominant-culture Canadians have visited upon our minorities. It has been, in smaller instances perhaps, the kinds of behaviours that have been outlined and have taken place with other visible minorities as they have come through.

Denial of citizenship, denial of voting rights, denial of legal redress, denial of land ownership, denial of parental rights and mechanisms of protest are the kinds of things that we as a dominant society and culture have visited upon our aboriginal peoples and, in some ways, we have not allowed those basic rights of natural justice to be held and to be exercised by our other immigrant groups as they have come into Canada.

It is not just physical and racial characteristics that have, up until the very recent past, framed our discriminatory practices when it comes to the multicultural reality of our society. Treatment of central, eastern and southern Europeans also has shown that linguistic and cultural characteristics were also of concern to Canadian immigration officials and also have led to, in the past, discrimination.

There was legislation in the 1890s that was put forward to "manage" the new arrivals who were coming from the Ukraine and southern Europe and other non-British countries. The ultimate goal of these pieces of legislation and these policies were linguistic and cultural assimilation to the two dominant groups in Canadian history, that being the English and the French.

Up until very recently our official policies and certainly our unofficial attitudes and behaviours have denied the multicultural reality that Canadians have lived with since the aboriginal people first set foot on Canadian soil. We have always been a multicultural society. However, that was defined and it has changed its definitions over the centuries and the millennia. We have always been a multicultural society, and we have always reflected that multicultural reality in our laws and our attitudes, but up until recently, it was a society of assimilation and a society that stated very clearly that only the British or French experience was to be valued and all others were to be subsumed or assimilated into the dominant cultures.

We all know the history of our aboriginal problems in the province of Manitoba. I will not go into that because that is really tangential, although important, to the discussion of our multicultural background.

Late in the 19th Century and certainly into the early 20th Century and into the 1920s after the First World War, Manitoba, and all of Canada, was the recipient of an enormous wave of immigration. Hundreds of thousands of people came to this country to settle it, to live here and to try and find a new and better life. Many of them were from central and eastern Europe and many of them, particularly in Manitoba, came because of the potential for agricultural growth and development in this province. The agricultural possibilities in Manitoba were extensive, and the people who came here came from an agricultural background, often from central and eastern Europe. They quickly settled in this province and provided the basis upon which our strong agricultural sector has grown.

* (1110)

The downside to that whole process was, again, that because the dominant culture in Manitoba was British, was English speaking and was based on, largely in the economic sphere, the importance and the influence and the power of the railroads, the way that the province was settled and the way that we

handled our aboriginal peoples and our later immigrants was framed by the economic demands of the railroads rather than the sociocultural considerations that we feel should have had more expression and more play.

It was not just the financial and economic dominance of the British system in Manitoba that the British system dominated in Manitoba, but the dominant cultures played a part in the rest of our society. Again, these kinds of areas are areas that continue to play a very important role as we try and deal with our multicultural reality.

Education, the schools, had an enormous impact on the cultural and socio and economic fabric of Manitoba. Perhaps they had a more important impact or more dominant impact 60 or 70 or 80 years ago than they do today, because they were one of the central components of small-town Manitoba. The demographic reality of Manitoba is that while Winnipeg has from almost the beginning been the central locus of influence and power in the province, and certainly population, up until very recently, the smaller communities in the province, in the rural areas and in the North, were vital and vibrant centres of the regional centres.

We have seen a depopulation of our rural and northern parts of our province that is as a direct result of Conservative ideology and actions, but that is another topic that we will get into in another forum.

But schools, Mr. Speaker, have played an important and almost dominant role in our culture in Manitoba. The schools, certainly in the earlier part of our history, reflected the dominant culture, reflected the dominant language. The schools were taught by members of the mainstream culture with the aim of civilizing, Christianizing and Canadianizing.

The earlier parts of our history in Manitoba had the most negative effect on the aboriginal community, but the importance of the church and the educational system in the province of Manitoba had the same effect on all of the people who came to the province of Manitoba. The aim of our policies, whether they were stated or not, and in many cases they were not openly stated, it was just an attitude and an assumption, was to assimilate not only aboriginal peoples in the province but all other peoples who came to Manitoba into the mainstream, i.e., in most cases in Manitoba, British culture. That, Mr. Speaker, was sort of the first phase of our

multicultural history in the province of Manitoba, and it lasted, as I stated, up until the 1920s.

We all in western civilization went through a dreadful period in the 1930s with the Depression. Our immigration figures went down, but then after World War II we started into a new phase of multiculturalism and immigration and thinking about how we dealt with the peoples who made up our country.

Actually, after World War II there were some positive changes that took place. There were some more positive elements in our environment that would allow for the preservation and maybe even the enhancement of ethnocultural concerns, a bit of a movement away from assimilation and towards an official recognition that Canada really was a multicultural society that should be preserved and protected.

