

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 27, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I have the distinct pleasure this afternoon to table the report of the Manitoba Task Force on Literacy, entitled Pathways for the Learner.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to present the Third Annual Report, the report for 1988-89, of the Manitoba Law Foundation.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Pembina Crest School, and their guests from the Province of Quebec, forty Grade 9 students under the direction of M. Beaudoin. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans).

Also this afternoon from the Riverside School, we have twenty-four students from Grade 7. These students are under the direction of Mrs. Saunders. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Douglas Scott and Company Untendered Contract

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite like to pride themselves on being expert managers and of running an efficient and open Government. Yet they have consistently continued to grant thousands of dollars of untendered contracts, many of which leave this province on a weekly basis with no accountability to the Manitoba taxpayer. Yesterday the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey) failed to account in any substantive way for the \$10,000 untendered contract to Douglas Scott Communications to summarize research previously done on elder abuse. Looking at the work performed by Douglas Scott and Company and comparing it to the research done in the past, how can the Minister tell us he got \$10,000 worth? More importantly, how were the seniors of Manitoba well served by this particular political spin?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, let me be very straightforward

with the Leader of the Opposition. It was our Government that proclaimed The Freedom of Information Act. We have done nothing that we are ashamed of, we have hired no one that we are ashamed of, and we expect excellent work and excellent results. I am ashamed of the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), who pressured and pushed the Government to get on with the issue of elder abuse. Now all she has to criticize is the work done by an individual and a personal attack on somebody's work that has been done on behalf of the seniors.

* (1335)

Elderly Abuse Discussion Paper Author

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Well, that is an interesting answer, Mr. Speaker, but interestingly enough, in 1982, Donna Schell wrote an excellent report on elder abuse for the Manitoba Association of Gerontology. In April, this ministry hired the same Donna Schell to write a report, essentially a Discussion Paper on Elder Abuse. If Donna Schell wrote the Discussion Paper on Elder Abuse, what exactly did Douglas Scott Communications do?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what year the Honourable Member said that was written by Donna Schell, 1982?

Mrs. Carstairs: Yes, hired again by your Government in 1989.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, again, it just shows the lack of action by the former administration, clearly an obvious lack of action by the former administration. Again, the work done by that individual was good work, again was used, as well as Doug Scott, to deal with the very important issue of which, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party had been pressing very hard to do. We provide action, we get on with the job, and all they can criticize are the people who are doing the work.

I am sure the people of Manitoba will judge as to the capabilities of the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) and how she would administer the affairs of the province.

Discussion Paper Costs

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): But I would like to ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) a very simple question. Does the Minister of Finance believe that it is necessary, in the purview of good efficient Government, to pay \$16,000 to warm up a report from 1982?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The Government often brings in independent sources to

help in its deliberations and its development. But let me say, the final judge of this of course will be the Provincial Auditor, because obviously the Provincial Auditor will be looking into whether or not money was well spent, whether it was effectively spent, and will accordingly pass judgment, and that is the way it should be, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Auditor is a servant of the Legislature and the people of Manitoba and he will pass judgment.

Dr. S. L. Bond Untendered Contract

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a new question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), on March 22, a \$205,800 contract was entered into with a Dr. S. L. Bond to conduct research, again untendered. Can the Minister tell this House what Dr. Bond will be researching for her nearly one-quarter of a million dollars, and is it the policy of his particular ministry to award contracts of this magnitude without first having gone to tender?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Let me say, first of all, that we have to determine what is an untendered contract and what is an unsolicited proposal because that is what this particular issue was. Dr. Bond came to our department with a proposal to conduct research into the area of the values that Manitobans bring to the workplace. We analyzed that proposal. We determined that, yes, it was a reasonable proposal, one that would provide good information, and accordingly went through the process of arranging to have that contract let. But it was not untendered in the sense that the department created the issue and then went out and selected somebody to do it. It was the other way around.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, that is an interesting response, Mr. Speaker. We thought that the management style was coming from the ministry. Now we understand the management style is coming from outside of the ministry.

Consultants Out-Of-Province Bids

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, with a supplementary question to the same Minister, this Minister said, and I quote: "When the Government looks for expertise and advice on specific matters, it goes to consultants, particularly out-of-province consultants for those who have certain expertise and advice that they could give the Government." Is the Minister saying to Manitobans that there are no consultants in Manitoba capable of providing expert advice to his Government?

* (1340)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, that is a silly comment, quite frankly. The Leader of the Opposition is suggesting we do not have consultants in Manitoba capable of doing

work for the Province of Manitoba. It is a silly statement and I stand by that.

