



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold. Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 17, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Mark Reed, Joe Segal, Kevin Dearing and others requesting that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care, that this annual income increases as prices increase, and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their family.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 77—The Natural Products Marketing Amendment Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), that leave be given to introduce Bill 77, The Natural Products Marketing Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la commercialisation des produits naturels), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the

Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today members of the Canada-Ukraine Legislator Co-operation Project. The leader of the delegation, Mr. Yulij Ioffe, Mr. Yanko, Mr. Volodymyr Biliayev, Ms. Matveyeva, Ms. Sokolovska, Mr. Pikuliak and Mr. Hashenko.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

I would like to also draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's loge where we have with us today Mr. Ken Dillen, the member for Thompson from 1973 to 1977.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Regional Health Boards Elected Representatives

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Acting Premier (Mr. Downey). The public presentations over the last couple of evenings in committee were universal in their condemnation of the undemocratic and autocratic nature of this government in establishing regional boards. They are very critical of the fact that the government wants to proceed with patronage boards rather than elected boards and recommend very strongly that we proceed to have boards elected in the regions across Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, in fact, the government's own task force advisory committee report on page 16 makes a mandatory recommendation that 15 members of boards be established, that three of them be appointed by the government and 12 members be elected by the regions to reflect the diversity of the population within that region.

I would like to ask the Acting Premier, why have you rejected your own advisory committee report and why do you further reject the advice of the public to proceed with elected bodies rather than patronage bodies?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the Constitution of Canada places in the hands of elected people, members of the Legislative Assembly of the Legislatures across Canada, the responsibility for the administration of health services in those provincial jurisdictions. That is where the accountability is, and by virtue of regional health authority legislation, governments in various provinces have been delegating that authority to regional health authorities.

The honourable member asked this question I think yesterday, did not answer my question about whether he felt the regional health authorities ought to have the power to tax the people as well, which is something that goes with the concept of elected boards.

So I would like to know if the Leader of the Opposition is proposing, as New Democrats are wont to do—any kind of way they can gouge the people, they would like to do that—are they asking that regional health authorities be given that opportunity as well?

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, we reject the concept of taxation for regional boards and we reject the user fees that are contained within the government's own piece of legislation. But we do embrace page 8 of the minister's advisory committee report, which is consistent with the public recommendations, where it states that the regional health authority will be accountable to its residents—this is the elected body, by the way—for equality of service delivery, and Manitoba Health providing the provincial and professional standards and be responsible for financial management.

The advisory committee of the minister dealt with the issue of financial management. We know that the government will establish the budgets. We just believe those budgets should be implemented by elected bodies rather than patronage bodies. Why is this minister choosing patronage over democracy?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I answered that question already. The honourable member wants to pick and choose recommendations from the Northern and Rural Health Advisory Council. Those he likes, he can press for, those he does not like, he can be silent about. That is, I guess, the nature of being in opposition, that you can try to be all things to all people.

When you are charged with the responsibility of providing leadership and providing health services for the people of Manitoba, we need to take a somewhat more responsible approach to our function as a government than the honourable Leader of the Opposition does in his role where one day he takes one position—and he is one of these people who has a position for everyone and they are not always the same. This is very common with honourable members, and in addition to that, they cannot even agree amongst themselves what the position ought to be.

Mr. Doer: I would remind the minister that it was he who said on June 5, 1995, in Hansard, not just rhetoric but in Hansard, that he was not opposed to boards being elected. This was June 5, 1995.

I would like to ask the Acting Premier, in light of the fact that people of all political stripes right across this province want to be able to elect their regional boards and operate within the parameters of the provincial budget as recommended by their own experts, will this government allow rural members to have hearings and public consultations outside of Winnipeg? Will they open up the democratic process and let people in rural and northern Manitoba vote for their regional representation or are they going to stick with this autocratic Premier and have only patronage recommendations and patronage boards here in the province of Manitoba? Shame on you.

* (1340)

Mr. McCrae: The newfound interest of the Leader of the Opposition in health care is refreshing, but it does not add up very well because it is clear that what he is talking about in terms of having public hearings and meetings all around Manitoba is something that has been going on for some three, four, five years. The honourable Leader of the Opposition is just waking up right now to a piece of legislation—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health, to quickly complete his response.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable Leader of the Opposition is just now waking up to the fact that we have important

legislation before this Legislature to put into effect matters that have been talked about by thousands and thousands of Manitobans over the last few years, Madam Speaker. Something went off in his head and he is awake today, but it is really nice to see that. It is never too late to get in on the debate, and we welcome the honourable Leader of the Opposition to the debate.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Health could read his own advisory committee report and stop taking cheap shots and deal with the substance of the reports.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Leader of the official opposition, I would remind all honourable members to pick and choose their words carefully.

Dauphin Regional Health Centre Funding Reduction

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

As a result of this minister's \$824,000 cut to the Dauphin Regional Health Centre, our hospital board is now considering the closure of the operating room one day a week or for longer periods during the year. Further to that, they may also consider staff reductions.

Why is this minister continuing to cut funding to the Dauphin Regional Health Centre when in only two months' time the regional board is to have its own plan in place?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I am moved to observe that it might have been well for the honourable member to raise this matter with the Prime Minister when he was in Dauphin, I understand yesterday, or I assume Marlene Cowling, the member of Parliament for that area, is available once in a while to hear the honourable member's entreaties about reductions in funding that are taking place from Ottawa.

As I hear honourable members in this House raise questions like this, I think that, well, maybe they live in some world other than in Canada where the reality is that

the federal government, the federal partner in medicare, is removing from the social services envelope for Manitoba some \$200 million. This is a reality. The honourable member comes to this place and pretends it does not exist. It would be nice if I could wish it away like the honourable member does, but I cannot as a Minister of Health. Like other ministers across this country, we have to realign our health services to make sure that they will be there for future generations.

* (1345)

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Dauphin, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Struthers: Madam Speaker, Jean Chretien is not the Minister of Health; Jim McCrae is.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Dauphin that no postamble is required prior to a supplementary question. The honourable member for Dauphin, to pose his question now.

Mr. Struthers: Is it this minister's plan to so disgust the current hospital board members and their volunteers that they throw up their hands and make way for this politically appointed regional board?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member is right, that the Prime Minister is not the Health minister for the province of Manitoba, nor for any other province. It might be interesting if he put himself in the shoes of a Health minister for a day or two as he tries to carry out his function as the Prime Minister of this country. That is one of the greatest frustrations we have, Madam Speaker, is that the federal government, in its requirement to reduce its budgetary spending, is choosing to do so in the area of transfers to provinces for services to people.

It would be very nice if the federal government understood what it is like actually to try to run a health system. I would invite the honourable member to join me in inviting the Prime Minister of this country perhaps to put himself in the shoes of a provincial Minister of Health for a day or two to get a little flavour for what it is like to try to run a quality health system with a partner who seems to be running away all the time instead of joining us and helping us resolve the problems.

Manitobans, Madam Speaker, do not throw up their hands. Manitobans embrace challenges because they care about the health of future generations.

Mr. Struthers: Does this minister realize, while he whines about the Prime Minister, that his cuts at the Dauphin Regional Health Centre have caused three doctors to leave our area in the last short while?

Mr. McCrae: I remind the honourable member that in 1995-96, the total spending in health in the province of Manitoba rose by \$60 million over the previous fiscal year. The honourable member and his colleagues in this House talk every day about cuts, but the last time I checked, \$60 million more is up, not a cut but up. It is in that kind of a framework that we have been working actual over actual, \$60 million additional, so the honourable member—it is certainly appropriate to raise issues related to the Dauphin Regional Health Centre in the same way that it is appropriate for the member for Brandon East to raise issues related to Brandon General Hospital, but I remind the honourable member for Dauphin about their experience with the New Democrats. He might sit with the honourable member for Brandon East and find out what it must have felt like to be the local member in Brandon when his government ordered the closure of 40 beds in 1987 of the Brandon General Hospital.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Conflict of Interest

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): This morning in committee we had a document tabled from the MTS financial advisory group, the document on which the decision to sell MTS was based, which appropriately enough—their address was 161 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario. We also learned that the minister—MTS never did a single internal study on the privatization part of the decision.

Madam Speaker, what is even worse is the minister confirmed that RBC Dominion securities, CIBC Wood Gundy securities, and Richardson Greenshields, who prepared this report, will also be selling the shares of MTS when it is privatized. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for MTS, he has now had some time to reflect on that, whether he will perhaps recognize that

it is a conflict of interest for the three investment bankers based on Bay Street who recommended the sale of MTS to now be profiting from its sale.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): As we told the member in committee this morning, certainly three firms that he has named were commissioned to do an analysis of MTS in terms of financial challenges it faces and make recommendations to how we would recapitalize that corporation in the future—they came back with recommendations which the government has acted upon and introduced the legislation in front of this House.

Madam Speaker, these are professional people. The member tries to allude to some conflict of interest. I do not believe one exists, and we have made it well known that we want the availability of people to purchase the shares, very widely made available in Manitoba through all the financial institutions in Manitoba.

This is a delicate matter. It requires the very best of professionals, and I believe that the people responsible are very capable, intelligent and responsible people to do it.

* (1350)

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I will ask the question again: Will the minister not recognize that something that would be totally illegal, for example, for members of the Legislature to do, be considered a conflict of interest, that if that member was involved in such a conflict he would lose his seat? Should the same standard not apply to these three investment bankers, the three bankers that made the recommendations to sell MTS and now would be profiting directly from its sale?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, they were commissioned to make recommendations; the government made the decision. They are now engaged in the process of carrying out the privatization, which involves many professionals, many professionals in the legal process, in the accounting process that must be gone through as the legislation moves through here to ultimately make an application to the Securities Commission in Manitoba.

Advertising Campaign Expenditures

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, on a new question: If the minister does not recognize that there are a lot of questions that have to be asked about the ethics of what is happening in the sale, I would like to ask the minister, who in committee this morning in response to questions involving the \$400,000 advertising campaign and this recent document that is being sent throughout rural Manitoba which is just incensing many people in terms of waste of public resources—I wonder if the minister could explain his comments this morning when he referenced in committee, first of all, he said that this was because of what I have said and what our members have said throughout the province that they are spending \$400,000, and will he also explain his comments that it was stimulating the advertising industry in Manitoba.

On what basis does he justify spending \$400,000 of the people's money on this kind of political propaganda?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Madam Speaker, I think the member does understand that MTS's revenue is under considerable competition out there, a lot of challenges, a lot of other service providers wanting to take away the business.

MTS became aware that there were certain concerns out there about rates, service, future ownership, and Madam Speaker—

An Honourable Member: Why are you selling it then?

Mr. Findlay: Why are we selling it? Because that member when he was minister lost millions and millions of dollars of Manitoba telephone users' rates. We made a profit. He lost money and in the period '86-87, they had five Crowns that lost \$317 million. He has no accountability or credibility in dealing with the public. They lost \$48 million to Manitoba Telephone System. That is a challenge to the corporation, and they must inform the public that the concerns that are being raised out there are not real and that the corporation will be there in the future strong, and the rates will be controlled by the regulator. Services will be as they are today and in fact improved, and, Madam Speaker, MTS has a right to protect their rate base.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I will ask the question again. I want to ask the minister to explain how he considers it appropriate for this type of material to be sent out under the MTS letterhead when in fact it is clearly an attempt by this government to deal with the fact that they broke their word in the election. They are selling off MTS and they are using our money, the people of Manitoba's money, \$400,000, to run a political propaganda campaign using the MTS corporation, our corporation, in the process.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, MTS has chosen to communicate with its rate base with this information. That member, of course, wants to challenge and say they should not do it. I take the position that, if they want to communicate with their customers, they can and they should. He is worried about \$400,000; he does not ever want to talk about the \$48 million that his government lost. Somehow I think the two numbers are far, far apart. They have a right to communicate with Manitobans, their ratepayers, the telephone users.

* (1355)

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, and I did not talk about the \$60 million they blew on the Winnipeg Jets either.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member was recognized for a supplementary question.

Mr. Ashton: My final supplementary and, again, to the Minister responsible for MTS: If he does not recognize this is unethical and it is wrong to use MTS in a political campaign, will he at least do the right thing and make sure that the bill for this particular document is not absorbed by MTS or the government of Manitoba, the people of Manitoba, but by the people who are really running the show in this whole issue, the PC Party of Manitoba? Will he not do the right thing and, if you are going to run a political advertising campaign, pay for it yourself and not abuse the people of Manitoba in the process?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, this is factual information; this is not political propaganda. It is about the telephone system meeting the challenges in the

marketplace where competition is high, technological change is rapid and expensive. It is a process that they must do to communicate with their customers.

Year for the Eradication of Poverty Manitoba Recognition

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Acting Premier.

The Liberal Party has always stood up to defend the rights of children. However, this is not a question of politics but of conscience. Today is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and, according to Winnipeg Harvest, Manitoba has the highest child poverty rate in Canada, 24.1 percent of all children live in poverty. That represents 64,000 people.

Why has this government not chosen to commemorate this day?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for that question. It is indeed a very serious question and a question that I believe he should look internally to his own party to help answer that question.

The federal government chose a couple of years ago to commemorate International Year of the Family and spent a lot of time and energy and resource and effort to co-ordinate that kind of activity and all provinces came on board, Madam Speaker. This year, the federal government did not choose to organize or co-ordinate anything around the Year for the Eradication of Poverty because I am sure all provinces would have co-operated with the federal government in that venture.

Child Poverty Rate Reduction Strategy

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): It is fine to blame somebody else, but this is Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Why has this government done very little since the 1995 election to eliminate child poverty in Manitoba?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, again, our government does take the issue of child poverty very seriously. One of the

reasons we have embarked upon welfare reform and support for single parents, many of whom are on welfare and living in poverty, is to be able to train and to enter the workforce, recognizing and realizing that the best form of social security is a job and a way out of poverty.

Might I indicate to you that this is not only an issue in Manitoba? It is an issue that goes right across Canada and governments of all political stripes right across the country are working together and taking a leadership role in trying to develop an integrated child benefit. Right across the country ministers of social services and ministers of Finance, as I said, of all political stripes right across the country, are working very aggressively right now to see whether we can come up with an answer to some of the issues around child poverty.

* (1400)

Mr. Gaudry: Madam Speaker, to the same minister: What will this government do to eliminate this problem so we do not have this number of children living in poverty next year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, again I would indicate that it is not an issue that Manitoba alone is attempting to deal with, and any level of child poverty is an unacceptable level. We, in many areas within our government, are attempting to address the issue of child poverty.

I have said many times before that it takes a co-ordinated approach and we need to work together on this issue. I would not want to lay blame on anyone specifically around the issues of child poverty, but I would want to say that we as a community, we as a society, as a country and as a province need to work together on programs that will help to ensure that children do not go to bed hungry at night and that children are well nourished, well fed and loved, and we will continue along our efforts to ensure that there are programs in place that will help to do exactly that.