One of these things was the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which I believe took place in 1948. Now, many of the UN declarations are wonderful principles and, if we lived by the major tenets of any one of these declarations from the United Nations our world would be a far better place to live in. Unfortunately, we can judge our actual lives and policies and laws and cultures more in the absence of following these declarations than in the observance of them. At any rate, there was a UN declaration on human rights in the late '40s which did make statements about the rights of individuals and the rights of individuals to maintain their cultural heritages.

I am referring to the green paper for discussion from the task force on multiculturalism in Manitoba, which also mentions another positive factor which I found very interesting for this particular factor to be seen as a positive factor in bringing Manitobans to an understanding of the multicultural reality of our province, and that was the Holocaust, Mr. Speaker. I cannot imagine seeing any positive things come out of that unbelievable twelve years, but it did have as a slight positive impact bringing home the realization to people that other people could be completely destroyed only because of where they lived, what their religion was or what their cultural or ethnic background was. No other individual component entered into it. So I think the enormity of the Holocaust brought forward to some of us the need to make sure that our laws, our policies, and our society reflected the ability of individuals to

protect and cherish what makes them an individual, that being in many cases their cultural history.

A third component was the independence movements following the breakup of the British Empire, and this took place a great deal in the continent of Africa. It also had an impact in Manitoba where we started to hear about these things happening. There were changes taking place in the world, geographical and political boundaries. Political boundaries were being changed based not on the needs of the British or the French or the Dutch or the Portuguese empires, but based on more legitimate social, cultural, tribal, if you will, natural boundaries, natural groupings. So this was another recognition of the importance of being able to maintain and be aware of your cultural background.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

* (1120)

A couple of other elements that were closer to home, Mr. Acting Speaker, in this postwar period leading up to the late '60s were the civil rights movement in the United States and the re-emergence of feminism. Now, again, things that may not on first blush have as much impact on multiculturalism as we might think, but the civil rights movement in the United States again focused very clearly and very sharply on the issues that face peoples who are defined by the dominant culture as different and thereby less acceptable. In the United States in the civil rights movement in the '50s and '60s, the dominant culture was the white culture, and the subservient culture that was fighting against this were blacks. The same principles apply across the board. No matter what the dominant culture is and no matter how many or how dispirit the subservient cultures are, the same principles apply.

The blacks in the United States were saying, excuse me, we are individuals; we are Americans; we are citizens of this country who have every single right that you the dominant culture have as well. The only distinction that should be made, and this is an American frame and I think is not seen as much in Canada, America being a nation that was born out of individualism and has certainly in its 250 years learned to regret some of that reliance on individualism, is the concept that people should be taken for their inherent qualities not for their superficial characteristics, not for the colour of their skin, not for their country of origin, not for the

language that they speak, not for the dialect that they speak.

This was something that was very difficult for the United States and has been very difficult for other dominant cultures to be able to accept. It was not just that blacks or other minority groups or visible minorities or people from Poland or Ireland or the Ukraine are "different." It goes further than that. It has enormous political and economic repercussions as well because, if a dominant group starts to open itself up and it becomes more inclusive, that means that there are more people in that group that can participate in the life of the community, and perhaps the power differentials that have fueled our various societies for virtually the entire history of humankind would be lessened if not eliminated. So there are a large number of elements that go into all of these discussions.

At any rate, the civil rights movements started to break down some of these barriers and attitudes. Laws were changed. The civil rights legislation of 1964 in the United States was an absolutely seminal piece of legislation which, for the first time, stated that people have civil rights just by definition of their being a citizen, not by any other characteristic. It was the responsibility of those groups and people who had power and influence and authority in the financial, economic, social and political spheres to encourage and enable everyone to have access to those rights and privileges, something that 25 years later we are at least paying lip service to, although in many of our actual daily lives we are still fighting those same struggles.

The re-emergence, Mr. Acting Speaker, another element of feminism, and I say re-emergence because there was a strong feminist movement in North America in and around the early part of this century. Certainly in Manitoba, with the women getting the right to vote in 1916, the women becoming members of Parliament in the '30s for the first time, that was one kind of part of feminism, the suffragette movement in the United States, the same kind of thing happening. Acknowledgment of labour issues by the workers, particularly in New York—this kind of feminism was in a sense a first wave.

In the '60s and the '70s in North America there was a second wave of feminism, which in a way paralleled the civil rights movement. It said that it is not just colour, language, country of origin, but the most basic characteristic of all, gender, that has to

be looked at and has to be seen as something that is inherent and should not be the basis for any kind of discrimination. We have made some progress in that regard, but certainly there are new challenges that face us in this area every day.

At least, again, as in the civil rights movement and as in some of the other statements that I made earlier, these kinds of movements started people thinking about the whole issue of racism, of prejudice, of sexism, of all of these kinds of negative things. It started people thinking about their own attitudes. It started people thinking about the impact that these negative attitudes had not only on their personal lives, on others' lives, but on the social and economic fabric of our country. I think we are starting to realize, at least we pay lip service to, the importance of not having these kinds of negative attitudes to our society.