With regard to an out-of-province situation where you are dealing with a very volatile market in Ottawa, probably the most volatile in the country in terms of office space, in terms of accommodation, in terms of personnel and in terms of needs, you want to go to a consultant that you have confidence in and that is exactly what we did.

Provincial Bids

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): I think the Minister digs himself in even further. He is now implying, I think, to this House that he does not have any confidence in any consultants who actually live in Manitoba. He might be surprised of the talent we have here in Manitoba and the confidence he could have.

Will he and his colleagues provide consultants in this province and researchers in this province a full opportunity to bid on Government ideas and Government work instead of consistently passing out untendered contracts, all too often to people outside of the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, hands out contracts on a regular basis to Manitoba consultants as a result of tenders. I do not know the exact number and I will find it out for the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), but I can tell you it is probably 50 or a 100 contracts over the past year, if not more, and she raises the question of two, suggesting that is the practice of the department. That is not the case. In one case, we have an unsolicited proposal from Dr. Bond, no different, quite frankly, than the unsolicited proposal from Wang Canada Limited, which the Members of the Opposition agreed to and thought it was a great idea. I do not understand where now an unsolicited proposal from Dr. Bond constitutes a vilification of Manitoba consultants, and yet an unsolicited proposal from Wang Canada is a good deal.

AIDS Reporting Confidentiality Breach

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, AIDS unfortunately is a disease that is beginning to touch too many lives in Canada and North America. In fact, the personal part of this terrible disease is coming to Manitoba this week with the arrival of the quilt, symbolizing the tragic death of many members of our Canadian society of all walks of life.

Part of the guidelines dealing with AIDS, the HIV infection, from both the Department of Health and the federal centre for AIDS, is to have information held in a very confidential manner which might lead to the identification of any individuals. I would ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) whether this is still part of the guidelines in his department.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: My second question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), does he feel that the information his department released to the Canadian Diseases Weekly Report, dated May 20, with a list of a number of individuals, and I will not go into the specific details because it would breach the guidelines, did indeed breach the department's own guidelines and the recommendation from the federal centre for AIDS?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, the information that would have been contained in that, and I have not seen that information because that reporting process is undertaken as a routine reporting mechanism the department uses on AIDS as well as other diseases. It would be my understanding of the guidelines that HIV-positive individuals who are not suffering from the AIDS syndrome in a way requiring hospitalization and identification through the regular channels, any of that information would not be made available on a names basis, only by a number of cases basis.

Mr. Doer: The Minister did not answer the question. The question was, did he feel that this publication and the information released from Cadham Lab and his department did breach the guidelines, in terms of any information that can identify any individuals with this terrible disease?

* (1345)

I would ask a further question to the Minister. If his department is releasing information that could identify individuals, does he not feel it is necessary to correct that action because we know that to deal with the AIDS disease, detection and testing is absolutely paramount with confidentiality. I would ask the Minister, does he feel that this will jeopardize our collective fight against this terrible disease with that release of information from his department?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with the specific information that my honourable friend is referring to because there are reporting procedures in place whereby we have to report HIV-positive numbers in the Province of Manitoba. Our reporting system does not allow identification by name of those people identified with AIDS. That is a highly confidential piece of information between that individual who is so identified as being HIV positive and the physician. Not even the lab tests, the people performing the lab tests, know whose blood sample is being analyzed.

However, Mr. Speaker, where individuals have AIDS and are hospitalized, then their identity does become public because of the nature of reporting in the hospital that they have the disease, but HIV-positive tests are to remain positive. When I see the nature of the information my honourable friend is referring to, I will be able to answer, and I would believe that the guidelines have been followed as they have been in the past.

Mr. Doer: I am a little concerned with the answers we received from the Minister. Last week he would not confirm the underspending in home care. The week before, he would not confirm the underspending in health care. Today, he alleges not to have been aware of this situation.

AIDS Education Misconceptions

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), as the further information in the publication indicates—and again it is information produced from his department and sent to the Canadian Disease Manual—that a person exposed to her son dying of AIDS was one of the persons listed in HIV. Given the fact that is not one of the causes that we believe for AIDS, does the Minister feel that is inconsistent with the information put out by his department on what can cause AIDS in our society?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I know my honourable friend is wanting to make certain allegations against the reporting system that we have in place for AIDS. I do not report that information to Ottawa. That is done by my departmental staff, inclusive of the Cadham Lab. That information does not even cross my desk.

If, as my honourable friend is attempting to allege, the very strict confidential guidelines as to who is HIV positive have been violated, then I will deal with that very severely because that breaks guidelines and codes that are in place across this country. If that has been violated, I will investigate and, if that is the determination, action will be taken very swiftly. Without seeing routine information that goes from Cadham Lab to Ottawa, I cannot comment on my honourable friend's question.