Child Poverty Rate Reduction Strategy

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, 1996 is the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. In spite of that, this government has done

absolutely nothing to eliminate poverty and, in fact, has made it worse by forcing the City of Winnipeg to reduce the allowances for children. In Manitoba, 71 percent of single parents live in poverty, which is 11 percent higher than the national average.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services what she plans to do to eradicate poverty, rather than make it worse, and does she understand the links between the cuts to essential services in health and the worsening problem of poverty? Why are they going to start charging user fees in health that is going to be a hardship for the poor who are not going to be covered by these essential services anymore and that is going to increase the problem of poverty in Manitoba?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I do thank my honourable friend for that question because it does allow me, again, the opportunity to indicate that many of the things that we are undertaking in the area of welfare reform will in fact reduce the dependency and break the poverty cycle and help people get into meaningful jobs that will in fact lead them out of poverty. I wish my honourable friends in the opposition would come on board and support the legislation that is before the House right now that will indeed provide and help to eliminate poverty. Organizations like the Mennonite Central Committee are working with us through Opportunities for Employment program that is helping to train people to enter the workforce. We have our Taking Charge! initiative which has—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Family Services, to complete her response.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We have our Taking Charge! initiative which has in fact worked with and will continue to work with single parents to train them to enter the workforce, to help provide the child care support that needs to be available for women to enter the workforce. There are many things that are ongoing, and we will continue to focus our efforts and our energies on eradicating poverty.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the minister why she is making the problem of poverty worse in Manitoba, and point out that the executive director of Opportunities for Employment spoke against her welfare reform in Bill

36 at the committee recently, and ask her if she will listen to the advice that she is getting from her own staff including the Environmental Scan for Winnipeg Child and Family Services, dated August 28, 1996, in which the risk factors for children coming into care are enumerated, and Manitoba has the highest number of children in care per capita in Canada. One of the risk factors identified in this report, the statistics done by one of her own staff, says that being poor is a risk factor for being in care in a Child and Family Services agency.

Will you listen to the recommendations of your own reports and your own staff?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Indeed the issue of single parents living in poverty—adolescent pregnancies are high in Manitoba. We acknowledge that, and we recognize that as an issue that needs to be addressed. We are taking steps to address it. I am sure my honourable friend will want to support some of the initiatives that will be announced in the near future in order to try to co-ordinate and provide supports for—well, I guess what we would like to see is the number of teen pregnancies decrease in the province of Manitoba, and we will be working very aggressively to help facilitate that.

There are many meetings that are ongoing right now throughout our community to see how we can address that issue as a total community. But, Madam Speaker, we do have right now a review of our Child and Family Services Act. I would hope that members of the opposition might make presentation to that panel and provide some constructive solutions to some of the issues we are dealing with.

* (1410)

Headingley Correctional Institution Space Availability

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question is to the Minister of Justice. The superintendent of—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns was recognized to pose a question.

Mr. Mackintosh: The superintendent of Headingley jail, who in a memo expresses no concerns about

available beds for weekend inmates, has listed several jail improvements that the minister has still failed to deal with not just six months after the riot but over several years.

My question to the minister is, can the minister understand that, given the most basic, fundamental requirement that the authority of the courts and the law be underpinned, not undermined, there is no excuse for her failure to find space for inmates half a year later?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We have heard eight scandalous, wrongful allegations from the member for St. Johns over the past approximately seven days, and he continues to add to them day after day. The member just continues to want to run—the member wants to run our correctional system from his seat in the Legislature as a member of the opposition. The member across the way totally fails to understand that Corrections needs to be administered, needs to operationally work with professional correctional officers, with a superintendent of Corrections who will make the decisions about when we are ready to receive inmates. We also have to work with the workplace health and safety committees, but it is not the first time that the member for St. Johns has put himself above and beyond the professionals in this province.

Corrections System Intermittent Sentences

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, would the minister take some leadership and then at least listen to the judges of this province who are nonpartisan and more authoritative than her, and realize what a terrible thing she has done, not just in failing to find space but not telling judges that she is not respecting their orders, a deed incompatible with her office.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, let the member not leave on the record an incorrect statement. Communication has gone to the judiciary, communication has gone to Prosecutions, the formal communication, and that is not new. But, as the Minister of Health said, they have woken up today; the other side is finally awake.

Now they understand that that communication has, in fact, occurred, that formal communication has occurred. The public statements—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice, to complete her response.

Mrs. Vodrey: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The public statements, however, made, No.1, in the media release on April 26, the public statement in the Legislature. May 28, which in fact did not raise any concerns by members opposite and argued in open court on September 18 by a Crown attorney in my name, is in fact some public notice. So I have said from the beginning there should have been formal communication. There has now been.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister, instead of flailing around and trying to blame everyone but herself—does the minister not comprehend that Parliament did its job, the victims did their jobs, the police, the prosecutors, the judges did their jobs but then along comes the Minister of Justice and pulled the rug out from under the whole system, something entirely contrary to the very reason for her office?

Mrs. Vodrey: Did the member for St. Johns do his job in a responsible way by raising eight wrongful, scandalous and untrue allegations in this House? If that is how he sees his job, I for one am particularly discouraged with his work in this House.

Civil Service Senior Management—Women

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, while I am on my feet, I took a question as notice—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The minister is attempting to respond to a question taken as notice.

Mrs. Vodrey: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I took a question as notice yesterday for the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) about women in the civil

service. I would like to provide the House today with information that since our government has taken office in 1988, numbers of women in senior officer and equivalent classifications have increased by more than 28 percent. Women now comprise 23.8 percent of all executive positions.

I would also like to tell the members opposite that our record within the civil service shows that women are truly welcome at all levels of the civil service. For example, women received 54.35 percent of all promotions within the civil service and the women make up 45 percent of applicants for a position. They comprise 64 percent of all new appointments.

Madam Speaker, the member also asked what efforts have been made to assist women as they achieve these new positions. Well, government has been very proactive in facilitating and supporting flexible work arrangements, flexible hours and job sharing to enhance women's opportunities to participate in all career streams, and in my own Department of Justice, I have Crown attorneys participating in job-sharing arrangements.

Home Depot Omand's Creek—Environmental Impact

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): The construction by Home Depot along the banks of Omand's Creek is scheduled to start today or this week. The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), his department has sent a letter to the Shindico representatives for Home Depot indicating five areas of concern, recommendations to reduce the detrimental environmental impacts of that development. Will the minister table the Environment's report on the Home Depot development and will he ensure—or what measures will he take to ensure that these are going to be followed?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I think our record in making sure that that particular creek has been taken care of over the years stands for itself and I can assure the member that we will examine any issues that are raised, and there will probably be ample opportunity for her to comment.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable Leader of the official opposition will be recognized when I am certain I can hear what he is about to say.

The honourable Leader of the official opposition, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, you have been standing for the last number of—at least 30 seconds—and the Minister of Education has continued to defy your order in this Chamber. I would ask you to call her to order, please.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker. I do acknowledge that I did not see you standing. I do apologize for not seeing you standing. In my distress over their refusal to acknowledge the good that came with the dramatic increase in women in the civil service, I did not see you standing. I do apologize.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable Minister of Education.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Emerson, on a new point of order.

* (1420)

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I seriously raise this as a point of order. The honourable Minister of Education stood and apologized to the Speaker for not recognizing the Speaker standing, and I would suggest that the honourable member opposite extend the same courtesy to

the Speaker and offer her apologies and apologize to this House.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wellington, on the same point of order.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, I, too, did not see that you were standing, and I, too, apologize for not recognizing that.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Wellington.

* * *

Madam Speaker: During debate of Bill 62 on October 7, 1996, the deputy government House leader (Mr. Praznik) raised a point of order which the Deputy Speaker took under advisement. In raising the point of order, the deputy government House leader stated that the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) was imputing a wrongdoing and stated that it was improper to "raise an incident that is not true and imply that somehow the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) was involved in a land deal related to Alcan."

Having reviewed Hansard, I am ruling that this was a dispute over facts and that the deputy government House leader did not have a point of order.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Seven Oaks Wellness Institute

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, the headline summed it up right this morning—sound body, sound mind. A \$12-million wellness centre was opened today at Seven Oaks General Hospital. This centre will attempt to have participants achieve the optimum state of health and well-being. Wellness has five basic aspects: physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual. The physical includes the obvious exercise equipment but also includes a therapy pool with direct wheelchair access. It also involves dark tiles at the sides of hallways so that the visually impaired know they are nearing a wall. Emotional means counselling services as well as a lounge space for relaxation and a number of windows to ensure an open environment. Social means the creation of a cafe

as well as the offering of programs for individuals who share similar interests. Intellectual means the offering of reading materials, videos, CDs, and Internet access. Spiritual means making use of the meditation courtyard or at some other equally quiet place.

We are advocating the creation of balance and harmony in people's lives when we reference these basic aspects of health. By doing this, people take and accept responsibility for their own well-being, which is the basis for preventative health. Our government has promoted prevention as the central part of health care and opening this wellness centre is a welcome addition to the city of Winnipeg in building healthy communities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Regional Health Boards

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, last evening the Standing Committee on Law Amendments heard the second of many presentations as part of the public hearing process on Bill 49. In opposition to Bill 49, we have raised several concerns regarding the autocratic, undemocratic and dictatorial nature of the proposed legislation from the jurisdiction and discretion of the Health minister to the political appointments to the boards of the RHAs.

Many of our concerns were echoed quite forcibly by the presenters last evening and Tuesday evening. We have particular and specific concerns with the authority of the Winnipeg-based Health minister and ministry to determine the delivery of health care services in rural Manitoba. The proposed legislation represents a radical change in the delivery of health care services in rural Manitoba.

Several rural presenters made it clear that the absence of hearings outside Winnipeg demonstrated this government's contempt for the contributions of rural Manitobans, as well as a disregard and disrespect for the experience and knowledge these Manitobans offer about health care in their regions.

The Union of Manitoba Municipalities, which represents 166 municipalities across Manitoba, including all 106 rural, 14 local, 23 villages, 20 towns and three cities, urged the government to elect RH boards and not appoint them. John Nicol, representing UMM, said that

municipal officials are representatives of their communities who are interested in ensuring that quality health care services are accessible to the residents.

Bill 49 will have a direct and significant impact on rural municipalities, and therefore RHA boards should be elected and this government should hold public hearings for rural Manitobans so they can have their input. Thank you.

Sister Jacqueline Saint-Yves

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madame la Présidente, il me fait plaisir d'ajouter quelques mots cet après-midi. C'est pour dire que j'ai assisté hier soir à une célébration pour reconnaître et remercier une grande dame de la communauté de Saint-Boniface, Soeur Jacqueline Saint-Yves, qui quitte le Manitoba après avoir oeuvré 32 ans dans la communauté.

Elle a été supérieure générale de la communauté des Soeurs Grises de Montréal et ensuite elle a été vice-présidente de la mission à l'Hôpital général de Saint-Boniface depuis plusieurs années. Elle était souvent aussi à plusieurs autres organismes. Elle a été la vice-présidente du conseil d'administration du Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. J'ai eu le plaisir de siéger avec elle au conseil d'administration du Centre Taché et du Foyer Valade pour plusieurs années lorsqu'elle était supérieure générale des Soeurs Grises.

Elle sera manqué certainement à Saint-Boniface et dans la communauté. Nous sommes peinés de la voir partir mais nous lui souhaitons un bon séjour à Montréal. Nous espérons qu'elle sera de retour au Manitoba afin d'être parmi les amis qu'elle a eu pendant 32 ans. Alors je demande à mes collègues de la Législature de lui souhaiter bon voyage et bonne chance dans la ville de Montréal. Merci, Madame la Présidente.

[Translation]

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to add a few words this afternoon to say that I was present yesterday evening at a celebration to recognize and thank a great lady of the community of St. Boniface, Sister Jacqueline Saint-Yves, who is leaving Manitoba after having worked for 32 years in the community.

She was the superior general of the Order of Grey Nuns of Montreal, after which she was the vice-president of the Mission at St. Boniface General Hospital for several years. She also often worked with several other organizations. She was the vice-chair of the board of directors of the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. I had the pleasure of sitting with her on the board of directors of Tache Centre and the Foyer Valade for several years when she was the superior general of the Grey Nuns.

She will certainly be missed in St. Boniface and in the community. We are sorry to see her leave, but we wish her happiness in Montreal. We hope that she will return to Manitoba to be with the friends that she has known for 32 years. So I ask my colleagues of the Legislature to wish her bon voyage and good luck in the city of Montreal. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Workers Compensation Board

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, recently the Workers Compensation Board announced it has retired its accumulated deficit of \$232 million several years ahead of schedule. As a result, the cost of doing business in Manitoba will be reduced as the Workers Compensation Board reduces assessment premiums for some 20,000 Manitoba employers. Beginning January 1, 1997, assessment rates will be reduced by 5 percent in each of the next three years. The combined return to employers is expected to total some \$40 million. Already employers have expressed the view that this will contribute to their competitiveness and their ability to employ even more Manitobans.

Over the next three years the Workers Compensation Board will work to ensure that a deficit remains a thing of the past by adding \$35 million to the reserve funds. This move is in keeping with the WCB's commitment to stable rates for Manitoba employers. Adequate reserve funding is a prudent way to avoid future rate increases. In keeping with the WCB's continuing commitment to improve service, they will allocate \$1.8 million per year over the next three years to a series of new service enhancements. This includes expanded services to employers, enhanced health care services, a new claims early intervention unit and an expansion to their special investigations unit.

These initiatives will better position our Workers Compensation Board to meet the present and future needs of injured workers and employers alike.

In closing, I would like to commend and congratulate the board of directors and the staff at WCB on their important accomplishments. Manitoba has gained a reputation for having one of the finest Workers Compensation Boards in Canada. They are providing a valuable service to employers and workers at rates that rival any in the country. Thank you.

* (1430)

Year for the Eradication of Poverty

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, today we commemorate the United Nations International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. This year is also the beginning of the decade for the elimination of poverty.

What is the situation in Manitoba and what is this government doing about it? In 1994 approximately 22 percent of all children live in poverty in Manitoba, but 71 percent of children living in lone-parent families live in poverty. What has this provincial government done to address this problem? On April 1, 1996, due to their policy of standardization of welfare rates, the City of Winnipeg was forced to reduce its rates for food and clothing allowances for children by up to 26 percent. On May 1, the Province of Manitoba reduced benefits for singles in the category of food, clothing, personal needs and household needs by 22 percent and for families, by 5 percent. When this was done by the Province of Manitoba, the federal government followed their lead and did the same thing on every reserve in Manitoba.

Why is this government continuing to attack the poor? Do they understand the link between poverty and Child and Family Services apprehensions? If not, then they should read their own report entitled Environmental Scan of Winnipeg Child and Family Services, dated August 28, 1996, which identifies three risk factors to be the main drivers of the number of children at risk of being apprehended by Child and Family Services, which are aboriginal populations, lone-parent families and children living in poverty. Also, they should understand that there is a link between poverty and child abuse. Manitoba has

a shocking number of child deaths and abuse in parental homes and in foster care.

The vast majority of the poor want to work, but labour force statistics show that job creation is down in August to September, 1996. The City of Winnipeg hired more staff and reduced the social service caseload by several thousand in recent months. I hope that the Province of Manitoba will support the city's infrastructure proposal.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Committee Changes

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas, with committee changes.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans); Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers); Wellington (Ms. Barrett) for Broadway (Mr. Santos), for Friday, October 18, 1996, for 10 a.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak); Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen); St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), for Monday, October 21, 1996, for 10 a.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh); St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway); Osborne (Ms. McGifford) for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), for Monday, October 21, 1996, at 7 p.m.

Motions agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Gimli, with committee changes.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr.

McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs for Thursday, October 17 at 7 p.m. be amended as follows: The member for LaVerendrye (Mr. Sveinson) for the member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer); the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed); the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey); and the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan).

I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development for Friday, 10 a.m., October 18, be amended as follows: The member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) for the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger); the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer); and the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the member for Riel (Mr. Newman).