Also in the last 25 years we have seen an increased political activity among ethnocultural groups. Increased political activity—I know that there have been some comments, particularly in light of the fact that Stephen Juba just passed away recently. In the discussion of his life and the impact he had on the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba was a revisiting of the fact that in 1956, when Mr. Juba was first elected mayor, he was seen as an outsider who made good. He was seen as an immigrant from the north end of Winnipeg who had leaped that barrier.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I think that is a very interesting juxtaposition of what 30 years can do in that 30 years ago someone of Ukrainian background could be seen as an outsider, and today that has changed so that one of the most powerful ethnocultural communities in this province are those from the Ukrainian community. It is an evolving situation.

I would like to remind, particularly the member for Rossmore (Mr. Neufeld), that I have unlimited time. This is an important issue that we are debating and the—[interjection] Well, if the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would like to make a motion that the Rules of the House be changed so that there is no such thing as unlimited time, then let him get up and say that. It is one of the major tenets of our parliamentary system that one person in a debate on issues has unlimited time.

I know what I am saying is not going to be received very positively by members of the

government benches, because what I am going to say, not only in my introductory remarks but all the way through my comments, is not going to reflect very positively on the actions, the attitudes and the behaviour of the government. But that is the choice that you as a government have made. The other side of making difficult choices, as the government keeps talking about, is that you have to listen to the impact of those difficult choices on the people of Manitoba, and on all the people of Manitoba, not just the focus groups that you are basing your policies and decisions on.

* (1130)

Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my opening introductory remarks, the reason I am taking more than 40 minutes to debate and discuss Bill 28 is that I believe it is important to put on the record, in one place, some of the background, some of the history not only of the Manitoba Intercultural Council itself but the background and the history that led to the MIC Act being put in place in 1983, the history that has gone on in this last decade and the implications that is going to have for the multicultural community of this province.

I am not putting these comments on record and I am not speaking longer than 40 minutes because I like hearing myself speak. I am doing it because the issues are important to all Manitobans, and I will ask that the Minister of Finance, if he is uninterested in this issue, has certainly options that he can use to deal with this disinterest.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 25 years much has happened that has been framed by our history that has led to our current situation in the province of Manitoba. In 1969, the federal government legislated bilingualism, and I know that that legislation of official bilingualism has had a long and stormy history in not only Canada but certainly in the province of Manitoba, as any policy which impacts on people as directly and as viscerally as bilingualism will have on people. I do not think that discussion, debate, differences of opinion are a negative thing in our society and I think they are healthy and that we should listen to a range of views, particularly those that may make us think or may make us a little uncomfortable.

In 1971, the federal government announced a policy on multiculturalism. As I stated at the beginning of my remarks, we have always been a multicultural country and province but, until 1971,

we did not officially reflect that fact in our policies, particularly the federal government. That official recognition of Canada as a multicultural society has had an enormous impact on all of the people in Canada and particularly in Manitoba, those who were here before 1971 and those who have come since 1971.

It is also one of the major differences between our country and the United States. The United States does not recognize itself as a multicultural society and Canada does. We have been in some ways successful in implementing that policy of multiculturalism and in many ways less than successful, but at least it frames our thinking and our legislation in the last 20 to 25 years.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

In the 1960s, as well, Mr. Acting Speaker, Canada federally liberalized or opened the immigration policies. I do not pretend to be an expert on immigration, certainly not on the history of immigration policies in this country, but I do know that up until the last 25 years or 30 years the immigration policies of the country of Canada were very reflective of the idea that groups who came to Canada or individuals who came to Canada would be looked at more favourably if they were easier to assimilate, as I said earlier, so elements, whether it was openly or overtly or covertly, were looked at such as language, such as skin colour, country of origin, religion, cultural compatibility with a dominant society.

The fact that Canada officially became a multicultural society, a bilingual society and had more open immigration policies in the late '60s and early '70s has had a very important impact on all of us.

The third phase in effect—and since then, since the late '60s, the early '70s, we have been dealing in the country and in the province with the multicultural fact, with the fact that immigration has been expanded and opened more. I will go into the specifics of that kind of thing and the impact it has had on Manitoba in a few moments. But I think, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is important that we know that right now in Manitoba and Canada we are in what could be a third phase.

We have gone through the assimilation phase. We have acknowledged for the last 20 years that Canada is a multicultural society. We have made some beginning attempts to implement that

philosophy and that principle in our laws and our society to a greater or lesser extent successfully. Now we are faced with enormous challenges as we try and bring that multicultural fact that was evolved and developed in an expansionary society into phase with a society and an economy that is becoming, on the one hand, more global and, on the other hand, much smaller.

We need to make sure that the philosophies and principles of multiculturalism are flexible enough to be able to deal with the realities of the 1990s. That is something that is a challenge that faces governments and societies always, to make sure that the philosophies and the policies are flexible, are living and breathing organisms rather than something that is static.

I think, frankly, to a large extent certainly the debates over multiculturalism have been lively, and the issues that have been raised by policies on multiculturalism have had the positive effect of bringing into public and into the open the range of opinions and views on this issue as we as a society and as a government try to grapple with the new realities. So I think that is a very positive thing.