Head Injuries Services

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): My question is for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). I raised this question last week with the Acting Minister of Health. Every day, five Manitobans sustain head injuries and this amounts to 2,000 individuals per year. Medical advances will allow 1,800 of them to live, but almost one-third will suffer a wide range of physical, emotional impairment. Families of these victims of head injuries continue to suffer. My question is, can the Minister of Health tell us, tell this House, what services exist for these individuals in Manitoba?

* (1350)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I had taken, or my honourable friend, the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), had taken that question as notice last week. I was quite concerned when I saw the figure of five individuals per day suffering head injuries. We have been attempting to determine the source of that statistic because that would be a very alarming figure. To date, we have not been able to confirm how accurate that figure is.

However, in the Province of Manitoba presently, there are approximately 26 to 28 individuals who are head injury victims. They are receiving a range of services dependent upon their needs which can be placement

in an acute care institution or a long-term care facility. They are receiving support services from physicians, from nursing staff as well as, where appropriate, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, my information comes from the Manitoba Head Injury Association. I believe the Minister has the same report also. I am willing to table that report.

Head Injuries Association Report

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): My further question is, on February 1 of this year, the Manitoba Head Injury Association, a voluntary non-profit organization, presented to his department a report which I talked about earlier. Can he tell us why he has not responded to that report so far and what action he plans to take right now?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the phenomenon of head injuries of the very serious nature of the 26 to 28 Manitobans currently suffering appears to be on the increase, for instance, because of what appears to be increased use of three wheelers and other all-terrain vehicles. Now, the phenomenon appears to be growing. In the light of that, this Government may well have to react to the head injury phenomenon in a more pro-active way.

Currently, given that 26 to 28 individuals are suffering from severe head injuries, the types of services that I have indicated to my honourable friend are being made available within the health care system for those suffering from severe head injury.

Head Injuries Community-Based Programs

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary, as the Minister has indicated, there are about 25 patients at the Health Sciences Centre. How can the Minister justify spending about \$2 million per year for these victims who are just having room and board service, and there are no specialized community services? My question is, can he tell us when he plans to establish the community-based health care system to meet the demands of these patients and save taxpayers' money?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): My honourable friend makes an interesting proposal. In some cases, community-based care and outpatient services are the appropriate type of service for any one of those unfortunate Manitobans who are suffering from head injuries. In other cases, institutional care is the most appropriate method of care for those individuals, and that is being provided.

Now, that is not my assessment, that is the professional assessment of those who are dealing directly with those individuals. As I have said, the phenomenon appears to be growing and it may be another very substantive challenge to the health care

system, to provide a unique set of services to a very special accident victim category. That being the case, we are, as we always have been and as previous Governments have been, willing to address that issue as best we can.

Workers Compensation Board Inquiries

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, on April 7 last, all Members received a letter from Mr. Brian King, outlining and announcing the creation of a registration and inquiry branch to handle the inquiries from Members. This new service was described as being dedicated to responding to all benefit-related inquiries.

Now, the problem is that this new service actually removes the individual's file from the system, either the appeal system or the cheque preparation system. As a result of this, the very act of inquiring adds delay to an already difficult process or situation. Will the Minister instruct the board to ensure that individual's files do not lose their place in the system by virtue of being answers to an inquiry?

* (1355)

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister responsible for The Workers Compensation Act): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's concerns. We appreciate the fact that we have to have an inquiry for Members of the Legislature to inquire on behalf of their constituents. I will take that up with Mr. King. Thank you.

Mr. Patterson: With a supplementary to the Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board (Mr. Connery), I neglected to mention that initially. I apologize.

Medical Consultations

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): A second problem arises when there is a difference of opinion between a company doctor and the board's doctor. In such a case, it will of course go to appeal and the individual is without benefits during that particular time. Will the Minister inform the House today what interim steps he plans to take or are being taken to alleviate this suffering while more longer-term and long-run steps are being taken to alleviate this pressing problem?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister responsible for The Workers Compensation Act): Mr. Speaker, naturally when there are severe cases and the board requires additional information, they do go to expert doctors who are specialists in the field. I think that is part of the system. When we go to that length to find out the extent of injuries and the assistance required by the injured worker, naturally it is going to take some additional time but, when there are claimants that are obviously valid, then advances are made to those individuals.