I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Monday, October 21 at 10 a.m. be amended as follows: The member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck); the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae); the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik); and the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

Motions agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to announce that Bill 25 is being referred to the Law Amendments committee for 10 a.m. on Monday, October 21.

I would also like to ask if you would canvass the House to see if there is a willingness to waive private members' hour today.

Madam Speaker: First, an announcement regarding Standing Committee of Law Amendments for Monday, October 21, 10 a.m., to consider Bill 25.

Is there leave to waive private members' hour?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No, leave has been denied.

Mr. Praznik: I would ask that you would please call for report stage Bills 14, 15 and 39, and then following that, if you could please call for continuation of debate. In addition to these bills, if you could also call for report stage all of the bills that are at that stage now in their order, pardon me, not just Bills 14, 15 and 39 but all of the bills in their order, please, and following that if you could please call for continuation of debate on second reading Bills 73, 18, 67 and 72.

REPORT STAGE

Bill 14—The Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I would move, on behalf of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that Bill 14, The Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société commerciale du Manitoba, reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* (1440)

Bill 15—The Tourism and Recreation Amendment Act

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Bill 15, The Tourism and Recreation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le tourisme et les loisirs, reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 27—The Museum of Man and Nature
Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act**

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 27, The Museum of Man and Nature Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Musée de l'Homme et de la Nature et apportant des modifications corrélatives), reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 39—The Pari-Mutuel Levy and
Consequential Amendments Act**

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that Bill 39, The Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les prélèvements sur les mises de pari mutuel et apportant des modifications corrélatives, reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I would simply want to confirm my seconding of this progressive act.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**Bill 71—The Manitoba Film and Sound Recording
Development Corporation Act**

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 71, The Manitoba Film and Sound Recording Development Corporation Act (Loi sur la Société manitobaine de développement de l'enregistrement cinématographique et sonore), reported

from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

**Bill 73—The Construction Industry Wages
Amendment Act**

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on Bill 73 (The Construction Industry Wages Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les salaires dans l'industrie de la construction), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
[agreed]

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to add my comments on Bill 73, The Construction Industry Wages Amendment Act. This has been a bill that I take it has been a long time in the making in that it was a number of years ago that the previous Minister of Labour, who is now Minister responsible for Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik), was the Minister of Labour and had gone to the Labour Management Review Committee in this province and had asked specific questions of that particular body in that they should come forward with recommendations on how to improve The Construction Industry Wages Act so that it would be fair to all of the stakeholders, that it would be fair to those that were employed in the construction industries of this province and that it would be fair to those that were owners of business operations in Manitoba that had their businesses in the construction sector.

Now, with this particular bill, we find that it has mixed parts in it. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) here quite often likes to say that he is introducing his labour legislation in this province because he senses that there is, as he terms it, a need to democratize issues that are dealing with workplaces in Manitoba. I want to tell you, Madam Speaker, in looking at this legislation, this is one of the Minister of Labour's most regressive pieces of legislation that he has tabled in this Legislature and that

it does not reflect the fair balance that we would expect that there would be from a government, especially the Minister of Labour, who is supposed to be the representative of some semblance of balance and order in this province, to make sure that there is a level playing field, first for the construction companies to compete with each other but that the rules are applied uniformly throughout the province.

I will get to specifics on that concern in a few moments as I continue my remarks.

One of the things that I have noticed that Bill 73 has done very clearly, and all you need to do is take a look at the Construction Manitoba document dated June 1996, it lists eight items that the Winnipeg Construction Association has indicated are of prime concern and are main points that they wanted to see in this legislation. I want the record to show that Bill 73 incorporates all of those recommendations, seven of them, in the intent that this Winnipeg Construction Association wanted and that the eighth one was included in a modified form.

So, when you compare the wishes of the Winnipeg Construction Association with the document, the Bill 73, you can see that they were incorporated into that document. Well, Madam Speaker, the Winnipeg Construction Association is not representative of all of the stakeholders in Manitoba dealing with the construction industry in this province. That is why we have the Labour Management Review Committee that is comprised of equal numbers of labour and business people with a neutral chair, the honourable Wally Fox-Decent, who members of this Chamber I am sure know, who has acted time and again on behalf of the people of Manitoba in a fair, impartial and neutral way.

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

Mr. Fox-Decent was the chair of the committee that dealt with the letter that came from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), looking for recommendations on the amendments to The Construction Industry Wages Act. This particular committee, the Labour Management Review Committee, went out into the communities around Manitoba over a number of months and consulted with the stakeholders throughout Manitoba. They did not just confine their discussions and hold hearings inside the

Legislative Building like this government is doing with various pieces of legislation. They went out through Manitoba and consulted with the stakeholders in the construction industry in Manitoba. For all of those hours of hard work that this government wanted that committee to do and the committee performed diligently, this government chose to ignore by far the majority of recommendations that came from the Labour Management Review Committee, construction sector.

There were 54 recommendations that this committee made, and then of those 54, they were further refined and the number was reduced slightly. Those recommendations went to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and to the government, and yet the government chose to ignore, by far, the majority of the recommendations in this report. Instead, the Minister of Labour, through the Winnipeg Construction Association, chose to accept all eight of the recommendations of the Winnipeg Construction Association.

* (1450)

So you can see that the government is not playing on a level playing field here, does not want to have a level playing field. They do not want to have democracy in action in Manitoba, as we have seen with respect to their actions on Bill 32, one of the education bills; Bill 72, an education bill, where it has been very antidemocratic in nature. We saw it in Bill 49, where they appointed a commissioner to determine what unions should be representative of health care employees in this province.

We saw it on the Payment of Wages Fund, where the government eliminated that fund in this province that helped working people. Now this government is choosing, very clearly choosing to ignore the Labour Management Review commission's recommendations that were made after weeks, many weeks and perhaps months of hard work went into the development of this document and the 54 recommendations that are attached.

One has to think that while governments choose not to accept all of the recommendations of reports that come to them, there are some very, very important areas that could have—[interjection] Yes, well, perhaps. They listen to Bay Street reports that come to them, and it is clear there was a conflict of interest in that respect with the companies that are doing the MTS sale on behalf of the

government and then are going to profit by it at the same time. It is clear that this government does not understand conflict of interest.

You take a look at some of the recommendations that are in this report. The only recommendations that this Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and this government chose to accept from the Labour Management Review commission on The Construction Industry Wages Act were ones that agreed with the Winnipeg Construction Association. [interjection] Yes, this is the subcommittee report but there are 54, and, as I said a few moments ago, those were further refined down to a few other recommendations. The number was reduced from 54 down, there is no doubt. But at the same time these were the recommendations that that subcommittee made. They held the hearings throughout the province; they listened to the people of Manitoba. There are the stakeholders in this, and the recommendations that came back, the government chose not to accept them unless it agreed with the recommendations that were made by the WCA.

The recommendations that the LMRC made that were agreed to by the government was, one, to retain the act; the other one that they agreed to retain or to accept as a recommendation by the subcommittee was the removal of industrial maintenance from the act. They accepted the recommendation to retain the present definition of journeymen, and they accepted the recommendation of longer hours for work camps for employees, giving employees working in work camps the opportunity to work longer hours. The 47th recommendation that was in here was also a definition that the government chose to accept.

No other recommendations were accepted by this government. They did not choose to accept the ability for third parties to bring forward complaints for enforcement of the act, The Construction Industry Wages Act in Manitoba. They chose to ignore other segments of the act that would improve the level playing field between companies in this province that would have fines for companies that were found to be in violation of The Construction Industry Wages Act. Recommendation No. 8 of the subcommittee indicates that fines for companies breaking the law, the fines should be increased by two and a half times their present value for employers as individuals and for employers as a corporation, and the government chose to ignore those. Well, if you take a

look at the number of enforcement officers in Manitoba you can see that there is a problem. Take, for example, Thompson, where there is an officer that is supposed to go out and enforce The Construction Industry Wages Act in that community and surrounding communities. The officer does not even have a car to allow the officer to travel to the worksites to make sure that the work is being performed and that the employees and the company are operating in accordance with The Construction Industry Wages Act of Manitoba.

The government has removed the house-building sector from The Construction Industry Wages Act. What is that going to say for each and every one of us and all of the people in Manitoba who we represent? We are now going to have people who are working in the house-building sector who are no longer going to fall under The Construction Industry Wages Act. Where is the regulation that is going to ensure that the people who are building our homes that our families live in have the appropriate skills necessary to build safe homes for our families? I think what is going to happen here, it is going to be downward pressure on the wage rates for those who are employed in the house-building sector in Manitoba and that you are going to see those who are searching for jobs now work for whatever money companies are willing to pay them and that there will be downward pressure on the wages of the people who are employed in that sector.

An Honourable Member: That is not true, Daryl.

Mr. Reid: Well, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) may not be concerned about safe housing conditions for our families in this province, and that is unfortunate. I would hope that he and his government would accept that there needs to be some regulation and some training and some skill level for people who are building the homes for our families in this province, and by removal of that you are going to put pressure and a downward pressure on the skill level of the people who are employed in that sector and a downward pressure on their wages at the same time. That is going to be one of the repercussions of removing the house-building sector from The Construction Industry Wages Act.

The other sector that the government has removed is the building maintenance, but the government does not realize, or maybe they do realize and do not care that 50 percent of the work that the construction sector has in this

province is in the building maintenance sector, and what you are saying by removing that is that the work can be done for the lowest possible wage for anybody willing to work for minimum wage or perhaps even less in this province if no complaints are filed.

An Honourable Member: Daryl, you know that that is not true.

Mr. Reid: I have cases in my files downstairs, for the Minister of Agriculture's information, that relate to complaints that people have brought forward where companies, companies that his government let operate in Manitoba on pipelines in southern Manitoba, that brought labour in from Alberta to work on those because they are willing to work on pipelines cheaper than the people of Manitoba, supplanting the people or kicking out the people of Manitoba from having employment opportunities in those jobs. Is that what we want for the people of Manitoba? I do not think so. I do not think that is right. If we are going to have people in Manitoba and companies come in to perform work on behalf of the industries here or on behalf of the government, we have to take some steps to ensure that Manitobans are employed in those jobs. We had the same problem with the Louisiana-Pacific plant in Swan River.

An Honourable Member: We can build a great fence all around Manitoba and keep everybody out.

Mr. Reid: Well, the minister is saying then that perhaps we need to have the open borders. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) wants to have open borders and said, let us bring in all the Alberta people to take Manitoba jobs and Manitobans can sit at home, now that their welfare is going to be reduced or eliminated, and that they can starve to death and they do not have to go out and work for the minimum wage or close to it that these companies are paying. That is what he wants.

I do not think that is right. I have asked the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) here in committee to make sure that companies that are coming into Manitoba first comply with The Construction Industry Wages Act in the province of Manitoba, and that they take every reasonable effort to make sure that Manitobans are employed in those industries. The Minister of Labour and his government refuse to take that action, so where are

Manitobans left in this? Companies come in from Alberta, bring their employees with them, and there is no level playing field between the businesses of Manitoba and the businesses of Alberta because the government will not enforce the wage scales, the wage rates that are set in this province by The Construction Industry Wages Act.

So we have an imbalance of playing field that is not level between the Alberta companies that are coming in here and taking that work, bidding on it because they know they do not have to pay the wage rates that Manitoba defines under the act and that the government will not enforce the act, making it a disadvantage for Manitoba companies. Now, if you do not care about the workers, you should care about the companies, but you do not even do that, so Manitoba companies are being disadvantaged. They are losing the business and their employees are losing the work.

One of the sections of the act, and one of the things that I have raised with the Minister of Labour in committee through the Labour Estimates, is that the building maintenance section is going to be removed from The Construction Industry Wages Act and that it will now be up to the Labour Board. The Labour Board will hold hearings under Section 16.1(2) of this Bill 73. The Labour Board will hold hearings on the jurisdiction and what work should be included under The Construction Industry Wages Act and which projects should not. I have raised this matter in this House during Question Period and during Estimates with the Minister of Labour. The Labour Board right now, today, does not have the resources to take on this extra workload. The minister is going to give the Labour Board extra workload under Bill 26 provisions. The minister is going to give extra work with respect to the certification applications or secret ballot votes under Bill 26, and he is going to give more work to the Labour Board to determine which businesses, which projects are going to fall under The Construction Industry Wages Act of Manitoba, all with the same people working there and no extra resources. This board, I tell you, I have the documentation from the board saying they are currently stretched to the limit and cannot take on any further work without the resources to allow them to do that.

An Honourable Member: We will roll up our sleeves and do it ourselves.

* (1500)

Mr. Reid: Well, it would be nice if the Minister of Labour did that, but I sense that he is more intent on taking other actions and finding ways to undermine the working people of the province of Manitoba than he is in trying to solve the problems of the Labour Board.

I asked the Minister of Labour on all his bills, as my colleagues have done on their bills, if the comments that we are making on these bills are, in your opinion as government, inaccurate, then provide for us the regulations that are going to be attached to these bills.

An Honourable Member: We have to pass the bill first.

Mr. Reid: So what you are saying is that you are going to amend the bill. That is what you are saying, either that or you are incompetent and you do not have that work done already. That is the only thing that I can determine from your refusal to release the regulations for the education bills, for the health bills and for the construction industry and labour act bills. So you have the regulations ready, and I know you do, but you do not want to give the public the opportunity to see those regulations and how they are going to impact on the public. That is what you do not want.

Well, the Minister of Labour must know that the Labour Management Review Committee is comprised of people from all walks of life, all the stakeholders, and you know that the Labour Management Review Commission and the Labour Board are involved in the development of regulations for these labour bills, so do not tell me that the regulations are not ready, because I do not believe that.

An Honourable Member: Well, I am not sure.

Mr. Reid: Then the Minister of Labour and perhaps other ministers are incompetent in not having those regulations at least drafted.

One of the other areas that I find is autocratic and, as the United Church said here on Bill 36 just two days ago, almost communistic in its nature—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Deputy Speaker, try and have order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will as soon as the minister comes to order.

The honourable member for Transcona, to continue.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know the government members opposite are sensitive to this and they took quite a hit in committee when members of the public came forward and accused the government of being like a communist dictatorship.

This Bill 73 will give powers to the minister and to the Premier so that every Wednesday on cabinet day the Premier and/or his designate will determine the projects that will be included or excluded from The Construction Industry Wages Act. The Premier will determine what is the definition of Winnipeg with respect to the wages act and where that definition will fall.

We know the recommendations that come on that issue from the subcommittee report and the final report from LMRC. It said to retain the current boundaries at 30-mile radius from this corner outside this building here. But you must know too that the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik) when he was Minister of Labour appeared before the committee and made representation to the committee on The Construction Industry Wages Act at the time he was minister. Now, is that not a conflict of interest, that the minister sends to The Construction Industry Wages Act, a letter asking them to review The Construction Industry Wages Act and to bring back recommendations to the minister of the time and then the minister, as a member of the public, I suppose, at least I hope it was, goes and makes representations to that subcommittee. Now is that not improper for a minister of the Crown to do? Is that not a conflict of his position?

I hope that the minister when he will have an opportunity here, the Minister of Mines and perhaps the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) or other government members will stand up and explain why the Minister of Energy went to that subcommittee and made a presentation. I do not think it is proper and neither did

the people who sat in on that committee when that minister showed up and made the presentation. [interjection]

It is a free country, but you have to recognize that there is a conflict here and that is why we have rules in place on members of this Chamber, for the information of the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister). He is bound by it the same way I am, but his minister clearly broke that conflict provision by going out and making a presentation. [interjection] You do not think so?