It is a challenge, and it is very difficult. We are trying to deal with this concept of multiculturalism in very difficult times, so I think it is good that we are at least bringing the issues up front. We are not putting them under the carpet, and we are attempting to open a dialogue or maintain a dialogue that needs to be ongoing.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the multicultural concept has not only been dealt with in a Canadian context but certainly as well in a Manitoba context. One of the many, many publications and documents and pieces of information that have been produced by the Manitoba Intercultural Council over its 10-year history is the document entitled, Multicultural Policy and Initiatives of the Government of Manitoba, 1970 to 1987.

I would like to spend a bit of time discussing this document because it puts into more of a Manitoba context the issues that led up to the tabling and the passage of Bill 50 in 1983, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act. So I will speak fairly extensively from this document.

* (1140)

As I stated earlier, the comment that elicited some negative response from members opposite was the fact that in 1956, Stephen Juba was seen as a

foreigner, was seen as not of us, was seen as an outsider and had a stunning victory in 1956 when he became mayor of the city of Winnipeg. How far we have come. How our attitudes about who is included, who is excluded have changed.

In 1969, another pivotal momentous event occurred in the province of Manitoba. It was the election of the first New Democratic Party government in the province of Manitoba. Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, I am not saying this was a momentous occasion because it was an NDP election. I would like to make that clear. What I am saying is that the government that was elected in 1969 included some members who again reflected the changing of the guard, if you will, as far as ethnic background in the political power of the province of Manitoba. Names like Schreyer, Uruski, Hanuschak, Saul Miller, Saul Cherniak reflected a new expanded role for individuals who were from other than the historically dominant northern European community.

Not only that, Mr. Acting Speaker, but in the first throne speech or the throne speech of March 1970, the government of the day for the first time iterated these multicultural concepts. The throne speech in 1970 said, and I quote: In enhancing the character of Canadian citizenship and nationhood, it is my government's intention to assist the different minority parties in the Manitoba cultural mosaic in holding a congress. This will, no doubt, provide a forum where the different cultural groups in the province may express their views on measures needed to nourish and sustain their linguistic and cultural heritage. My ministers express the hope that these measures will receive the support of all as being consistent with our desire to maintain the Canadian cultural mosaic in a free, plural and open society.

This was 23 years ago. It was prior to the federal government's statement that Canada is a multicultural society. The federal government followed the provincial government of Manitoba in acknowledging the importance of a plural, free, multicultural society. Now, I happen to think, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this is an important statement, an important milestone in the history of Manitoba. It was not the only time that the Schreyer government made those statements and made public commitments to the concept and the implementation of multiculturalism.

In 1971, the throne speech noted the government's ". . . policy of respect and encouragement for the rich cultural heritage of Manitoba's peoples . . ." In 1972, in the Speech from the Throne, the Lieutenant-Governor stated, quote, we established a policy last year which aims to preserve the heritage of the diverse communities of the province, end quote.

Similar declarations have appeared in virtually every other Speech from the Throne since 1970, at least the Speeches from the Throne of the New Democratic Party governments.

I would certainly be the first to admit that Speeches from the Throne and the statements contained therein do not necessarily mean anything. They are statements of principle, but they are only statements of principle and statements of attitude. They are nothing if they are not followed up and implemented with legislative and policy action.

The government of the day, the government that was in power from 1969 to 1977, did follow up those statements of principle, those statements of attitude, those statements of ideology with action. I am going to outline for the members opposite and for the people of Manitoba some of those accomplishments.

Following the throne speech of March of 1970, the government did enact or did bring forward a Manitoba Mosaic Congress, which was held in October of 1970. Knowing the time frame of how long things take to actually be implemented in government of whatever political stripe, I think it is remarkable that this congress took place in such a short period of time after its first statement in March of '70.

It was the first gathering of its kind in Canada, not in Manitoba but in Canada, and it brought together representatives of many ethnocultural communities including the Franco-Manitoban group, the native organizations and community and the Metis. It was brought together to discuss the cultural future of Manitoba.

It was a recognition of the fact that we were in a multicultural society. We needed to reflect, we needed to acknowledge that fact and get together to talk about how we implemented that reality in our cultural lives, in our educational lives, in our health care, in our social service provisions, in our financial workings, in all aspects of our working as a society

and as a province together. The Manitoba cultural mosaic of 1970 was designed to begin to address those issues.

The principles that underlay this mosaic, I think, are worthy of reflection and of sharing with the members today. First was the principle that government action should proceed only after community consultation. You cannot impose, particularly when you are dealing with issues that are as broad and as deep and as diverse as those that are involved in multicultural issues. No government, no one single group should be able to impose actions upon this community. That principle has been—it has either been honoured or not honoured, but it has certainly been reflective in the deliberations that have gone on in the last 23 years.

Secondly, the 1970 Mosaic Congress recognized and asserted the obligation of all governments to support multicultural endeavours as an appropriate social expenditure. Now this also was a brand new idea, certainly as it relates to the multicultural community in our province and in our country.