Appeal Delays

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): A second supplementary to the same Minister, the Board of Appeals must work more frequently in order to alleviate this unacceptably long delay and backlog. What plans does the Minister have for a more timely schedule of hearings of the Final Appeals Board, rather than the more or less ad hoc basis that they are on now?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister responsible for The Workers Compensation Act): It is not on an ad hoc basis, but I have never at any time suggested to the Members that the time for the final appeal is adequate. I had discussions with the board on Monday, and this Government and our department is looking at a method of improving that. Hopefully, within the next month, we will have some resolve as to improve the delays for appeals.

Pay Equity Private Sector Extension

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond). We have a new Minister responsible for the Status of Women, a new Minister of Labour, yet we have not heard one word from this Government of late about the incredible wage gap that still exists between men and women.

We on this side of the House in the New Democratic Party want to know what this Government's plans are when it comes to pay equity. We have heard words about consultation in the Speech from the Throne. We have heard nothing about two-thirds of the women in the workforce who still only get 68 cents for every dollar in the private sector, something that my Liberal friends will not touch, because they do not support it.

I want to know -(Interjection)- My question is very simple, to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond). What is this Government's timetable when it comes to extension of pay equity in terms of external agencies, school boards, municipalities and the private sector?

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, we are starting discussions, in fact continuing discussions with the school boards and the municipalities, so that we can have the extension of pay equity. As soon as these discussions are completed, then we will bring in a firm timetable.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: That is the trouble. We keep hearing platitude after platitude, consultation after consultation, and nothing is happening.

Health Care Sector

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): My question is to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), because when it comes to living up to the legislation that is now place, that this Government has bragged about supporting,

they are nowhere when it comes to paying up. I want to know from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) why is it that he is breaking the spirit and the intent of the pay equity legislation that they supported? Why will this mean Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) not come up with the 1 percent of payroll, a payroll for the health care sector, an agreement that has been -(Interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister of Health.

* (1400)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I know my honourable friend called me the honourable mean person, as rules require. Mr. Speaker, to answer my honourable friend's very important question, I want to tell her that \$2.3 million have been set aside by the Manitoba Health Services Commission to honour the 1 percent payroll commitment under The Pay Equity Act. It has not flowed because the respective unions and management have not yet reached an agreement as to how to flow that fund. We have set aside the money to meet that commitment, Mr. Speaker. We are in full compliance with the law. What we need is the final arranged-upon agreement, in co-operation with unions and management, to make the money flow that we already have set aside to meet the required legislation. I hope that satisfies my honourable friend from the Opposition.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, that is an embarrassment. The Minister does not even know what he is talking about. My mean honourable Minister of Health—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I would have to ask the Honourable Member for St. Johns to kindly withdraw those remarks. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Yes, I apologize. I will withdraw the word "mean."

Mr. Speaker: I would like thank the Honourable Member for St. Johns. Would you kindly put your question now, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that for want of funding, which works out to 96 cents over four years per worker in the health care sector, this Minister will not come up with the money.

My question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is, since he has got his facts all wrong, why is he dragging his heels, not living up to the law that he supported and putting in place the funding, and stop this nonsense of forcing the parties who have negotiated in good faith, both union and management, who are now being forced this week to go to the Labour Board to have this matter resolved

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: When is he going to put the money on the table?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order please. There is a question there.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, with all the kindness I can muster to my honourable friend, I have indicated to her that we have set aside, I am informed, \$2.3 million dollars at the Manitoba Health Services Commission, which will—Mr. Speaker, I expected this question from my honourable friend months ago, but it only came today.

Mr. Speaker, the money has been set aside. My honourable friend says that is nonsense. That is fact, \$2.3 million has been set aside, which we anticipate will meet retroactively the requirements as mandated by legislation. The unions and management, at the last information I had, were attempting to work out the formula for the distribution of that money that we have set aside.

Urban Native Strategy Consultants

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): There is not too much action in original matters in the 14 months since this Government took office, except a delaying or a holding action. At a time when the E-12 Guidelines are being changed and post-secondary education funding cut, the position of Director of Native Education has been permitted to be vacant for a year.

Outside consultants were hired to review the Native Affairs Secretariat, and their report has been gathering dust for over six months with no indication that any of these recommendations will be implemented. Outside consultants have now been entrusted with the responsibility of developing the Government's Urban Native Strategy. Mr. Speaker, it looks like we are facing another year of Government operations of Native Affairs without ministerial direction or policy.

My question to the Minister responsible for Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) is this. What other explanation can he give for why this Government would give an outside consultant the responsibility, when the aboriginal community had already last year established its own Unity Conference in preparation for full and active participation in the development of an urban Indian and Metis strategy?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member of the Liberal Party for that first question in this month and a half on Native issues. It certainly is not much of a priority with him, when it took till the third last day of the Session to ask a question. I have to say, my colleague from the New Democratic Party is much more interested and aware of Native Affairs issues and has a lot more interest and in fact participated in activities.