An Honourable Member: No, I do not think so.

Mr. Reid: So you think that the minister going out and making representation that perhaps could benefit his family's business just north of the city of Winnipeg is not a conflict. [interjection] So you are saying as minister of the Crown, you should be able to go out and comment on things that are going to benefit your family?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I can see we are heading in a direction that I would not be happy with at this time. I would ask the honourable member for Transcona to put his comments through the Chair, and I would ask other honourable members who want to make a presentation to wait until it is their opportunity to do so.

The honourable member for Transcona, to continue.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and through you to members opposite, I find it abhorrent that the former Minister of Labour, while he was Minister of Labour, would take that action and go before that subcommittee and that the members that were the stakeholders of the industry that were represented on that committee were also offended that that minister would appear. It is not proper, and I hope that the minister will take every reasonable effort to provide some clarification why he attended.

I also want to point out too that the government has taken other steps in that the government is willing to allow for jurisdictions' competitive position of the construction industry in Manitoba relative to other provinces and jurisdictions.

It is interesting to note the position difference here between the position of this government with respect to

the construction industry, and in fact all labour in the province of Manitoba, in comparing wages to other jurisdictions, not only provinces but perhaps U.S. states when it comes to the construction industry, but when the health care workers of Manitoba want to compare interjurisdictional, the government says, oh, no, we cannot do that.

* (1510)

So you cannot have it both ways. You cannot say for the construction industry, well, we are going to compare for other jurisdictions the wages of those and then set the wage rates for Manitoba people, and then when another sector of working people in Manitoba, the health care in particular here, want to have that comparison, you say no. How is that you can say you can have it both ways?

The minister is removing, through Bill 73, the ability and the power that these wage boards have—the heavy construction industry, the three wage boards—that they would meet annually, and they would put forward recommendations to the Minister of Labour on how to improve the act to make it representative of Manitoba. The minister now is taking back the power of those boards.

He is saying those boards will no longer meet, they no longer have his confidence and that he is going to appoint a board—perhaps another politically-appointed board like we are seeing with the regional health boards where you have got defeated Tory candidates, and God knows there must be enough of them around the province—to sit in on an advisory committee to consider matters that the minister will refer to that board, and they will meet at the minister's discretion.

So, if the minister says you are never going to meet, they are never going to meet to talk about issues affecting the construction industry of Manitoba. Not only that, they will be dealing with matters that the minister will refer to that board. If that is not an anti-democratic section, I do not know what is.

The independent wage boards were there before with stakeholders and a neutral chair to bring forward recommendations to the Minister of Labour on the construction industry. Now the Minister of Labour will

determine if and when that advisory panel for committee will meet.

The minister is also saying through Bill 73 that he is going to determine all of the issues, he knows what is best for the industry, and he will determine when they will meet. The wage boards—the construction industry wages of Manitoba have been frozen by this government since 1991. This minister has effectively, by his refusal to listen to the recommendations coming from those three wage boards, taken any action to make changes or to listen to the recommendations since 1991, five years.

So it is very clear that there is a pattern that has developed here, first that the government does not care about the recommendations coming from LMRC; second is that the government does not care that the businesses that are being affected here are now going to have to compete on an unlevel playing field by the removal of the sectors that I have already spoken about and that the government does not care, for the third point, about the working people who are employed in these areas and let them fend for themselves and wherever the wage rate may settle out in those sectors that are now going to be excluded, so be it, in the minister's mind, and that he does not care what happens to those people.

It is very clear that there is a centralization of the power into the Minister of Labour's hands and that they did not take the recommendations to heart that came from either the Construction Industry Wages subcommittee, or from LMRC that came to the minister. So let not this Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and his government say that he is taking these steps to improve The Construction Industry Wages Act of Manitoba when he refuses clearly to listen to the LMRC recommendations that came forward and chose instead to listen to the Winnipeg Construction Association and accepted those recommendations for Bill 73.

We look forward to this bill going through to committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to listen to members of the public who are in businesses or employed in that industry come forward with their recommendations to this government. I look forward to those committee hearings.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Bill 18—The Payment of Wages Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), Bill 18, The Payment of Wages Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le paiement des salaires, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to say a few words on Bill 18, The Payment of Wages Amendment Act. According to what the minister has mentioned when he introduced this bill for second reading, currently Manitoba has reciprocal agreements with most of the other provinces in the country for the purposes of enforcing each other's payment of wages orders. This is a good thing, as Martha Stewart would say.

An Honourable Member: I cannot believe you said that.

Ms. Barrett: I cannot believe I said that. Where was I? In trouble. Can I start again?

It is important, we feel, that workers be protected and be enfranchised so that they can receive the wages which they are owed throughout the country, and we hope that the reciprocal enforcement agreements that are underway with other provinces such as Ontario come to quick fruition. My understanding is that the purpose of Bill 18 is to enable reciprocal agreements to take place between Manitoba and North Dakota. Currently the legislation does not allow for reciprocal agreement for a non-Canadian jurisdiction.

I think with the movement of goods and services and people north and south more and more, a movement that has some real problems with it as we have raised in this House in the context of free trade agreements and capital, et cetera, and the Americanization of not only our economy but our health care system, there are problems in this regard. It is good to see that we are recognizing the need to put in place reciprocal agreements with states, so that Manitoba citizens, no matter where they go, or if they go into North Dakota as well as the provinces, will be able to have their wages protected.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we feel that Bill 18 is quite limited and does not address a major issue that has

been engendered by earlier actions of this government. I am speaking, in particular, of the elimination of the Payment of Wages Fund which, in the budget of this year, was eliminated by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), the Payment of Wages Fund which used to be protecting workers in Manitoba and now is no longer there.

It was to ensure that there was money available for workers to draw on should they not be paid their wages by their employer for any number of reasons, because the employer went bankrupt or had other financial problems or just because the employer chose not to pay. So the Payment of Wages Fund was put in place by the Schreyer government to be a pool of money that employees could draw on, not just willy-nilly, but employees could not just automatically have access to that fund. They were able to make application to get money up to, I believe, about \$1,200 to tide them over between the time that they were no longer getting wages from their employer and the time unemployment insurance would kick in.

In the budget this last year, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) eliminated that fund, and he stated that the Payment of Wages Fund was no longer necessary. He stated this. The member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), as well, stated that the Payment of Wages Fund was no longer necessary, not because employers were not going bankrupt, or not because employers were no longer choosing to pay their employees, not for any financial reason dealing with employers' ability to pay, but the Payment of Wages Fund was no longer necessary because the unemployment insurance fund would tide the employees over that period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems to us very callous, I think, or stupid—take your pick—of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) to eliminate that fund when he should have known, as we know, and as unemployed workers certainly know in this province, that the unemployment or the employment insurance act has a two-week waiting period. If they had checked, if the Minister of Labour had checked before he eliminated the Payment of Wages Fund with Human Resources Canada, he would have found out very quickly, as we did, with one simple phone call that the unemployment insurance provisions do not cover situations where an employee is not paid his wages through a default of the employer or a financial exigency of his or her employer.

* (1520)

The unemployment insurance fund only kicks in after the two-week waiting period. So the Payment of Wages Fund was necessary, continued to be necessary, even though the Minister of Labour said that it was not, and the member for River Heights agreed with the Minister of Labour.

It seems to us that it was a callous move on the part of this government, another move to punish the workers of the province of Manitoba, a particularly callous move because this is money that these employees earned. It is not strike pay. It is not pay for them after they quit a job voluntarily. It is not any of those kinds of things that the government has said, well, employees have choices in the matter.

No, in these situations, covered under the no longer existent employee wages fund, monies were paid to employees after they had worked. They had fulfilled their part of the bargain. The employer did not fulfill his or her part of the bargain. The employees now are being penalized for the actions of their employers. They have already worked, and a contract between an employer and employee states that if you do the work you are hired to do, you should be paid for the work that you were hired to do. The Payment of Wages Fund helped ensure that where employers could not or would not pay that money, there was a fund available for employees to access so they could meet their own bills, so they could meet their own obligations, at least for a period of time until the unemployment insurance kicked in. But, no, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), acting on his own behest or at the demands of the cabinet, eliminated that employment fund available to employees.

That in and of itself was bad enough, but for them to baldly state in the Legislature that that fund was no longer necessary because unemployment insurance would take care of it, it boggles the mind that the government could be either so incompetent or uncaring or both as to not make that one phone call to do the background work that should be an essential part of any legislation to figure out exactly what the impacts of their government programming and budgetary cuts are going to be. This is a very simple cut, the consequences of which were very simply identified, but they chose not to find out that simple identification of the major problem this was going to be for Manitoba employees. Not only did they not find

that out but they baldly stated in the Legislature at least twice that there would not be a problem for employees in the province of Manitoba.

Well, that is absolutely not the case. We would have preferred—and I must remind the House as well, particularly the government members, that while this Payment of Wages Fund was first implemented by the Schreyer government when Howard Pawley was the minister, so it was an NDP program to begin with, but the Lyon government continued the program and stated that it was a necessary safeguard for the employees and the workers in Manitoba. Gerry Mercier stated several times in the Legislature that this was not social assistance, it was not a handout, it was a fund designed to give workers a safeguard so they could have access to funds they were legitimately entitled to if their employers defaulted on their wages.

So it is not only the NDP that has felt that this is an important safeguard for the workers of Manitoba but the former Conservative government in the province of Manitoba, a government that has never been noted as a very progressive government, a government that was noted more as a very conservative government. Even that government's members continued the importance and stressed the importance of the Payment of Wages Fund.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while we welcome the changes that are in place in Bill 18 that do provide some protection for Manitoba workers who are outside the boundaries of Manitoba, we wish that the government had not eliminated another element of protection for the workers of Manitoba, but we are not surprised.

To conclude, we are prepared to pass this legislation to committee at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill—the honourable member for The Maples. I did not see you standing there.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have lost a lot of weight, so you may not have been able to see me.

I would like to put a few words on the record on behalf of our caucus in regard to Bill 18, The Payment of Wages Amendment Act.

An Honourable Member: Do you know what it means?

Mr. Kowalski: Yes. My colleague asked me, do I know what this bill means and what it provides for, and that is a good question.

This act amends The Payment of Wages Act which enforces payment of wages orders from other jurisdictions. The buzz phrase here is reciprocal enforcement of wage orders. The act is being changed to allow Manitoba to enter into reciprocal enforcement arrangements with jurisdictions outside of Canada.

The act was first amended in 1991 because of the new agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions: B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Territories, Yukon and Nova Scotia. Now steps are being taken to reach agreements with Ontario and North Dakota. This necessitates changes to The Payment of Wages Act.

The only real change to the act is, it allows the cabinet to designate another jurisdiction as a reciprocating jurisdiction by regulation. An official can apply for a copy of the payment of wages order from the other jurisdictions. Obviously the amendment to this act will be accompanied by a regulation designating North Dakota as a reciprocating jurisdiction. This accomplishes the purpose of the exercise, which is to enable Manitoba's Employment Standards branch to enforce in Manitoba payment of wage orders made by authorities in North Dakota and vice-versa, and we welcome this bill going to committee so we could hear public presentations at that point. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 18. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

* (1530)

**Bill 67—The Manitoba Telephone System
Reorganization and Consequential
Amendments Act**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay), Bill 67, The Manitoba Telephone System Reorganization and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant la réorganisation de la Société de téléphone du Manitoba et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), who has 14 minutes remaining.

Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing?
[agreed]

Also, standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing?
[agreed]

As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the names of the honourable members for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen).

Bill 72—The Public Schools Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), Bill 72, The Public Schools Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing?
[agreed]

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill, Bill 72, is driven by the government's desire to reduce the wages of teachers. It is driven by the demands of a Treasury Board, not by the needs of education, and it is driven by a Premier (Mr. Filmon) and a government who are hostile to the public service and who see an opportunity to continue their policy of wage reduction throughout the province.

Since 1990, the Filmon government has required public servants generally to cut their salaries. Combinations of wage freezes, Filmon Fridays and negotiated settlements by workers afraid for their jobs have all been successful in exerting a steady downward pressure on wages.

Those same workers, whether in Hydro, Telephones, schools or universities have seen their taxes increase at the local level as the provincial government has offloaded onto the municipalities and school boards. The myriad of user fees, the increased cost of services for everything from recreation to information to public schools has fallen on the public sector as it has for those in many of those areas.

Additionally, the public sector has borne the burden of the scorn of its elected government. Nowhere is this more true than in education. As we examine this bill we should remember the underlying recent economic and political history.

There are those who believe that the Filmon government's assault on teachers is merely a form of vindictiveness, retribution for perceived opposition of teachers during the election. But as I said in discussing Bill 33, I believe this only plays a small part. What is more significant and what would have in any case led to this bill is the ideology of a government of the New Right, which rejects the ideals of public service and which believes that wage costs must be reduced. The reduction of public sector wages is a means to a larger end of enabling Manitoba entrepreneurs to meet the competition of the international low-wage economies. That is fundamentally what much of the legislation in Labour has been designed for.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable member, but there seems to be a lot of chatter throughout the room. Could I ask those members carrying on their private conversations to do so in the loge. The microphones are on at this time and it is picking you up, so I would appreciate that.

The honourable member for Wolseley, to continue. Sorry for the interruption.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, fundamentally I think what much of the government's legislation in labour has been designed for is to reduce wages, reduce the power of

the unions, hold the minimum wage down until an election, ensure that the army of the unemployed exert their discipline on those still in work. We must certainly keep in mind the ideological context of this bill.

More particularly, we should bear in mind that this bill emanates from a Premier (Mr. Filmon) and an intensely political Treasury Board which believes that teachers make too much money. I tried to find a more formal way of phrasing that, but there is no other way around it, and the Premier certainly seems to have no qualms about it. At a meeting in the constituency of Seine River within the last few weeks, I am told that he argued that teachers were paid 15 percent, 25 percent too much and, yet, the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) would want us to believe that this bill is intended to level another of those playing fields or reduce the burden on local taxpayers or some other Tory version of accountability.

Fundamentally this bill is about reducing wages in the public sector. The original discussion document, *Enhancing Accountability: Ensuring Quality*, of January 1996 is quite clear about its purpose.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

It said: "The current process served the system well during times of buoyant provincial and national economies, and so long as the public tolerated increasing levels of taxation and government borrowing. The present fiscal circumstances and public attitudes are different however and demand a re-examination of the methods by which employee compensation is determined."

What the authors neglect to tell us of course is the role played in creating those fiscal circumstances by the New Right. Nor do they acknowledge the game they have played for some years now of offloading the tax burden away from the wealthy onto the middle class and cheering all the way as the middle class demands relief from that tax burden in the form of reduced services and a user-pay philosophy. It has been a devious and a temporarily successful strategy, but it has also begun a downward spiral for many groups within our society, and some of them are now beginning to recognize it.

The spirited defence of their profession that teachers carried out this spring was one indication that public

toleration of this low-wage, low-skill strategy has reached its limit.

This bill, Mr. Acting Speaker, has both an ideological and a political context. It also has a history in Manitoba which begins with the Filmon desire to cut public schools and increase the assistance to the private schools and to create a market system for education in Manitoba. One part of that market system must be, in the eyes of this intensely political Treasury Board, that teacher salaries must be made responsive to localized market conditions.

I have spoken of that elsewhere in more detail on Bills 47 and 33, but I remind my colleagues in this House that it is also part of the ideological underpinnings of this bill. So I would advise members of this House not to become wrapped up in the personal arguments of vindictiveness of the Filmon Tories. Nor should we spend much time speculating on why individual Tories seem to dislike teachers so much, though the amateur psychologist might anticipate such a jaunt with relish. The Tory goal is and always will be a low-wage economy with a greatly reduced public sector. There are many roads to this and Bill 72 is one of them.