We have evolved over the centuries as a society understanding that we have the responsibility to provide for the basic necessities of life for our citizens. Those include health, the right to decent housing, hopefully the right to be able to hold a job, and food, those kinds of things. Those basic rights have been in some cases expanded and in some cases contracted, but society has recognized that we do have as a society a responsibility to ensure that basic needs of all of our constituents are met.

This second principle out of the Mosaic Congress in October of 1970 expands that basic principle to include the fact that multicultural endeavours, however they are going to be defined, are also an appropriate use of social expenditure. By social expenditure, I am taking that to mean that governments at municipal levels, provincial levels and federal levels have an obligation to ensure that there are resources available so that the continuation of the cultural heritage, the concept, the principle of multiculturalism can find actualization. This is an enormously important principle that had never been articulated before.

* (1150)

These two principles, that government action must only proceed from community consultation and that government has an obligation to provide resources and assistance to enhance the concept

of multiculturalism, have remained the basic underpinnings of the ethnocultural communities' expectations of government and, as well, have been either honoured in the observance or in the breach by succeeding governments. So there are two very important things that came out of this 1970 Mosaic Congress.

Not only were these two principles elucidated in 1970, but there were some recommendations that were made out of this Mosaic Congress which were also very important and which also have implications for our deliberations today. The first one that I would like to speak to was requests for various initiatives by the government to add a multicultural component to several existing programs. This is the beginning of the implementation of the principle that multiculturalism is important and should be assisted wherever possible. If you assume that, if you take that as a given, as a principle that you are going to live by, then you need to actually implement it if you are going to follow through, so you have to have the government accepting the fact that they need to make sure that their existing programs have a multicultural focus to them.

We are still, Mr. Acting Speaker, dealing with that particular issue today. We are still dealing with and grappling with how we actually make sure that our health care system, our social services system, our education system, our justice system reflect the multicultural reality of our province. The only way we can actually do that is by the service delivery system reflecting that. We have been discussing in this House in a number of areas for decades now how we implement that principle.

Another recommendation that came out of the cultural mosaic of 1970 that goes back to both the principle of community consultation and the principle of multicultural endeavours being in and of themselves supportable is that there be financial and/or other forms of support to the ethnic voluntary organizations which sponsor and maintain cultural projects and programs of activity. Again, it is the implementation of the principles that were agreed to.

If you are going to support a concept of multiculturalism, you have to support it not just verbally, not just with statements in the House or that kind of thing, but you have to actually put in place programs or assist the community to work with the government and with each other to implement

programs. That goes back to the principle of consultation.

The multicultural community and its component parts know what it is that they need. The elements of the multicultural community may not always agree one way or the other, but together, as individual groups, as individual people and as a multicultural component of our society, those needs have to be reflected and have to be listened to and responded to, to the best of the government's ability.

The third general recommendation, and one which in the context of the deliberations in Bill 28 is perhaps the most important today, is that there be a cultural council of Manitoba established by the provincial government to serve the whole community. This again goes back to the principles of community consultation and government obligation, that there be a council established to serve the community and to work with the government, an incredibly important principle that came out of the October 1970 Mosaic Congress.

The government of the day listened to the Cultural Mosaic Congress and implemented and acted on many of those recommendations. I will not for a moment suggest that they or any other government then or since then has completely or totally satisfactorily responded to or implemented recommendations coming from the multicultural community. Some very important things did come out of that congress. It did not just sit as a report on the shelf and gather dust.

In 1972, the ministerial advisory committee on multiculturalism was established. Again, we are talking over 20 years ago, at the very beginning of governmental recognition of the importance of multiculturalism. So these are seminal historic things that took place.

There were 15 members of this committee appointed by Order-in-Council. Its role was to take an active role in developing multicultural programs for government. So again it goes back to the principle that you cannot impose programs on the community. You have to work co-operatively with the community and act on, to the best of your ability, advice and suggestions from the community. That was the role of this advisory committee.

Largely as a result of this committee, several important things happened. There was a program of project and operating grants for ethnocultural organizations introduced. For the first time there

was a recognition, not only in principle but through grants and actual money being flowed, of the principle that cultural organizations needed government assistance and help in order to survive and expand and become more robust.

A second element that the government followed as far as recommendations from the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Multiculturalism was that linguistic support grants for heritage language supplementary schools were established. Again, this is 21-22 years ago. We still have programs that deal with heritage language support in our school system.

Parenthetically, Mr. Acting Speaker, we will, when we get into Estimates, discuss the extent of those grants and whether we think it is a satisfactory level or not, but the principle is still being maintained that you not only have support, financial and otherwise, to ethnocultural organizations, but you also recognize as we have also recognized as a government for over 20 years the importance of maintaining heritage language programs in the school system and in the community as a whole as a resource to enable the individuals and second-, and third- and fourth-generation individuals to maintain the connection with their heritage languages.