Specifically, we have had many Native people involved in the work of consultants, in work of the activities of the Urban Native Strategy. The report has been

submitted recently, and I am very pleased with the input that has come from all the Indian and Metis communities within Manitoba, as it relates to the Urban Native Strategy.

Native Affairs Secretariat Staffing

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): The answer is yes. You have received information, yes, but basically what kind of policy? When will a permanent director be named to the Native Affairs Secretariat so that this department can get doing the work it was established to do, instead of using outside consultants to do its work? Does this Minister not have confidence in his own staff?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have confidence in my staff. Mr. Speaker, we are working to seek an individual who can carry out the responsibilities on a full-time basis of the Native Affairs Secretariat.

Policy

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): I am still waiting for some indication that policy has been developed because we still need to know how much longer will the aboriginal community have to wait for policies to be agreed upon so that negotiations leading to decisions can be made on matters such as Indian taxation, Indian gaming, child and family services, indigenous issues, education on and off reserves, etc.

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if the Liberal Critic (Mr. Herold Driedger) had been paying attention, he would have noticed during the Budget that we in fact did move on a taxation issue dealing with Indian reserves, and the removal of taxation of telephone calls is a very important issue when it comes to the communications of our Native people.

We have a broad range of issues dealing with the Native community and I will be announcing them very shortly, in fact, major initiatives which there has not been one question asked by the Liberal Party on. Within a day or two, Mr. Speaker, we will be having a major announcement to make on behalf of the Native community of this province.

Canada Pension Plan Reforms

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): My question is to the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey). The matter of the clawback of pension incomes of seniors, as proposed in the federal Budget, has been a matter of debate for a number of weeks now. We have heard the Liberals say that they do not find fault with that proposed clawback of seniors' incomes. We have heard nothing on the part of the Conservatives with respect to their policy. Today, seniors in Manitoba are announcing their campaign against these clawbacks because they believe that these clawbacks are discriminatory and that they undermine the universality of Canada's social programs.

My question to the Minister is, can he indicate how he is prepared or even if he is prepared to support Manitoba seniors in this province in their fight against this unfair clawback of their income and family allowances by his federal counterparts in Ottawa?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I find it most interesting the terminology used by the New Democratic Party, the word "clawback." The seniors and the people of Manitoba would love to claw back some of the money that they frittered away in Saudi Arabia on MTX. That is what I would like to see used as clawback. We would love to claw some of that money out of the sands of Saudi Arabia.

As far as supporting the seniors and the reflection of the federal Budget, it is my responsibility to work with my colleague, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), to make sure that all programs that assist seniors in the purchase of medication and any other related matters are working effectively on behalf of the seniors of Manitoba.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, seniors in this province and others are getting a bit tired of the Minister's puffery and buffoonery in this House. We now know nothing more than we knew before he took his feet to answer that question with respect to the Government's policies or his actions to support seniors.

Seniors Directorate Canada Pension Plan Reforms

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): If the Minister is not prepared to take this issue seriously, I would ask him then if he would direct his staff to take this issue seriously and ask the Seniors Directorate to undertake an analysis of the impact of these clawbacks, which is a commonly accepted term because it is quite descriptive of the way in which the federal Government has attacked seniors in that Budget, the impact of these clawbacks on the income of Manitoba seniors?

* (1410)

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I take very seriously my responsibility as it comes to seniors, far greater than the manner in which the former administration did when you look at the increases in our hydro bills, when you look at the increases in their taxation, all directly related and impacting on the seniors of this province. Seniors are taxpayers as well and we are very sensitive to them.

As far as the impact of the federal Budget, yes, I am quite prepared to take on that responsibility.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, indeed, seniors are concerned about any increase in hydro bills, any increase in taxation. They are concerned about the two increases in Pharmacare deductibles for seniors since this Government has taken office. They are concerned about the fact that those increases in deductibles for seniors are going to be coming in effect on a regular basis year after year after year because of the policy decision of this Government.

Canada Pension Plan Reforms

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): When the Minister asks his staff to undertake that review, is he prepared to ask them to analyze the present impact as well as the potential impact over the next number of years as more and more seniors are impacted by the erosion of their income by the clawbacks? Will he be prepared, in tabling that analysis, to finally define his Government's position on the federal clawback of Old Age Security and Family Allowance benefits, and the effect on Manitobans?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, not only will I do a comparison under the federal-provincial times that are currently before us, but I will do a comparison of the previous administration, for example, the fact that the Pharmacare increases were twice as much under the New Democratic Party as they were under our Government. Yes, I will do a comparison but I will do a complete comparison.