The more immediate history of this bill lies in a discussion paper, *Enhancing Accountability: Ensuring Quality*, issued by Manitoba Education and Training. We do not know who the author was. We do know it was not written in the Department of Education. The minister acknowledged as much last spring, although she quite properly took responsibility for it. Had it been examined in the context of the Education department, she might have been spared some of the howlers.

Somewhere in the Treasury Board or Policy Management Secretariat, there was a nameless and faceless group of individuals who produced what they tried to suggest was a discussion paper. This paper presented evidence to show that Manitoba had high salaries in comparison to many Canadian jurisdictions and that the pupil/educator ratio is one of the lowest in the country. The authors concluded that Manitoba teachers were overpaid and underworked. What is more, one source of their overpayment was in the classification system which encouraged further education and paid teachers accordingly. We had horrors, Mr. Acting Speaker—well-paid teachers perhaps because they were well qualified. All of this was compared with Manitoba's

economic standing relative to other Canadian jurisdictions.

For once, the Filmon government gave up its usual empty boosterism to argue that Manitoba had a poor economic performance and could not afford to pay the wages that teachers were currently receiving. Ironically, at the same time, the Finance minister was busy writing earnest letters to *The Globe and Mail* extolling his own and Manitoba's successful economy. The government, of course, selected the statistics which best supported its argument. Much was made, and rightly so, in subsequent hearings of the bias of these numbers and the inconsistent economic arguments offered by the government. But the numbers were merely the floss, part of an effort to give some respectability to the whole process of lowering wages.

The conclusion the anonymous authors reached, and I quote, "that the current system places too much control in the hands of arbitrators, limiting trustees' ability to be accountable to local taxpayers and potentially hindering their efforts to deliver quality educational services to students in the community," was one which did not require complex statistics. This was a political argument which was based on a belief that 40 years of arbitration had given too much power to teachers and that the size of their wage bill, not the provincial cuts to education, was the source of the financial problems facing school boards.

These anonymous authors, Mr. Acting Speaker, then offered some political solutions entirely in keeping with the authoritarian character of this government. Strikes or lockouts will be permitted for two weeks. This would, of course, have violated elementary and international codes of labour relations. But, in my view, the Filmon government was not seeking a just settlement. It was looking for a political club to be used and against an important element of the public sector.

It is interesting that for the moment they have abandoned that proposal in this bill. They abandoned, too, the proposal for local referendums on salaries. They heard from their own people in rural Manitoba of the divisiveness that such proposals would bring to communities where everyone knows everyone else. Two-tiered bargaining and traditional strikes and lockouts are also off the agenda for now, but no one should think that these have all been permanently consigned to the garbage

cans of history. They are simply resting, and when the government thinks it can get away with it, they will be looking at them again.

* (1540)

Mr. Acting Speaker, why did they withdraw these proposals? Well, they held public hearings in a few centres in the province, and parents, teachers, superintendents and citizens turned out in great numbers. The Tories recognized that their agenda had to be slowed down and some of the more unpleasant aspects had to be locked up in the cupboard. But really the fundamental problem with the government's proposals, short version or long version, is that they intervene in agreements made 40 years ago between teachers and trustees, the people who must face each other across a bargaining table, people who know each other well and who both have the long-term interest of the students and public education at heart.

A government should only intervene in such a relationship when it is irretrievably broken and this was not the case, in my view, nor the view of many trustees and teachers. It is true that many school boards are facing very serious financial difficulties as the provincial government pursues its priorities of private education. It is also true that recent negotiations and settlements had, for the most part, recognized this situation.

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

There was no inherent opposition to a review but such a review should have been carried out with the full co-operation of both parties and in an atmosphere of openness. The government chose, and I could only think it was a clear choice, to dispense with co-operation and to steer a clearly divisive path. Their discussion paper was untainted by research. It did not examine teacher collective bargaining in other jurisdictions. It did not attempt to evaluate what worked well and what did not work in the existing systems here or in other jurisdictions. It did lay out a clear political agenda for the reduction of wages, the centralization of power in the hands of the minister, the reduction of incentives for further education, and the imposition of conditions that neither side of the bargaining table had desired or requested.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents put it most succinctly in its brief to the Render-Dyck hearings, and I quote: "Government needs to be seen as fair and equitable in its treatment of public servants. Collective bargaining for teachers should be carried out within the context of teaching as a profession within one of the most valued institutions of our society, the public school system."

The superintendents argued in a measured way that long-term solutions are needed and that those solutions are found within the context of public school education where the interests of the student remain paramount. Sufficient time should be allowed for this important activity. The superintendents argued strongly that the work of the present committee be seen as only the beginning of a much more comprehensive and in-depth review of the collective bargaining process and its related issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was good advice in the spring and it remains good advice today. All parties to this matter would benefit from re-examination. We would all benefit from a longer, more thorough, more comprehensive and more balanced review, and that is what I want the government to consider. If we emerge with a co-operative framework, there need be no loss of face for the government or the minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Render-Dyck response was brought in very quickly after the hearings in order that the legislation we have before us today could be considered. The authors of that report heard voices that were inaudible to the rest of us and produced a report which gave us Bill 72. Bill 72, as the minister indicated in her introductory speech, is only the first in a series of changes that will flow from the Render-Dyck report.

We must assume that other changes will follow dealing with classification, education and other professional matters. We must try to take these into account, unknown as they are, in dealing with this bill. Although the government has chosen to take the strike lock-out proposals off the table for the time being, this bill remains one of the more contentious of the session. The most controversial element is the inclusion of the ability of school divisions to pay, to be taken into account by the arbitrator. Indeed, the bill goes further in saying that the arbitrator in all aspects of his or her financial decision

shall—not may—but shall base his or her decision primarily, and I underline primarily, on the division's ability to pay. It must be the most important factor according to the legislation. There is no flexibility for the arbitrator there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is to be noted that this is most unusual in Canadian legislation. This treads new ground, and I believe will make the job of the arbitrators, already difficult, even more so. Moreover, ability to pay is defined as being current revenues and includes the funding received from the provincial government and the Government of Canada. So just in case we had not got the message, this government is determined to drive down the wages of teachers. This section will make it quite clear.

The reduction of funds by the provincial government will be, shall be, reflected in the arbitrator's decisions by law. Arbitrators will also be required to take into account local pay scales in making their judgments. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my riding, the average income is \$19,000. In some parts of the riding, it is half that. In the minister's riding, it is \$40,000 and in Tuxedo or Springfield, it is even higher. Here is a direct invitation to return to the pre-war days, and I mean pre-World War II days, when teacher salaries varied greatly across the province. As teacher wages varied, so did their qualifications and levels of education. Inevitably, we had greater inequalities in education than we do today.

I cannot believe that the rural Tories have considered where this bill is taking us. There may be an immediate political jolt in satisfying the populist right in disclosing and personalizing teacher salaries, in reducing the wages of yet another public sector worker, in narrowing the curriculum to what they remember from their own school days long ago, but will it be worth the price they are going to pay in the long term? No modern economy, rural or urban, is going to survive very long without a strong public education system. Let me say again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that no such public education is going to run very far on distance education alone. The backbone of any sound education system is a well-educated teacher who earns and is accorded the respect and support of their community.

Bill 72, like so many of the bills before us this session, increases the power of the minister in collective

bargaining. The minister may now amend or add to the statement of matters referred by the two bargaining parties to arbitration. The minister may also initiate arbitration and may ask arbitrators to reconsider any judgments they make. I put "reconsider" in quotation marks because there is a pretty thin line between reconsider and reverse. Will arbitrators consider such ministerial requests as merely that, requests, or will they be required to defend their judgments in front of some new ministerial tribunal? From an arbitrator's point of view, the introduction of a third party who sits in judgment on the arbitrator is new and unfortunate.

The position of mediator-arbitrator that is created in this bill is also of interest and concern. In labour legislation generally, this would be considered very unusual. I shall be interested in hearing in committee of the experience of it elsewhere and the value that the minister attaches to it. I certainly heard from people who believe it will be unworkable or who point out that the qualities that make a good mediator do not necessarily make a good arbitrator.

There are also several sections of the bill which deal with the timetabling of budgets. Some of these changes may distort the collective bargaining process, and I expect that we shall hear more about this from the many presenters at the committee hearings.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister has arbitrarily decided in Bill 72 that several matters may not be referred to arbitration. She maintains, or at least tries to, that they may still be negotiated and technically that is so. But as anyone who has been involved in collective bargaining will tell you, there is far less pressure to negotiate if none of these items, the transfer of principals and teachers, the methods of evaluation, class size and scheduling of hours of work cannot be taken to an arbitrator.

The minister, in responding to her many critics on this bill, points to the fact that this act requires school boards to act reasonably, fairly and in good faith in those matters not referable for arbitration. From the teachers' perspective this is a new development and it may be helpful, but it will take some time for case law to develop to define what is meant by this. Grievance procedures are costly to all in matters such as class size and transfers which affect the daily lives of many families. In addition,

from the perspective of the trustees, there is a great deal of uncertainty being introduced here. How will "reasonably," "fairly" and "good faith" be interpreted in Manitoba, and what will be the implications of this for the school boards across the province.

In all these matters, we come back to the fundamental proposition that the government is introducing law in haste, which will affect an important part of provincial society and which fundamentally does not have the consent of a large proportion of those whom it will directly affect, nor does it establish the co-operative atmosphere which should be required by collective bargaining in this sector. It increases ministerial powers yet again and will put arbitrators in extremely difficult situations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this law has been conceived in a climate of hostility and antagonism. Its long-term purpose is to reduce the wages of teachers and to create greater differentiation of salaries across the province. The minister has created strife where there should be mutual respect. She has lost the trust of many partners in education. For once, I need only quote the words of the Free Press editorialist on Bill 72, and I quote: By acting in the manner she has, Mrs. McIntosh has shown herself to be nothing more than a schoolyard bully.

* (1550)

So I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that Bill 72, The Public Schools Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just ask the minister to wait until I have read the motion or checked the motion.

Motion presented.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Does the member wish to speak to the motion?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: She has spoken.

Mrs. McIntosh: I would like to speak to the motion. The member has made a very interesting speech, full of

her own impressions and speculations, assumptions and notions as to what the bill is about. She is wrong on many counts as to what the bill is about, but then she has an agenda that she must follow, which is to support whatever her caucus determines would make the issues that the government puts forward be shown in the worst possible light in order to, as so many people do, try to make themselves look good by making others look bad.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have trustees in Manitoba who have been waiting for the better part of a decade for the government—and I wonder if the member would like to listen to the speech on the motion that she has proposed. Perhaps she would like to hear what I am saying, and I would appreciate her attention, given that she has made this motion, and perhaps she might like to have some of her other party members join her in listening to the debate. I think it is a very important debate to have so few people on the other side is not, I do not think, an indication of how well supported this member's motion might be. Maybe they do not realize that she is making the motion to delay the business of the people of Manitoba, and that I think is rather significant.

Here we have the trustees of Manitoba who are elected by the people of Manitoba who have asked three years in a row for consideration of this type of legislation and now have it before the Legislature, and this member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) wants to further delay the needs of the field that have been identified through resolutions passed at convention, and I do wish the member would remain in the Chamber while the motion of hers is being debated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. McIntosh: I did not say that she is gone. I just said I wish she would stay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know you will call the Minister of Education to order on the presence or absence of a member of the Legislature, but I would like to let the Minister of Education know that the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) is currently

meeting with representatives of the school trustees in the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the same point of order.

I am currently missing a meeting with schoolteachers in Manitoba to stay and speak on the motion that that member put forward. So, when you only have a handful of people on the other side on a motion they are going to hold up what the trustees need and want, and they do not even have the courtesy to stay while they make me miss a meeting with teachers so they can go to a meeting with trustees, I think is absolutely appalling and deplorable. I have a meeting, too, but I am here doing what needs to be done and she is gone. I know I am not supposed to say it. I take that back. I apologize for referring to the fact that there are hardly any NDP in the House. I apologize for referring to the absence of members opposite.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the honourable minister for the apology. The matter is concluded.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister, to continue her presentation.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member for Brandon, who was here in the Chamber today, has indicated that I do not need to speak on this motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. May I remind the honourable minister that we are neither to say that a member is here or not here.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for that correction, I apologize.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister, to continue.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member for Brandon points out that I do not need to be here to speak on this motion. I can get anybody else to speak on it, he tells me. I guess that maybe I do not feel like absenting myself from my

responsibility the way some other people may choose to do. The member for Brandon is hollering, is muttering. They are all muttering. Thank heavens, there are not too many voices muttering, but all the voices that are here are muttering.

I am going to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the trustees have asked for this. They said it was urgent. They are asking for some—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am having great difficulty hearing the honourable minister at this time. There are separate conversations going on; there are different discussions going on. Could I ask those members wanting to do so, to have their conversations either in the loge or out in the halls. The minister has the floor at this time and I think we do owe her the respect to listen to her comments.

The honourable minister, to continue.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the trustees, in resolution, as I said, at convention three successive years in a row have pleaded with the government to move on this. The net result they say, if legislation to this accord cannot be passed, is that they will begin laying off hundreds of schoolteachers.

I am appalled that the opposition wants consciously to see hundreds of teachers laid off. They have stood up and said, we want to delay this decision so that hundreds of teachers can lose their jobs, and I think that is a terrible signal to send. It is a good thing the member is not meeting with teachers right now, because she has just said, we want to delay this past the point where this legislation can be introduced this year, knowing full well that the consequences of that will be the loss of jobs for hundreds of teachers, because that was the alternative put forward to this government by the trustees, who said, if they could not have the scope and type of bargaining altered, because it has changed—the member said we need to go back to the beginning of when arbitration came into being. I say to you that if we did that, if we went back 40 years and did it exactly the way it was done when it came in, none of those items that are now labelled not referable for arbitration would have been seen on any bargaining table anywhere in the province, nor would they have been 10 years later, nor 20 years later, nor 30 years later.

Those things have all entered and been placed upon the table within the last decade. Some of those have never been placed on the table. Some of those have never been bargained. Maybe the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) and the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) would like to hear this. I would appreciate them listening. They say it is important enough to hold up the business of the people of Manitoba and yet they sit there and they talk. They are speaking and they are distracting me, and I would like you to call them to order. They want this motion and they are talking to each other instead of listening to it. They are out of order. [interjection]

* (1600)

They are out of order. They are talking instead of listening. That is against—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mrs. McIntosh: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would appreciate it if members opposite would, if they are going to stand and talk to each other, not do it in the debate that they have asked to take place. They do this all the time to us. I am now in reverse doing it to them. I am asking them to live by the same rules. The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) rises on a point of order 65 times a day on this type of thing. I am now rising to ask them to live by the standards they demand of us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I thank the honourable—the honourable member for Transcona, on the same point of order.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): On the same point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, perhaps you could advise the minister that this is not a schoolyard nor a classroom and that we do not have to face her to listen to the words she is saying in this Chamber. If she wants to act like a teacher perhaps she can return to the classroom or to her former role as a division trustee if she wants to have the power over members of the Chamber and ask them to be obedient to her. We are members of this Chamber and we respond to the members of our communities' wishes,

not to the wishes of the Minister of Education. I think her point of order is out of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Government Services, on the same point of order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): No, on a new point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Could I just deal with the other point of order first, please?