This goes back again to the fact that we are a multicultural society. We are not an assimilative society, as the United States is. You do not find anywhere near the extent of programs for heritage retention, heritage language programs in the United States, because they believe that you should become an American and that means you should be speaking English. You can have your little celebrations on one day of the year, but that is a very small component of the activity of citizens in the United States.

* (1200)

The large cultural events, the large cross-country events that are celebrated in the United States are things like the 4th of July and Thanksgiving and other events that do not have a cultural background to them. We in Manitoba and in Canada as well have a much more richly diversified cultural heritage and we maintain it largely through programs such as the linguistic support grants for heritage language in the schools.

The Department of Education during the 1970s established the Bureau de l'éducation Française—

excuse my accent—and the Native Education branch, again, as a recognition that in order to foster and strengthen our multicultural heritage, we needed to put in place programs and recognize through programs and financial support our bilingual heritage with the French and English languages and also our aboriginal heritage which, as I have stated in my earlier remarks, was sadly lacking prior to that.

In 1972, there was an act which established the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, something that has been of vast importance in enriching our cultural heritage and our cultural understanding in Canada. In 1974, and this reflects back on the sort of extension of the UN Declaration of Human Rights that I have spoken of earlier, a Human Rights Act was introduced in the province of Manitoba which was considered at the time to be one of the most progressive statutes in all of Canada.

This Human Rights Act which—I was surprised we had not had one earlier than 1974—has not been in effect for very long. It is less than 20 years, although it is getting closer to 20 years. This also, The Human Rights Act of 1974, was a reflection of the need for government to codify the concepts of multiculturalism, to have in place standards of behaviour and standards of performance and standards by which we could measure our positive progress and our negative actions as they relate to human rights, of which multiculturalism is the basic component.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to inject at this point a small partisan aside, if I may. After having spent a fair bit of time discussing the actions of the Schreyer government in four years, the first four years of the Schreyer government saw an enormous amount of activity as regard the establishment of the principle and programs of multiculturalism. When this government says that New Democrat governments have done virtually nothing or very little for multiculturalism, they are not sharing with the people of Manitoba the full accuracy of what history shows us.

There was much that was done, and I think one of the remarkable things about what took place in that four-year period or five-year period is that it was new. It was not building on a base; it was creating the base. It was creating the base that successive governments have used as a benchmark, sometimes successfully, many times not successfully. But it is remarkable the amount of work that was done in a very short period of time,

creating something that has served us as a guide since then and has also served the rest of Canada as being the first components of a multiculturalism policy in many areas.

According to the Manitoba Intercultural Council report which I have been quoting from, Policy and Initiatives of the Government of Manitoba from 1970 to 1987, things did not remain as positive as they had started out in the early and mid-70s. I am going to quote a whole paragraph from this document.

It starts by saying: Between 1978 and 1981, multiculturalism as an organized activity of government seemed to be grinding slowly to a halt. After 1977, the ministerial advisory committee on multiculturalism lapsed into inactivity as appointments expired and were not renewed. At a time of concerted budget reduction, multicultural and linguistic support grants were systematically reduced to a mere fraction of the levels in 1977. There developed a sense among ethnocultural communities that multiculturalism had ceased to be important to the government and perhaps even that the government had grown antithetical to the very notion of a multicultural society—end quote.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I quoted that paragraph directly from that MIC document because I did not want to be accused of being overtly partisan in my comments.

But it is interesting that the years from 1977 to 1981, where this document is talking about the diminution of multicultural programs and policies in the province of Manitoba, correspond exactly to the Tory government. Now, I do not for a moment believe that that is coincidence, and I think by the time my comments have been thoroughly read into the record, no one in the province of Manitoba can legitimately believe that the actions of the Conservative government between 1977 and 1981 were a coincidence, that these things happened just because of some external events. No, Mr. Acting Speaker, these events of 1977 to 1981 were a result of deliberate policy changes on the part of the government of the day.

I am going to show by the end of my remarks that the changes that have taken place in the last five years are a continuation of the policy that was begun in 1977 and 1981 by the then-Premier of the province, Mr. Sterling Lyon.

A change in government took place again in 1981, and again, not coincidentally, there was a change in

the attitude and the focus of multiculturalism in this province. The MIC paper says that there was a resurgence of the ethnic community in the electoral process in the election of 1981, and I will take that statement from this document.

I myself am not personally familiar enough with the voting patterns in that election to either agree or disagree with it, but the Manitoba Intercultural Council firmly believed that part of the results of the 1981 election were as a direct result of the ethnocultural community in the province of Manitoba saying we do not like the focus that the Sterling Lyon government was taking, we do not like the fact that they are appearing to put less emphasis on multiculturalism, and we are going to try and ensure that a government is put in place which will respond to the multicultural needs of the community in Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, due to whatever causes, and there were many causes for the government change in 1981, the effect of that government change was to change the multicultural policy back to what it had been from 1969 to 1977, with the understanding that—when the 1981 election occurred, we were in the midst of a very serious recession, a very short, in comparison to the current recession, recession, but a very deep, serious recession. So there were many, many financial constraints on the government of the time, but, unlike other governments, that government, to the best of its ability, put its money where its mouth was. They made policies, they consulted and they changed the face of the multicultural policy in the Province of Manitoba yet again.