Highway Construction Funding

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, despite record revenues, this Government chose not to spend any of the revenues on the highways of this province. Instead, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) decided to impose—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Mandrake: —a further tax which will result in an additional \$8 million in revenue for 1989-90. My question to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger), can he explain why not all of these monies will be used for highways despite the commitment from the Minister of Finance?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, let me first of all correct the record. If the Member has had a chance to look at the budgetary figures from the year '87 when the figures were \$87 million and the last year we had an increase up to \$95 million in our highway program, I am very proud to say that we have a record number in the Highways budget this year, which is \$102 million, far short from where I think that possibly I would like to see it. At the same time, we have also increased the grant in aid to towns, villages and cities. We have also increased the funding to the Local Government Districts. I do not know what the Member is talking about.

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I rise indeed with a high degree of pride and pleasure today to announce that the Red River Ex Manitoba Farmer of the Year Award has been given to Paul and Dorothy Born of Kleefeld, a young couple with four children who were involved in producing hogs, eggs and some crops. This award has been given out to 24 deserving farmers in the Province of Manitoba since 1966. Just for the record, I would like to quickly read into the record the kind of individuals who have represented Manitoba very proudly in this award: Mr. Greenslade from Portage; Mr. Roy Bailey from Carberry; John Murta from Greysville; Jack Wilton from Carman; Art Rampton from Dauphin; Frank Leggat from Birtle; Eldon McEachern from Carman; Clifford Lundman from Erickson; Norman Edie from Dugald; Lorne Parker from Ste. Agathe; Anthony Chorney from East Selkirk; Harry McKnight from Roland; Don Mitchell from Douglas; Albert Vielfor from La Broquerie; Gordon Church from Killarney; Ed Connery from Portage la Prairie; Harold Kletke from Teulon; Clare Geddes from Pilot Mound; Clarence Baker from Beausejour.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take particular note that up to 1984 the other member of the marital contract was not recognized but, from 1985 on, the husband and wife were recognized. In 1985, it was Lloyd and Betty Bertram from Swan River; in 1986, Henk and Yvonne Jonk from Bruxelles; 1987, Bill and Bertha Vaags from Dugald; 1988, Wenzel and Marlene Preun from Selkirk; and this year, Mr. and Mrs. Paul and Dorothy Born from Kleefeld, the youngest recipients ever to receive this award, very proud individuals of that award, and I was very pleased to entertain them this morning. Those are young people who are going to be leaders of our community in the coming years, leaders in agriculture and leaders here in our entire province. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be able to recognize them today.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I would like permission to associate myself in a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Speaker, I would like to on behalf of Members on this side associate ourselves with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) in congratulating the Born family in becoming the new Manitoba Farmer of the Year.

I noted the Minister's comments about now having both spouses recognized in the farm operation, and I take some personal pride in that, in that several times that I spoke to the board of directors during the Farmer

of the Year Award at the Red River Ex., I strongly publicly hinted that farming is a team effort and both spouses who are involved in that operation should be recognized and any success is due to the family operation. I am very pleased that they have accepted that and are making that announcement now to the entire family in the farm unit, and we congratulate them for that.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): May I have leave for a non-political statement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I would just like to add the congratulations on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal Party to the addition of Paul and Dorothy Born to this very distinguished list. I think it is certainly a good sign for Manitoba agriculture that we are getting a couple as young as these are, and they have certainly added their names to a very distinguished list so I think it just adds to the optimism that we all have for the farm industry and for rural Manitoba. It is a pleasure to add my congratulatory note to that, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call the Bills in the following order: Bills No. 30, No. 29, No. 27, and 6.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 30—THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), Bill No. 30, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), who has 32 minutes remaining.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I will just take a couple of minutes just to conclude my remarks on this Bill by saying that I do think it is a good piece of legislation. I think there has been a real attempt on the part of the department and department staff to work with those people in the community who will be most directly impacted by this legislation.

I would like to offer just one word of caution to the Government, and that is that this legislation will indeed produce an increase in the need for investigations. It will indeed produce an increase in the need for contact between agencies. It is going to put a tremendous load on staff and those resource needs are going to have to be addressed.

* (1420)

It is not as bad as the problem that would have been created by the previous Bill, and it does eliminate many of the problems that the previous Bill had. It represents a substantive improvement and I think a courageous attempt to address a very difficult problem, but there will be additional problems created by this Bill, problems that I think we can solve. I think that if a Government is willing to work with the agencies to ensure that they have the resources, this will indeed represent a major improvement in service to people in this province.