Mr. Pallister: Certainly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister did not have a point of order, but let me advise the honourable members in the Chamber that at times the decorum within the Chamber has been reaching certain levels that do not only not please us but do not please the public out there that is either listening or watching us. I think it is up to us behave in a manner that we would be proud of and that our children would be proud of in the future, so if we could maintain decorum a little bit I would appreciate it.

Point of Order

Mr. Pallister: On a new point of order. The member for Transcona's (Mr. Reid) response to the previous point of order, he spoke in an accusatory and defamatory way about teachers, about educators, and in an attempt, a feeble attempt I might add and a failed attempt to insult the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh)—I know that when he reviews Hansard he will be embarrassed by his comments, so I would like to give him the opportunity right now to withdraw his comments and apologize to the minister because of the disparaging comments that he made about educators in this province. I know he would want to do that now rather than have those comments go on Hansard unaccompanied by a full retraction and apology by him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. As I had said—[interjection] Order, please.

For the information of the House, I would like to read to you from the Appendices of our rule book: "Points of Order are questions raised with the view of calling the attention to any departure from the Standing Orders or the

customary modes of proceeding in debate or in the conduct of legislative business, and may be raised at any time by any member, whether the member has previously spoken or not."

I would appreciate it if we abided by the rules a little bit and were not just rising just to disturb or to disrupt the manners of the House.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister, to conclude her statement.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, like the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister), am really intrigued by the words chosen by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). In essence what he said was my behaviour was disgusting and deplorable just like a teacher's, and if I wanted to be as disgusting and deplorable as a teacher I should go back to the classroom. I think that was just absolutely incredible. An incredible statement. He implied that—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot hear myself speak over the heckling that still continues despite your admonitions to the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister is correct. I am having trouble hearing the honourable minister, but it is not only from—it is from both sides of the House at this time, so if I could ask the honourable members to carry on their conversations again either in the loge or in the hall or up in their offices, it would be greatly appreciated at this time.

The honourable minister, to continue again.

Mrs. McIntosh: As I said, the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) stood and in essence indicated that if I wanted to act as disgusting and terrible and horrible and bossy and rude and mean as a teacher, I should go back to the classroom. I cannot believe that that would be the essence of his message. It was the essence of his message. It tells me what he thinks of teachers. It offends me as a teacher to be thought of in the—[interjection] The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) is speaking from his chair and heckling while I am trying to speak, and I would ask that he be brought to order.

The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I ask that he would be brought to order for heckling.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am having great difficulty this afternoon, I can see that, but there is one thing that is happening, and every once in a while when we have the floor we do tend to incite the debate a little bit or choose not to directly come through the Chair. I would ask all honourable members to please refer their comments through the Chair and not directly to any members of the Chamber. It might not incite the debate quite to that point.

The honourable minister, to continue.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your support on that issue. I know the members opposite rise on a point of order constantly, and I think that it is interesting that they do not like it when I do the same thing in return to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would indicate that—back to the speech which I am trying to make.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. McIntosh: They are still heckling; for the record, I am not asking you to order. I just want the record to show they are still shouting from their seats.

Back to my speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The members opposite know that the trustees of Manitoba for three years have passed formal resolutions asking for this legislation. For many years before that, informally they were asking government—including the NDP government that came before us—that they have these changes to the legislation. They feel they are imperative that they be given quickly because of the length of time that new items have crept into the bargaining procedure over the course of the 40 years that binding arbitration has been in existence. The scope and style and type of items over those 40 years has changed, and the trustees feel that it has caused them great difficulty.

I am waiting till there is no talking in the Chamber so I can resume my speech. [interjection] I am trying to

abide by the standards you insist on from us and insisting that maybe that you obey the same standards you try to set for us.

* (1610)

I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I will talk above the noise coming from the benches opposite and say that the members opposite wish to delay this legislation by six months in direct violation of the will of the people of Manitoba, who have elected trustees right across the province, all taxpayers of Manitoba able to elect people who then represent them, who then say on behalf of all the people of Manitoba there is an urgent need for this legislation. The members opposite would delay it, run the risk of increased costs for taxpayers and lost jobs for teachers. I think it is irresponsible of them to do that. They have the right to do that under the law. They have the right to put forward the motion, but on behalf of the public interest, on behalf of the people of Manitoba who want this, and on behalf of the many teachers who want the protection and fairness that is in this, the right to grieve class size, things that they could never get under any other circumstances, the member should check with the union hierarchy at the MTS and find out how they feel about that fairness clause that the members say they do not want.

I believe that if they really think about what they are doing, this is not an issue to be used for grandstanding to delay the will of the people. Because in this instance this legislation is clearly and absolutely the will of the people, having been given from the taxpayers with thousands and thousands and thousands of votes to their trustees, who then by formal vote again, another vote at convention, have asked for this. So this legislation is not like other legislation in that it is simply the commitment of government. This legislation has clearly come from the people of Manitoba through legal vote at the polls and three times on the convention floor, and yet they would delay the will of the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that is not a good thing. I think it is not a right thing. I appreciate the need they have to make some kind of a public stand or display as they so often feel they need to do. I think in this case they are holding back good legislation that is in the best interest of trustees, in the best interest of teachers, in the best interest of the public and, most of all, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, in the best interest of the students that we are all sworn to care for.

So, on behalf of the students charged to our collective care, for the good of teachers, for the good of trustees and for the public interest, clearly expressed by votes at the ballot, I say that it is not a good thing to further delay this request that has been made for three successive years of the government by duly elected people in Manitoba. So I say that I think that we do need to get on with the business, listen to the will of the people, and not try to delay what they have clearly asked us to do.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am quite frankly amazed at the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) taking objection to the opposition moving a motion in the Chamber. You know, the motion is our clearly stated view on this bill. We think it is bad legislation. We moved this. We are fully anticipating that in fact we will be able to put it to a vote fairly soon. It is not going to delay the bill passing unless it is adopted by this Legislature. If this Legislature was to vote not to deal with this bill, that is the ultimate democratic will.

To the Minister of Education, she talks about the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, they are one player in this whole equation. There are many people out there as well—many teachers, many parents, many others—who are very concerned about this particular bill, and I love this kind of view of democracy here of the minister that it is bad for the opposition to move this motion. That is her view. I guess we should sit back and listen quietly to the minister. I found it amazing when she was telling us about heckling, when she is one who regularly gives us advice and assistance from her seat. When you live in a glass house, I would suggest you should not throw stones, but, to the minister, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is our right as an opposition—I think it is our obligation—when we see bad legislation to see that legislation defeated in this House, and this is bad legislation. I know that the minister is joining in this general power grab that we are seeing across the way. I likened this legislation, when I first saw it, to the war measures act of collective bargaining for teachers—[interjection]

To the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) who had better watch out because the Minister of Education is

going to ask that he be called to order if he does not watch out, the bottom line with this legislation is this is draconian, it puts power—it distorts the power balance we have had in our society.

To the minister, who has been lecturing us, I think we would be doing our duty as an opposition if we could defeat this legislation because it will stop this minister from being able to dictate, through this legislation, to the people of Manitoba what will happen in terms of collective bargaining for teachers.

You know, this minister was appointed to cabinet. The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) was appointed to cabinet. There is only one person on that side who decides who a cabinet minister is. We are all elected, all 57 of us; the people decide that we get elected. There is nothing magical about the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) being the Minister of Education. In fact, I would advise her to be careful because there has been rather a lack of job security over there with ministers of Education. We have had rather a rapid turnover the last little while, but that is what is fundamentally wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with what this government is doing. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Education were not elected to be anything other than members of the Legislature and abide by a fair, democratic process. They are not elected to dictate, to have dictatorial powers over the people of Manitoba.

We are seeing the Minister of Health, and we are going to debate this on Bill 49, with the powers that that Minister of Health has to impose his will through the commissioner on the collective bargaining situation in our regional hospital boards.

We are seeing now with the Minister of Education on a personal agenda which has been very clear, and at least she is up front about it, and it is basically to take away the balance of collective bargaining in our schools. It is not the Manitoba Association of School Trustees she is concerned about; it is her own personal agenda. She should be up front about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and not try and hide the reality of what is happening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my apology is going to the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) here. Perhaps he would care to explain to the Minister of Education, perhaps he has the same view, I do not know, but

hopefully he has a rather different view of the democratic process than the minister does and a number of ministers. The bottom line is it is not just about electing a government once every four years, it is about maintaining participation, about discussion, and, you know what, it is about maintaining balance in our society. We have a Premier who now is talking about getting rid of powerful forces—he talks about this—in our society that are preventing change. Well, putting aside—[interjection] Including the opposition, says the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski).

You know, I listened to the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) lecturing us on this side, and the member for The Maples is absolutely right. Who do they consider these powerful forces that are stopping change? Well, we know it is the Manitoba Teachers' Society, Manitoba Government Employees' Union, the Manitoba Nurses' Union. Oh, by the way, it is all coincidental. They dared to speak out in the election against this government. [interjection] Oh, and the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) talks about the war chest. I mean, you do not even have to be a rocket scientist here to figure out that this is get-even time with those words. They dared, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to speak out against the government in the election. You know what MTS did? They did not say, go and vote for a party. They said, think education. My God, what a terrible thing they did. They ran a nonpartisan campaign on education, and according to the member for River Heights, you know, that big war chest—well, I guess they are getting their just rewards now.

You know, every teacher I talk to in the province—we had a rally in Thompson. It was organized by the Manitoba Teachers' Society where more than 250 local residents, many teachers, many other people, our school board chairperson, by the way, for the Minister of Education—because the School District of Mystery Lake does not support this legislation or the minister's agenda on this. The bottom line is they are being punished for having done what? Speak out in an election. Well, let us run through what they are doing now—

Point of Order

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Unfortunately, I was attempting to listen to the member for Thompson

(Mr. Ashton), hoping that he would shed some light on the concern that the opposition has to the process of putting this bill through to committee, and basically he has for the last several minutes been impugning motives about the reason for this bill being in front of the Legislature. I think that for him to put on the record the kind of comments that would give this bill a flavour of revenge and vengeance is absolutely ludicrous, and I would ask that he be called to order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It was clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

* (1620)

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, now they will not let me express my opinion, my freedom of speech, in this House, and I say to the minister opposite, there are a lot of people out there, a lot of teachers, that is what they are saying. I was in his constituency yesterday. I was in Minnedosa. I was in Virden. I talked to some teachers in Virden. You know what they said? They said, we know why this is happening.

An Honourable Member: Why?

Mr. Ashton: Well, to the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), they said, you know what our big problem was? We dared to speak out during the election campaign. That is what grassroots teachers are saying in Virden, Manitoba, and the minister should be aware of that. He says that I am impugning motive. It does not take anybody to figure out. You add up one and one, and who has been targeted in this legislative session? Who has been targeted? It is everybody that has spoken out against this government. It is payback time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and teachers are getting it. The Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) knows that. She knows that teachers know that—

Point of Order

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, unfortunately, the member denies that he is impugning motives on this side. I would also suggest, who are the most elected and closest to the grassroots in

this educational community if it is not the trustees, a responsible body that he says are being punished the same and being treated unfairly by this bill? This is a result of a duly voted request from those elected trustees.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister did not have a point of order, and as I had stated prior, points of order should be when we are moving away from the rules.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, to continue.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, once again, I look forward to hearing from the minister and other ministers in terms of this because it is very clear that this bill is payback time. It is very clear, and I do not think anybody in Manitoba knows better than the people who are directly involved, the teachers.

I was in Flin Flon when the committee made a presentation to the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) and the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck). That is what they said there. That is the feeling that is out there, and do you know what? It is shared by a lot of people in society who realize that.

But this is the point. This Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) does not have, I believe, the right to do what is happening in this legislation any more than the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) does. I think we are ending up in a situation where this government is so arrogant that it believes that it can do whatever it wants in an election, get elected and then break every promise it ran on for four or five years, as long as they can hang in there, give themselves unprecedented powers. Then they face the people in four or five years, and that is democracy. Democracy is not about doing one thing during an election campaign and then getting in with a completely different agenda when you are in power. That is not democracy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Having elections every four or five years is not the only part of the democratic process.

To the Minister of Education, bringing in motions in this House when we are opposition members on a bill that is a bad bill, I do not think it should be delayed from going to the committee; I do not think it should go to the

committee at all. It is bad legislation. It is dictatorial. It is vindictive. I do not understand why the minister would be so sensitive. I know the Minister of Education does not want to listen to the teachers who are concerned about that. We know there is not very good relations between that. I mean, she has made comments in committee attacking teachers. She has made comments—oh, she is talking about the people coming in from the lake, picking up their pay cheques, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member has placed false information on the record. The member has said that I have said bad things about teachers, and I never have.

He made reference to a request made at one point in negotiations over a decade ago in one division, where the teachers asked to have their pay cheques in 10-month instalments rather than 12-month instalments because, as they indicated, they would prefer to get it in 10 months so that they would not have to interrupt their summer holiday, drive in from the lake and pick up their pay cheque. That is a fact. That is not an insult. That is not a bad thing. It is just explaining why they wanted a 10-month pay period instead of a 12. They are paid on an annual basis, 10 months by agreement. That is not insulting teachers, and the member has put false information on the record which I wish to have withdrawn because it is false information.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, to continue.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find it amazing that the minister now is engaging in revisionist history about her own comments. I quoted those comments from Hansard. I quoted them in Question Period, and I do not

think the minister understands that she has brought in an era of confrontation with teachers that is unprecedented in this province.

You know, I was critical of the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) and the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey), when they were ministers of Education, on policy, but you know what? We have never seen this level of confrontation in this province, and it is because of those kinds of remarks that the minister makes on the record and the kind of confrontation we have seen with teachers. That is not going to build a better education system, to the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). We can only have a better education system in this province when we work in partnership.

She talks about the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. They are an important part of the educational community. So are teachers, and right now there is such an atmosphere of distrust out there that we are not going to get the co-operation. Why is there distrust, to the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe)? Because your government, the Conservative government, is engaged in a vindictive campaign against anyone who speaks out against them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for River Heights will have an opportunity to put his comments on the record at another time.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, the honourable member for Thompson clearly has put on the record their ability to frustrate the education system and not only their ability but their will and intent to frustrate the education system and put out false information to educators and the education system about how our government and our governance, our legislation will affect the education system in the future, and I would suggest that the honourable member opposite be very careful in how he portrays this government in comments that will be construed as being nothing short of being mischievous and therefore cause discontent and unrealistic expectations by the education system in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member did not have a point of order. It is clearly a—[inaudible]

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Mr. Ashton: I look forward to the Minister of Education perhaps raising some concern about her own government members bringing in points of order, none of which have been points of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Excuse me for just one minute. My microphone was not on. The honourable member for Emerson did not have a point of order. It was a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Ashton: Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am amazed. Earlier today, I had the Minister responsible for MTS (Mr. Findlay) justify spending \$400,000 of government money on MTS because of comments I was making throughout Manitoba. Now we have the member, the member who spoke just previously, saying that I am leading to some great dissension because of my comments here on the legislation.