Right after the 1981 election, the two principles that had framed the Manitoba Mosaic Congress of 1970 were reasserted again over a decade later, and that was funding levels for multicultural and linguistic grants were soon restored to the levels that they had been in 1977, and the government committed itself to community consultation through the establishment of a community-elected multicultural council. We are now getting closer to the establishment of the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

The basic principles of the Manitoba Mosaic Congress in 1970 had been implemented, or at least they had begun to be implemented, in the Schreyer years. They were put on the back shelf, on the back burner. They were ignored during the Sterling Lyon years, and when the Howard Pawley government

came back into power in 1981, they began again to reassert the principles of the Manitoba multicultural mosaic.

* (1210)

I guess a question could be asked, Mr. Acting Speaker, as to where we might be as a society and where the province of Manitoba might be in regards to multiculturalism had we not lost those four years.

Later on in my remarks I will ask the same question about the current situation in the province of Manitoba.

So we have now come to the election in 1981, when the New Democratic Party was returned to power and reaffirmed its commitment to the concepts of multiculturalism as they had been established by the Manitoba Multicultural Mosaic Conference of 1970.

I would like now to go into what happened between October 1981 and 1983 when The Manitoba Intercultural Act, Bill 50, was enacted, in the manner of governments, very quickly, comparatively speaking, particularly, as I have stated, when the government was dealing with a very deep recession and was also dealing with four years of inactivity and decline in the concepts of multiculturalism and the programs of multiculturalism.

I am going to back up just a bit, Mr. Acting Speaker. We have come to 1981 in our deliberations as far as the background of the MIC act. I think we need to go back again and look a little more globally as to what is going on in our society today, what was happening in the late '70s and the early '80s, in this context, not just the economic but some of the political and social and cultural things that were framing our society and framing the government's actions when it came into power again in 1981.

In 1969 there was expansion in the immigration policies. There was the recognition of official bilingualism and official multiculturalism on the part of the federal government. So the '70s were not only economically but socially and culturally an expansionary time, and that was seen no more effectively than in the province of Manitoba. The late '70s and the early '80s start to get at a different kind of a situation, and we are again today in an even different, a third kind of larger context. We are today in Manitoba, certainly in the '70s and continuing on,

dealing not only in Manitoba and Canada with what multiculturalism is.

We have established that we are a multicultural society, but what does that mean? How is it defined? What are the programs that we need to put into place? How do we actualize the concept of multiculturalism? You have to look at it in a different context in every year and certainly in every decade or every half decade—changes. How do we shape a nation which has an overarching set of values, goals and attitudes that all of its components can agree to, and how do we structure that so that it is not just words but it is actuality? How do you have on the one hand a set of overarching goals and objectives that everyone can agree to, on the other hand recognizing and acknowledging the fact that we are a multicultural society with all the diversity that that entails?

It is far easier to agree on things if everyone comes from the same viewpoint. Just a more localized example, any government is elected and the majority or all of the people who are elected in that government come from basically the same philosophical viewpoint, with enormous differences within that context.

The current government, for example, has a philosophical approach and a way of looking at the world and a way of looking at the government's role in the world which is very different from our discussion, from our way of looking at the world.

So generally speaking, the people on the government side, whichever government is in power, generally agree one with another. Their ability to set goals and objectives is far easier among themselves than it is to have the two bookends, if you will, of the political ideology in the province of Manitoba today to agree on anything.

We are very much narrower in the items that we can agree with, government and opposition, Conservative and New Democrat, than we are within each political party. That is in agreement, that is accepted, that is understood. Even within our own community, if you want to call the government a community and the opposition a community, there are differences of opinion.

You may all agree on an overarching goal, but how you reach that goal may not be completely understood or accepted within your group. So it is easier if you come from the same background to

come up with overarching philosophies. It is less easy if you come from different backgrounds.

What I am trying to say in a very long-winded and circuitous manner is that Canadians and Manitobans have set themselves a very difficult task and, parenthetically, my task may just have gotten slightly more difficult too.

What Canadians and Manitobans are struggling with and all parties are struggling with is how you put together an overarching set of principles and guidelines that can encompass everybody in the country or the province while, at the same time, recognizing the enormous diversity of our multicultural mosaic. This is something that we have been dealing with for the last 500 years, but it is really coming to the fore in these days.

It is not only tensions between different groups, but it is tensions, as I have stated earlier, intergroup. The multicultural community is just as diffuse and diverse as any other part of our society. I think what tends to be forgotten is that it is as diverse as it is.

We have multicultural community groups that have been here for hundreds of years. The Franco-Manitoban cultural groups have been in the province of Manitoba for hundreds of years. The aboriginal cultural groups have been in the province of Manitoba for tens of thousands of years. There are ethnocultural groups that have been in the province of Manitoba for 100 years, 25 years.