With that, I would like to conclude my remarks and allow the critic for the NDP to speak on the Bill and let us get on to passing this before we recess. Thank you.

Ms. Judy Wasylcyia-Leis (St. Johns): I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this discussion on Bill No. 30, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, and to indicate the general support of the New Democratic Party Caucus for the provisions in this Bill.

Members will know that this Bill, Bill 30, came about particularly as a result of several incidents over the last year. The most well publicized of those incidents was with respect to the St. Charles Academy where a student was being sexually harassed by another classmate. At that time, we learned that there was no apparent attempt on the part of the school's administration to defend the student from these assaults, and there was no reporting of the assaults to the authorities. Further to that particular incident, when the parents of that young woman being abused finally took the matter to the police, no charges were laid because The Child and Family Services Act did not refer specifically to third-party obligations to report.

It became quite apparent to all of us, quite clear from the concern expressed by parents as a result of these incidents and subsequent reports of similar cases, it became clear to all of us that what was really in order was an amendment to The Child and Family Services Act to deal specifically with reporting pertaining to third-party assault or abuse cases.

Members will also know in this Chamber that it was the New Democratic Party Caucus who initiated action around this gap in legislation, who began very serious work on a piece of legislation that was introduced in this Chamber, Bill No. 31, which would have required the reporting of suspected abuse of a third party where the abused party was in the care and custody of an adult. That legislation, and consequently the provisions of this legislation, means that teachers, day care workers, group home workers and so on are obligated to report such incidents if they suspect abuse.

Obviously, this is an onerous requirement, because it does require very careful judgment and a very difficult decision on the part of persons in authority positions, but we felt at that time and we still feel today that these kinds of provisions, these kinds of amendments to The Child and Family Services Act were necessary to protect their charges.

I am pleased that Bill 30 has been introduced following along the lines of Bill 31 and in actuality somewhat

more encompassing, more substantive in terms of dealing with these particular issues. I applaud the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) for following that lead, for doing the necessary groundwork in terms of leading up to the drafting of this legislation, for consulting with a wide variety of community groups to come forward with a fairly comprehensive piece of legislation dealing with a very, very serious issue.

In our view, we have offered general support for Bill 30 for a number of reasons, but we do look forward to hearing from community groups and individuals at the committee stage of this Bill, to hear first-hand their concerns and their possible suggestions for even further improvements to this piece of legislation.

Bill 30, at first blush, gives certainly a better definition of children in need of protection. Bill 30 in our view appears to be sensitive to the needs of parents to be informed but protects the child by allowing the reporting to be done directly to a child care agency. Furthermore, it is important to note that where the suspected abuse or failure to protect the interests of the child is as a result of misconduct or an act of omission or commission of a professional that the professional society shall be informed and conduct an investigation.

Another important provision of Bill No. 30, something that the New Democratic Party certainly can support and would want to encourage, are the provisions pertaining to the reporting of conclusions of an investigation to the parent or guardian, the employer and/or the school principal or superintendent. Section 18.(4) of this Bill does allow a police officer to report charges laid against an adult in charge of the employer.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of important provisions to this Bill and important amendments to The Child and Family Services Act. Finally, I think it is important to note the fairly stiff penalties provided. The summary conviction, when the person fails to report a child in need of protection, is another important aspect to this whole Bill and to the critical issue.

I think all of us, if I could make some general comments, Mr. Speaker, are concerned about dealing in every way possible with incidence of child abuse, whether it be child abuse in the home as a result of parents, relatives, siblings, or friends, or whether it be child abuse out in the community and caused by third-party interference by the result of friends, teachers, guardians, neighbours, all kinds of incidents that have come to our attention over the last number of years.

In my view and certainly the view of all of the colleagues in the New Democratic Party Caucus, it is imperative that we come to grips with dealing decisively with child abuse in order to prevent very serious problems for our society in the future. We are all well aware of the fact that abuse in early childhood, even infancy, can lead to very serious problems in the future. I think it is quite statistically documented that child abuse, that a child being abused in early years has a greater chance of becoming an abuser himself or herself.

It is also quite clear from the statistics and from the personal documentation around these incidents that

abuse in childhood and infancy does lead to addiction problems, greater problems with respect to crime, a potential for suicide, general problems in every walk of life. It is absolutely imperative that we look not only at amending The Child and Family Services Act to deal with a gap in that legislation, to deal with the fact that it has been difficult to deal with third-party cases of child abuse, but it is critical for all of us to look beyond that particular gap in policy and critical to look at our programs and legislation in general to determine their effectiveness and determine whether or not we are even making a small dent in a very, very serious problem.