To the member, talk to teachers in your communities, to any member, and find out what they have to say, because you know what? It is nothing coming from the opposition. Teachers are not stupid. They can read the bill. They can figure out that you are imposing your will on this issue because of what happened in the election campaign, and I say to the members opposite, have you lost touch that much with reality that you actually believe that I or our Education critic or anyone is creating some dissension out there? The reality is, you bring in a bill where you target teachers, and they get angry. They get upset. They get frustrated. They came to the building because of that reason. They have had rallies. They have been putting signs up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know it would be a lot easier for this government if they lived in a period of time where there was no opposition. I know they would like to ram this through. It is obvious from the Minister of Education's (Mrs. McIntosh) comments, but you know what? It is not just the opposition that you are dealing with here. It is the people of Manitoba who are saying this, the teachers. The teachers are saying, you have targeted them. It is not me, the MLA for Thompson. It is the teachers. There were 250 of them in my constituency who held a rally. Get your heads out of the sand. Let us get a reality check for the Conservative government.

We are not fomenting dissension throughout the province. We are representing our constituents. We are speaking out to the people in the education community who are concerned about that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is democracy. That is democracy and nothing they can do will stop us from speaking.

You know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? That, I think, is the ultimate goal of this government, to prevent that kind of democratic debate in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Thompson will have 14 minutes remaining.

The hour now being 4:30 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

* (1630)

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 200, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), standing in the name the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
[agreed]

Bill 201—The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act

Madam Speaker: Bill 201, The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act (Loi sur le jour de solidarité à l'égard des autochtones), on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
[agreed]

Bill 203—The Public Assets Protection Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Bill 203, The Public Assets Protection Act (Loi sur la protection des biens publics), standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, yes, I would like to speak on Bill 203, which was proposed by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), which is The Public Assets Protection Bill. In this bill the member for Thompson is aiming at one issue only and that is the Crown corporation of the Manitoba Telephone System. When he talks about The Public Assets Protection Act, all he is trying to do is trying to protect or make sure the province does not sell the Crown corporation. Well, I think in this case he is speaking only about one particular Crown corporation and that is the Manitoba Telephone System.

I would like to say, he talks in the bill that the question should be put to the voters. Well, you know, we were elected in April of 1995 with a clear mandate. We have a strong majority and I think in this case, Bill 67 would give the Manitoba Telephone System the opportunity to sell shares locally to the people of Manitoba. I think Bill 67 outlines what the Manitoba Telephone System is really doing, and why it is necessary for the Manitoba Telephone System to progress to do the things that they have to do to provide the services to Manitobans.

First of all, the original intent of a Crown corporation was to provide a service where there was no competition, where there was no private companies in order to do it. That is when the government had to come in to provide a service, and that is what the Manitoba Telephone System did. I believe it was 1909, or something like that, when it first started, but today that is not the case anymore. Today there is competition in the telecommunications business. Almost all of the business that the Manitoba Telephone System does, whether it be in the cellular business or in the NETCOM company, they are all being competed with by other companies. So it is a lot different than it used to be.

The Manitoba Telephone System over the years has been a fairly well-run company and has done fairly well. Even when you look at the annual reports of 1994, 1995, it has been a profitable venture. It has been run very well by the board of directors and by the chairman and by the minister. So I think, even having said all that, the company, MTS, has a large debt load of some \$880 million, something of that nature; therefore, it has a difficult time competing with the other companies.

I think, in order for MTS to compete, that we are doing the right thing with Bill 67 by putting MTS up for sale to the people of Manitoba. It is going to give the people of Manitoba an opportunity to invest in their own telephone system, to buy shares and share in the profits. I think it is an excellent way of doing it. Anybody can buy shares in any of the oil companies, any of the car manufacturers; a lot of people that serve transportation services, CP Rail; even in Air Canada today, it is not a monopoly anymore. You can go buy shares in Air Canada or in many of the large companies that provide services to Manitobans and to Canadians.

No different than the Manitoba Telephone System will be doing after it has been privatized and after the shares are sold. They will be sold to Manitobans or to whoever wants to buy shares, but I believe that we should give Manitobans an opportunity first to purchase shares in this company. I think it will be a good investment; it will give the company an opportunity to grow and expand and to continue to provide the service that is so necessary and that Manitobans want.

Just on the technology side, I think this morning at the committee dealing with the annual reports to the Manitoba Telephone System, the chairman and the minister outlined the changes that have taken place and the improvements that the Manitoba Telephone System has made and how it operates. Technology has changed so much with, of course, the fact that the MTS Mobility, the cellular business, has expanded to such an extent and everyone today has a cellular phone, as an example. That is just the fact that the computer age has brought the use of MTS lines to such an extent, the Internet. There are so many things that are interconnected with the Manitoba Telephone System. You can buy burglar alarms, all kinds of alarms, fire sensors, whatever, that it would be hooked to your telephone system to protect your homes and property. I think there are so many things that have

been just new in the past 10, 20 years—so many changes, technological changes in the way things are being done, such improvements to make our lives in Manitoba and in Canada so much better. I believe the things that they have done till now are great, and I am sure they will continue to do that.

When they are owned by shareholders, they will be responsible to a board of directors, and that board of directors, I am sure, will operate the company in the most profitable manner in trying both to provide a service to Canadians and Manitobans and also to provide a return on your investment to the shareholders. I think that is a much better way of operating than as a Crown corporation, and especially the fact that there is competition in so many different ways in the telephone system.

This morning when they talked about how MTS operates—

An Honourable Member: They operate okay.

Mr. Helwer: Yes, they sure do, and they provide great service to your constituency there, but they will provide better service and more things under privatization, under a private ownership. They will not have to spend—at the present time, the Manitoba Telephone System spends some 17 cents of every dollar of revenue that they take in on interest to the banks. Why should we pay the interest to the banks? Let us let the shareholders own the company and pay the return on investment to the shareholders. Give them a return on their investment. Let Manitobans own the company. At the present time we are paying that interest to banks down east. We are not helping Manitobans by doing that. That is of no asset to anybody, not that I have anything against the banks. They have certainly made a contribution to this country as well.

MTS has been a very well-run company and, over the past number of years, especially since 1988, since this government came to power, they have made MTS be accountable. We have an excellent board of directors and we have excellent people running the company. They have made some money, you know, 14-15-16 million dollars or whatever. It is not big money, but it has shown a profit. That has been run very well.

* (1640)

Another thing on the technology side that MTS has done is the fibre optic cable that has been installed in all of Manitoba. I think it is one of the first provinces, one of the first companies—MTS really took the initiative to provide this kind of service, do away with party lines and provide the service with the fibre optic cable. Fibre optic cable can send many signals down the same line at the same time, thereby providing all the rural people in Manitoba the benefits of this. It is just immense, the many things that you can do. It is putting our farmers, our rural people in the same position as the people in the city of Winnipeg were in, whereby they had access to the different things, the private lines so that you could put in the Internet, they could have fax machines, they could do all these things with their telephone system cable. Today that is all available in all of rural Manitoba. It is just a tremendous thing, a tremendous advance in technology.

These services being available for the rural communities have been a great boon, and they can see the growth that has expanded in the rural areas. This kind of technology has certainly helped businesses operate in rural Manitoba, give them more lines, some toll-free service into communities surrounding Winnipeg and our larger calling area. There have been a lot of improvements in the Manitoba Telephone System in the way they operate.

I certainly support Bill 67 and the fact that it will make MTS a company that is going to be run by shareholders, it is going to be run by a board of directors, but it will be more accountable and will continue to provide service and the technology and the improvements that we want to see in Manitoba.

With that, Madam Speaker, I do not think that Bill 203 would do us justice. As a matter of fact, I am sure it will not be passed, because we want to pass Bill 67, which would give the Manitoba Telephone System an opportunity to be privatized and to sell shares.

I certainly will be one that will line up and try to buy shares in this new company.

An Honourable Member: You can afford it, Ed.

Mr. Helwer: Yes, I will be—you too. Good for you. Great. Glad to see some of the opposition members even want to buy shares in a company like MTS.

An Honourable Member: Good. That must mean they are in favour of it.

Mr. Helwer: That is right. They must really agree that MTS is a good company and that it will provide the services necessary and will operate well under private ownership or under a shareholder basis.

With that I will conclude my comments, but I am sure I cannot support Bill 203.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I am very appreciative of the opportunity to speak on this particular bill, because it is one that I think underlines a very important set of decisions that this Legislature is making in this session with respect to the sale of the Manitoba Telephone System, the privatization of Manitoba Telephone System, creating the opportunity for Manitobans to buy directly the Manitoba Telephone system. Although that particular issue is dealt with directly by another piece of legislation, these two particular bills are very much intertwined in the principles of that debate.

Yesterday, Madam Speaker, I sat in this Chamber and heard the—I believe it was yesterday—speech of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) dealing with the government bill allowing for the privatization of the Manitoba Telephone System. I listened to his speech, and he put forward some very, I think, compelling and strong arguments as to why governments in a province like Manitoba should have been in the business providing telephones. Many of the points that he raised were supported by members of this side. The member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach), I know, made comment about bringing a better line service into his constituency some years ago when he was first elected as an MLA and that service happening because the trustees of the Crown corporation, as represented by us in this Legislature, were able to convince the board, put pressure on the board, to look at something they otherwise would not have provided.

However, Madam Speaker, no matter how compelling those arguments are, there is one observation that I make, one point that struck me very strongly in listening to the Leader of the Opposition. That is, like so many things we have to deal with in our society today, so many issues of public policy that this Legislature, that the cabinet, has

to deal with in moving our province forward, facts of life, I guess, have overtaken our perception of the way things are done.

Let me elaborate a little bit for a moment, Madam Speaker. The world that the Leader of the Opposition described is a world that just a few years ago, when we were embarking under the leadership of the member for Springfield—at that time the member for Virden constituency and the minister responsible for the telephone system—the process that we embarked on in revitalizing the capital plan of MTS, incurring, guaranteed by the public of Manitoba, some \$800 million, which has a cost to the taxpayers because it adds to our borrowing and our ability to raise money and the cost of money to this province. When the minister embarked, with cabinet's full concurrence, this caucus's full concurrence, on that venture, at that time, I remember the sense of technology starting to raise questions with us, is this the right decision? Are we making one that we will regret in all too short of time? I remember one of my colleagues, the then member for Pembina, raising that point about the new technology. Were we successful? I think we were, but that world in which we made that decision in 1988-89—and I look to the minister for his concurrence—that world is quickly moving out from under us. As we speak, it is moving out from under us.

The Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues in the New Democratic Party, the world that he described in his speech is a world that in a few short years is not even going to be there. It is disappearing. The technology to make it disappear has happened already. It exists already. When you talk about telephone service in northern Manitoba, in rural Manitoba, in any isolated region with small density of population, the great difficulty of bringing service there. Certainly, 70, 80 years ago when we started the telephone system, it was virtually impossible, it was unaffordable, to bring that service in. By the pooling of the province we made it affordable over a period of time. My grandparents did not get a telephone in St. Andrews, which is just outside the city, until the '40s. The service was not there or was not affordable to them. So we have seen that growth, we have pooled, but technology has made that difficulty of density and distance not a factor today.

You know, when you look to where the technology has taken us—and I do not profess to be an expert in the

detail, but in the generality companies like Motorola, which are now in the process of planning for the launching of a constellation of cellular-phone satellites—I think it is some 800 in the constellation. I may be wrong on that number. That service will provide cellular telephone service to literally anywhere on the globe. Literally a trapper in northern Manitoba, within the foreseeable future, will be able to call home from anywhere on their trapline with the right equipment.

Will that equipment be immediately affordable? Well, like all things, it starts high, but it does come down. I remember, as a young MLA being elected to this House, buying a cellular phone and the cost being some \$1,800 for a cellular phone. Today you can purchase a cellular phone for under \$100; in fact, you can get one for free. So the cost of those services is coming down.

Technology has made the wire system, has made the physical equipment and plant that had to service distance, that was dependent on density, and all those factors that really underlie, underpin the premise of the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. Doer) speech—the reality of it is that technology is removing those barriers, the barriers that ultimately and logically justified public ownership of this utility for most of this century.

Madam Speaker, I am sure that the people of Manitoba do not expect this Legislature or its government to tie itself to issues and decisions or Crown corporations solely on the basis of the fact that that is the way we have always done it. When the logic behind the reason for some action that we take as a Legislature disappears or changes or erodes or evolves, it is our duty as the trustees of the taxpayers of this province to adjust, to accommodate that.

* (1650)

What we see from the New Democrats, time and time again, is this view of the world that is not leading edge, that is not looking to the future, but is very much based on realities that are quickly shifting away from us and, in many cases, are gone. Whether that be in agriculture or telephones or in education or in a host of other areas, we see them sort of in this time warp about the way the world looked—and, granted, change takes time. It takes time to bring the public to see the change that is happening, to appreciate it, but we on this side of the

House, as the trustees of the taxpayers, are duty bound, I believe, to ensure that we are trying to keep as on top as possible on those issues.

The members of the opposition do not share that same responsibility, and, in fairness, they have an obligation to test us, to question us, to challenge us to ensure that our assumptions are right. But I think, Madam Speaker, if you look anywhere in the world in telecommunications, you see this tremendous shift, technologies that make physical plant on the ground and, hence, the cost of delivering the service or the cost of low density—quickly it is making those not all that relevant to the cost of telecommunications or the ability to provide it, and that has changed dramatically. I did not hear the comments of the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) but—so here we have our utility in Manitoba which is at a crossroads. Do they move forward into the future or do they stay glued to a past? Well, ultimately our utility has to look to the future. We have to ensure that the investment that Manitobans have in this utility is secure, and if this utility is not able to function to its greatest capability in a quickly growing competitive marketplace—and the minister has pointed out time and time again that now 70 percent of the business of this utility is carried on in a competitive marketplace—if this company does not have the tools and the ability and the debt load that it can carry that allows it to be competitive, it will fail. Its value will diminish, and the value of the assets of the taxpayers of Manitoba that we have today will be reduced.

Members opposite, if we do not do this, will not stand here in five years when the company is only worth a fraction of what it is today because it has not been able to function, and say, well, we are sorry about the loss. No, they will blame it on something else.

The day where Manitoba Telephone System existed in a monopoly position where it did not have to worry about competition, those days are gone. So what we have now is we have a publicly owned company with all the constraints of public ownership with a large debt. Besides the debt, I would say, just the inability of any Crown corporation to have a timely and effective decision-making process when they have so many people to answer to makes it difficult for them to compete.

Madam Speaker, I think a very important sign in whether or not this is the right decision is to ask people

in the company, employees in the company who have an understanding of and have studied and looked at the role of their company, who work every day and compete. In my constituency this, by the way, has not been a huge issue. I say to members opposite, I have had about a half-dozen or so, maybe eight or nine of my constituents, people whom I respect who work for MTS who have come to see me. They have had one issue, and that has been concern about the security of their pension. My colleagues have had that. I think the minister has recognized it and we have been working with that, because I do not think there really was a problem but it is a matter of making sure that there is no perception of a problem, that things are done right and properly. Let us remember, a few years ago when we came to power, their pension was not secure at all, just to put it in a little perspective.

That is a legitimate concern, but that is the concern that they bring to us, right? They are not coming and saying, do not. In fact, almost every one of them has told me they are buying shares. One gentleman who figured that, as he looks at telecommunication, his particular role is likely one that will not be there five or six or seven years from now, he is already thinking in his own mind that he is getting ready to get into that business if that role ends at MTS. The word I get from them is, get on with it because we think we can compete. We have a good customer base. We service our customers. We think we will do well. Give us the chance to compete.

I know my time is running short, Madam Speaker. I have two minutes. But the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) made a point. He talked about Faneuil, and I would love to have a whole hour to talk about Faneuil because one of the things we have learned is we managed to hook up through a lot of good negotiations with one of the best companies in that business in North America. The work that they are doing to bring business to Manitoba has been successful. How many employees now with Faneuil? I look to the minister. How many?