There are ethnocultural groups that are just starting in the province of Manitoba. We have a small but very active and alive cultural group from the new country of Eritrea. This is a very new community group and cultural group that needs to fit itself into the multicultural community and the larger community as a whole.

So these tensions are tensions that are challenging for us but also provide an enormous amount of creativity. We need, Mr. Acting Speaker, to learn to live with that tension. I know we have talked a lot about creative tension and challenges and opportunities, but the reality is, as long as we agree that we are a country that is multicultural in scope, we are going to have to learn to live with those differences and use those differences and build on those differences. That is where an organization such as the Manitoba Intercultural Council is so important.

We have seen in many instances in our country and in our province the fact that we sometimes are

successful in this creative tension and often we are not.

* (1220)

With those brief comments on the sort of general problems and challenges that are facing us today, and faced us all the way through, and faced us certainly in 1981, 1982 and 1983, we are now coming to the point of the implementation of the introduction and passage of Bill 50, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act, which was presented and introduced for second reading on April 21, 1983.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is again very interesting that in a year and half from the election—actually less than a year and a half from the election—of 1981, November 17, 1981, to the introduction of Bill 50—this is a very short period of time to do such an enormous amount of work.

I would like now to briefly go through what the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation at the time, the Honourable Eugene Kostyra, stated in his opening remarks about Bill 50, The MIC Act, and the process that was undertaken by the government of the day leading up to that introduction of that legislation, that landmark piece of legislation.

Again, Mr. Acting Speaker, later in my comments, I will be comparing that process with the process that has gone on, or not gone on, preceding the introduction of Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act.

I would like to read from Mr. Kostyra's comments as he outlines the principles and role of the Manitoba Intercultural Council: The purpose of The Intercultural Council Act is to create an arm's-length agency to make recommendations and to provide information and advice to the Manitoba government on all ethnocultural matters relating to the province, not just narrowly defined ethnocultural matters, but all ethnocultural matters relating to the province, including education, human rights, immigrant settlement, media communication and cultural heritage.

The council membership will include Manitobans from ethnocultural groups throughout the province.

Now, this introductory paragraph goes back to the principles of the Manitoba Mosaic Congress of October 1970 which says that policies cannot be implemented without prior consultation with the people affected, with the communities. This is reflected in the make-up of the Intercultural Council and its terms of reference, that it shall advise and

provide information to the government so that the government is not implementing policies, is not putting forward or taking away programs based on their ideas, but that the government will reflect the input from the intercultural community.

Bill 50 was a result of a year's worth of consultation. Mr. Acting Speaker, the word "consultation" has been demeaned by this current government. This current government has talked about its constant communication and consultation. We could go through a number of examples where this government in effect has not consulted, but focusing more narrowly on the consultation process that was undertaken by the Pawley government in the year and a half between their election and the introduction of this bill, this was true public consultation. The government of the day should pay attention to this, because this is the kind of consultative process that should be undertaken by this government, and it virtually has never been the case.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the MIC bill is a result of the report of the interim liaison committee on multiculturalism appointed in May of 1982. So less than six months after the election of the Pawley government, there was in place an interim liaison committee on multiculturalism. After nine months of consultation, extensive study of the practices in other provinces and community consultation—I mean, this government does not even know what other governments are doing in multiculturalism or any other area. They do not consult with their colleagues in other provinces. They do not have any idea what is going on in the rest of the country.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

In 1982 the Pawley government consulted not only extensively throughout the province, but with other jurisdictions. Do you know why they did that, Mr. Speaker? Because they knew that they did not have all the answers. They knew that they had the principles that had framed the Schreyer government policies on multiculturalism as enshrined in the Manitoba Mosaic Conference of 1970. They knew that the four years of the Sterling Lyon government had decimated those principles and those

programs. They knew that they wanted to, they were committed on principle to re-establishing multiculturalism in this province, and they knew that they needed to consult, and meaningfully consult.

So they went to other provinces, and they went throughout this province. They did not consult through focus groups. As a matter of fact, they had 37 written and 55 oral presentations from rural and urban Manitoba that framed the recommendations that led to the creation of the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

Later in my comments, I will be comparing the consultative process that led to The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act with the lack of consultative process that has led to Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act. I think it is important that we juxtapose those two processes. The two major objectives and functions of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, I will be dealing with as time permits.

Mr. Speaker, I think at this point it is not inappropriate to sort of recapitulate my comments to date. What I have attempted to do is to put in context the Canadian and Manitoba historical perspective and background that was in place when The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act was first introduced in April of 1983, and not only to put it into context, but to show objectively the difference in philosophy, principle and implementation between the New Democrat governments of Mr. Schreyer and Mr. Pawley, and the Tory governments, first, of Sterling Lyon and, in my later comments, the government of Mr. Filmon. So I have set the stage and look forward to continuation of this process and this discussion. I look forward to expanding on this process.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 12:30, when this matter is again before the House, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) and also, as previously agreed, in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 7, 1993

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