An Honourable Member: Well over 300.

Mr. Praznik: Well over 300 additional people working at pretty good jobs. They have been a success, but the minister says, what about Manitobans? Are there not Manitoba entrepreneurs? There are. The Manitoba Telephone System, as I have come to appreciate, is full of

entrepreneurs like that, and the people from Manitoba who are working with companies like Faneuil and who are developing call centres and who are learning this business are doing very well and are very competitive in North America and the Manitoba Telephone System in this new world, we believe, I believe personally, will be highly competitive.

So, when you come to this bill, this is more of a dinosaur protection bill than anything else, because every government, as times change, governments have to have the ability to come back to first principles, which are, if we are going to be involved in an enterprise, what is the reason? And there may be enterprises that government should be in, in the future. We would not be afraid to get into them, but there are businesses we should not be, and we need to be out of them. McKenzie Seeds comes to mind. A number of other companies, the logging companies were in, but that will change from time to time and members opposite should never be afraid. They have a right to question. I do not doubt that at all, and I am glad they do. It makes for good debate, and it makes for good public discussion, but let us never tie ourselves that we do not have the flexibility to make the right decisions for the people of our province. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a few comments on the record in respect of this act as well, the act entitled The Public Assets Protection Act. As my comments will indicate, in fact, this act is the very opposite of a public assets protection act. This is a public assets destruction act, and I will go into some of the reasons why I say that.

Let us take a look at, first of all, the definitions. In Section 1 it says, in this act, "Crown entity" means and not surprisingly the Manitoba Telephone System is on the top of the list. In addition there is Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, Liquor Control Commission, Manitoba Development Corporation, Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, Manitoba Trading Corporation and "any other Crown entity designated in the regulations" so clearly it is intended to get every single Crown entity that one could possibly think of. But, again, as I said, it is not surprising that Manitoba Telephone System is at the top of this list because of the, in fact, opposition of the members from the New Democratic Party to the sale of the Manitoba Telephone

System in the way that has been proposed by the government of Manitoba.

The interesting section is the government in Section 2. "The government shall not"—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable minister that he is not to refer to section and clauses of the bill but speak to the principles of the bill contained in those specific sections.

* (1700)

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The principle here is not that this bill says we have to have a referendum when we want to look at selling a particular entity as defined by the act, but in fact, not only does it say the entity but any part of the entity and that is not even defined. What does it mean, any part of the entity?

Every time the Liquor Control Commission wants to sell a bottle of its assets, do we have to have a referendum here in the province of Manitoba? I am being facetious in that respect, and I hope that the courts and the members opposite would come to some resolution, a reasonable resolution of how to interpret this if this in fact would ever be put into law. But here we have saying, any part of the asset, and this, I would submit, Madam Speaker, creates tremendous difficulty.

The way I would want to illustrate these difficulties is in fact the issue of competition. Competition is the fact. It is the order of the day. It permeates our society, and if we think that we can avoid it by setting up walls around our province, the truth of the matter is that business will pass us by, jobs will pass us by, tax-paying corporations or their employees will pass us by. Competition, if we are to remain a viable province, an aggressive province, a province that provides for its people in terms of social services—in that respect I include child care, education, family services, these essential services that government is the best to be there to protect—if we are to preserve and protect these, clearly, we have to attract business, and we have to remain competitive. Competition requires quick action.

As members opposite might know, I spent four years in the private sector, and that in fact taught me a lot of things that I had not seen before. My entire career was in the public service. I had been a member of the Attorney General's department for many, many years in very many roles, and it was a good experience.

An Honourable Member: Union member.

Mr. Toews: I was a union member, and I was the vice-president of our union, I might add. It taught me a lot of lessons, the public service. I will still speak in favour of unions because I believe that there is a role for unions, but that is another issue. What we will see, and what I learned from Great-West Life, is that there is another side to the story. It is not government that creates wealth. Government can be a good steward of wealth. Government can create opportunities, but ultimately we have to rely on the private sector to bring the business here. I remember, when I first went to Great-West Life in 1991, before I went to Great-West Life, I had a conversation with an old friend who worked for Great-West Life, and I said, well, should I give up my civil service career, my public service career and come over to Great-West Life? He said, come over here; it is the closest thing that you will have to cradle-to-grave protection other than the government. I thought that was a curious comment.

I went there, and suddenly I was caught up in one of the largest corporate re-organizations that Great-West Life had seen in its 100 years of existence, because not even the employees there who had been there for a long time realized that the world was changing very, very rapidly around them, Madam Speaker. It was changing, and the ultimate decisions that were made resulted in 200 people being laid off in Great-West Life in 1992. Let me tell you, that is a very difficult time. When any person loses their job, it is a difficult time, not just for that person, but for the entire family, for the community, for the tax base, for everyone. It is a difficult time. But one person told me, in that corporation, do not look at this as losing 200 jobs. Look at this as saving 1,800 other jobs, because when the banks come in, and when you are in debt to them and you do not have any choices, the banks will make the decisions for you, so the point being, Madam Speaker, that what you have to do—[interjection] The member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) says, oh, the top 20 companies do not have to worry about the banks.

That is exactly what Confederation Life in Toronto said: We have been around for 125 years; we have multimillion dollars in assets. Within a year, that company was gone, and where were their employees? Out on the street. Do you know why? Because that corporation did not respond to competition. So where was the member opposite? Where was the NDP government in Ontario at that time when these people were out on the street?

The corporation that is responsible to its employees is a corporation that responds quickly to the marketplace to protect not just its assets, but to protect its employees, to protect the community that it lives in. Members opposite might one day take a look at the private sector and just spend some time there and see that there are caring people there. There are people who care about their community, and they make these decisions in the best interests of the community, not for some obscure shareholder somewhere. They care about the community. Maybe if they had some experience in the private sector, they would learn that as well.

So, in respect of Great-West Life, this was an issue not just of 200 layoffs, but saving 1,800 jobs and, you know, Madam Speaker, they did that. They stayed here in Manitoba. They saved 1,800 jobs, and today they are expanding more and more because of, I believe, the business climate here in this province. Do you know what that means when they expand here? They create more jobs. They create a bigger tax base, and we pay for the social services that we are the stewards of.

That is what it means. Competition requires certain action, and it is the fools who stay buried with their heads in the sand. It is like Confederation Life that ran massive bills, massive debt, and said, oh, we do not have to worry; we have been around for a hundred and a quarter years. Within 12 months that huge, huge corporation was gone, and the vultures were picking up after the corporation had gone, and where were the employees? The employees were on the street, and the NDP government in Ontario, with all its platitudes, could do nothing.

Well, Madam Speaker, that is not what this government is about. We care about people. We care about these corporations because they provide that

lifeblood. They create that wealth so that we can pay for our social services. That is what we are trying to do.

Now, what are they doing here with this particular bill, getting right back to this bill? What are they doing? They are saying, well, what we want to do is have a referendum in respect of the sale of any part—any part—of the corporation, not just the whole corporation, but any part of it, whatever that means. So we have some entrepreneuring young man or woman inside, let us say, MTS, and they see an opportunity. They see an opportunity for a joint partnership with another corporation, but that would involve an exchange of shares, in fact, a sale. They say, let us get together with another corporation to move very, very quickly and capitalize on this particular business proposition.

* (1710)

Well, you know what the problem is right now. The young or old person who is employed by MTS will have to go to his or her manager. That manager will then have to take it up with the higher manager, then to the CEO. Then it goes to the board. The board kicks the idea around a bit. Then it goes to the minister. Then the minister, if he or she is convinced, goes to cabinet. Then cabinet discusses the idea. Then, if legislation is required, we have another six months to a year.

So, for a simple business deal involving an exchange of shares, we wait a year, 18 months, two years, and this is what they are saying. Not only is the present system so hamstrung that any opportunities are eaten up by the marketplace long before that entrepreneuring young person within the corporation ever has an opportunity to get that idea as far as the board, that decision has already been made by the marketplace. That idea is long gone.

Now what they are doing is adding another layer—another layer—to the already huge problem that we have, and that is to say, well, it is not good enough that cabinet decides it. It is not good enough that we pass a bill in the House, as we are doing now. What we want to do now is have a referendum on the sale of a part of a corporation. It could be a minor part, it could be a few shares, it could be worth a \$100,000, and now we have the entire province of Manitoba voting on this business proposal. This is lunacy at its best or, should I say, at its

worst. How any reasonable thinking person could even do or suggest this kind of thing.

You know, they simply want to say, we want to preserve everything, we want to keep everything. That reminds me of the story about the union negotiator who came up back to his membership and that union negotiator said, I have got some great news. You know, you were making \$20 an hour before, you are now making \$25 an hour. The bad news is, the company has left and you do not have a job. That is the reality. That is what our friends across the way want to do.

I want to make it very clear on the record that I am not against Crown corporations. I favour Crown corporations, I favour public ownership, but I do not favour them because they are Crown corps or because it is publicly owned. That is too simplistic. You look at the purpose. What purpose is it serving? Is it still serving the best interests of the people of Manitoba? That is the basis you make these decisions on. As the Minister for Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik) has said, the time of a monopoly in MTS is over. Everyone in the world has recognized that. There are huge turnovers in terms of movement from publicly owned corporations to privately owned corporations for many of the same reasons that private corporations are constantly responding to the demands of the marketplace.

One of the reasons why Confederation Life of Ontario is no longer here is because, like our friends across the way, they had their heads buried in the sand and they said, we have been around for 125 years, nothing can happen to us. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, I, too, am happy to be able to stand and address the concerns of the bill that was presented from the other side. I think that it really has to be given serious thought in terms of where they are coming from, because I think that the member who is proposing this is certainly out of touch in terms of what the real world is offering today. In the communication systems that we have today, and I look back in my short years in terms of business when I first started as a business person, I relied on the communications that were available to us at that time. I made good use of them because I felt that, in order to be competitive in this world, you had to take advantage of everything that was available to you. If you did not, you were not in business for very long.

I guess it is a lesson that maybe the honourable members across the way have yet to learn, but I think that it is something that—you know, when I sit and listen to the members in this House across the way, and I am going to be very brief on this because I do not think that I am going to convince them or change their ways, because the number of years that I have been in this Legislature, it is something that I am amazed that people in today's society can even think the way they do and still live in the province of Manitoba. This is a bill that is going to tie the hands of everybody in MTS. Instead of giving an opportunity which we as a government are attempting to provide with Bill 67, the members across the way have put, in so few years, MTS in a position that they cannot compete with the overriding debt that they are having to contend with—\$878 million in debt which MTS has to deal with.

Anybody who has been in business today knows that you cannot work and survive and pay interest at the extent that a lot of companies are out there doing. That is why we are seeing companies in the business world today merging together. They are coming together to strengthen their positions, only because of the fact that they cannot survive; they have to remain competitive. So what we are trying to do on this side of the House is to try to give MTS a level playing field that they can compete.

This is a global market. When I started in business, my market was within the city of Winnipeg or the province of Manitoba, but my centre of influence was probably just within the confines of the boundaries of the constituency that I now represent in this Legislature. That was my centre of influence. Today, some 20 years later and even more recent than that, it has come to expand well beyond that. I am doing business with people and contacts with people who are in Calgary or St. John's or wherever that might be.

An Honourable Member: St. Louis?

Mr. McAlpine: The member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) says, St. Louis. Yes, I will do business with anybody in the world. The globe is my market.

Now, Madam Speaker, if we are going to impose legislation on business—I mean, today it is hard enough in competing with the competition and the challenges that are out there today—as the members across the way are proposing referendums in terms of selling off any portion

of a company, that company is not going to be here to be able to deal with that referendum, I dare say, there is not going to be anything to sell. How can you pile up the amount of debt that MTS has been able to build over a number of years? That debt has occurred over possibly the last 10, 12 years; it has not been the life of the corporation.

Granted, yes, that service back in the years when the first telephones were brought into Manitoba and the monopoly was established, it had a purpose, but we are living in today's communication and today's competition and we have to address that. We have to realize that, because if we do not realize it, we are all going to be tied with the debt. That is the only thing that we own in this province as far as MTS is concerned, is the debt. There is no revenue there. Furthermore, we are going to have to go and incur a further expense of some \$600 million in order to stay pace with what is needed in order to stay competitive.

* (1720)

Now, to me, I think the reasonable thing to do, as Bill 67 is offering, is to allow people of Manitoba to take ownership of that. How can you ask people to work in a company or to address the concerns and be competitive if they are not prepared to take ownership of that particular facility?

Madam Speaker, I think it is important that we look at the aspects of what MTS is prepared to offer and give them the opportunity to be successful and not to place barriers, which we have been doing as a government by the mere fact that we have been controlling their management over the past number of years. That may have worked many years ago, but it is not working today. When decisions have to be made, they have to be made now in order to remain competitive in a competitive world, and the world is our market. I have businesses in the communication business in Sturgeon Creek, that most of their business is in Asia or South America. Now, if they were not allowed to be competitive and have access to the communication and the technology that is available to them, they could not compete.

So I know that I have other colleagues who want to speak to this, and I guess I am going to sever my remarks here at this point because I am not going to achieve anything in terms of trying to convince the other members

that this is a ridiculous proposal that they are offering here and just say to the members on this side that we should, instead of supporting what they are offering, look to Bill 67 and try to do what we can in the interest of MTS and all Manitobans. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): I am pleased to rise and put a few words on record. I have to say, I am appalled by this bill, appalled but not surprised, and not surprised because I think this is one more example of how the opposition just wishes everything to remain exactly the same.

That is human nature. All of us have a problem, I think, trying to cope with change, but we on this side, as has so often been said, are the ones that are in government, and we do not have the luxury of pretending that we can just do whatever we want to do. We are in government, and we have to remember that we are dealing with the real world.

It is very difficult to change, and I hear some comments from the other side. We have to recognize that MTS was created in a time when it had a monopoly. The world has changed in the last 90 years. We are no longer operating in a monopoly situation. We have to adapt. The status quo is no longer a viable option.

One of the members talked about the debt that MTS has. We have to remember that we have to protect the taxpayers. The debt, I do not think any member that has spoken yet today, is one of the worst of the tel companies here in Canada. Are the members opposite saying that we have to be putting the taxpayers' dollars at risk? We have to make changes. We have to remember that we are living in a world where the changes in technology are moving so quickly. I think the figure that has been quoted, there is more than \$500 million will have to be put into MTS to just maintain its competition.

I see that my time is running out, but, again, I just want to say that government has to be responsible. Crown corporations, we must remember to ask, as the member for Rossmere (Mr. Toews) said, is it still serving the purpose for which that Crown corporation was first enacted? We simply have to remember that we have to also move with the times. Seventy percent of MTS' operations are now open to competition. We do not have the luxury of being in a monopoly situation anymore. We

do not have the luxury of pretending the world has not changed. We do not have the luxury of pretending that competition has not entered the whole—

Madam Speaker, I am sorry that I do not have more time, so I move, seconded by the member—oh, you want to speak? Okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (Ms. Radcliffe), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 205—The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), Bill 205, The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la thylose parasitaire de l'orme), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
[agreed]

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Madam Speaker: Bill 202, The Home Care Protection and Consequential Amendments Act.

REPORT STAGE—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 300—The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), that Bill 300, The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège biblique Catherine Booth de l'Armée du Salut, reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Laurendeau: Madam Speaker, I believe if you ask the House you might find a willingness to call it 5:30.

Madam Speaker: Is there a will of the House to call it 5:30? Agreed? [agreed]

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 17, 1996

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