I wanted to deal very briefly with that general topic, and I wanted to do so by reading into the record a small poem by Dorothy Livesay, whom many of you will know, because I think that poem puts it in perspective and helps us deal with some of the other issues that are facing us on a daily basis, both through this legislation and through other crying needs in our society.

That poem is called, "Ballad of the Battered Children." It says,

We have made a deal
have learned how to inhibit
the spiked dark:
we inhabit
blue utopias
wave
radiant rags of cloud.

We are summoned
to the death cell
after the hangman
in the brown checked suit
rosy cheeks
silver hair
has sat with us at the judgment table.
His children sit there too
listening to the judge
who is our father
cawing out words from the text in the Bible.

The parents are in league
have judged us
to be the culprits
laying down our sins
for all to see.
The parents have willed us
our death
the hangman rises, ready.

But we have made a deal
with the powers of light!
Before their accusing finger
their cursing cries
we vanish into
our blue horizon.

* (1430)

I think that poem, "The Ballad of The Battered Children," helps us a bit to understand what children go through, whether they are abused by their own parents or siblings or friends or strangers, because in all cases there is nothing more traumatic, nothing more

devastating to a child in developmental years than to experience sexual or physical abuse.

We all know of incidents. We have all come into contact with people who have children who have suffered abuse. We know the devastating impact that has on the children and on the friends and family around those children. The obligation for us as legislators becomes one of addressing that emotional disturbance, that emotional time in their lives by providing assistance through supports, by providing effective counselling, by providing economic programs in the cases of families in dire straits, by providing meaningful enforcement through legislation. We are dealing now with one piece of legislation that will help make it a little easier in cracking down on this most serious problem, but we have much more before us.

I have, over the course of the last number of weeks, tried to identify in this House some of the glaring needs when it comes to dealing with child abuse. I have pointed to the fact that there are children who have been abused, who have been witnesses to family violence and who need counselling, who have identified that need for counselling, and have yet been unable to receive that necessary counselling. Not to receive that counselling at that critical point in their lives means the problem gets entrenched and buried in the inner self for years and years to come.

I think it is imperative that this Legislature, that this Government, look very seriously at the gap in service when it comes to counselling for abused children, for witnesses of family violence and ensure that the agencies providing that kind of support is resourced fully and effectively. I think just to name a few, and I have mentioned these before in the House, EVOLVE, which as Members will know from my comments is turning away hundreds of men, women, and children every year. In this past year alone, over 500 female victims, children witnesses, and male batterers have been turned away from necessary counselling. To me, there is no excuse for a single person being turned away from counselling that is being demanded, that is being desperately sought in order to deal with a very hurtful, a very destructive experience.

(The Acting Speaker, Mr. Parker Burrell, in the Chair.)

I would implore this Government to find the necessary resources, to find the way to ensure additional counsellors for agencies like EVOLVE. That is just one of the agencies dealing with this critical problem. I can also reference the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre which does provide a service to women and children, particularly as a result of family violence and domestic assault. I think also of Family Services of Winnipeg Incorporated, that is in dire need of at least several more counsellors in order to meet long waiting lists.

I think of the Women's Post Treatment Centre which is designed specifically to help women who are facing serious addiction problems currently as a result of abuse as a child. The links are clear and those women desperately need help and support for overcoming their addiction problem by grappling with the abuse that happened when they were babies and children.

I think for any of you who saw the CBC documentary, "To a Safer Place," which reveals graphically and

emotionally the trauma that is experienced by children when abused, and how that experience haunts them for the rest of their lives, you will know if you have seen that program or understood through experiences of others the impact of physical and sexual abuse as a child, then we will all know and we will all come to grips with the need for resources in this area.

There is probably nothing more imperative, nothing more urgent than proper resources for every one of those agencies that I have mentioned, and many more indeed to meet an unmet need, to meet the thousands who are not even seeking help, who are not lining up to get into agencies, who are not on waiting lists, who are not being turned away. We know that we have just touched the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the few number of agencies, non-profit community groups that respond to this very critical need. Our task as legislators must be to improve that service to address those needs.

Furthermore, as I talk about the need in our non-profit sector, in terms of our community services that address the long-standing deep-felt impact of abuse as a child, there is a need to look at the adequacy of funding to our Child and Family Service agencies. It is an issue, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I have raised in the past, others have raised, and certainly an area where we have been disappointed when it comes to the present Government's approach. It is an area where there is a clear need for those grass-roots community front-line organizations to have the necessary resources to deal with the thousands of reported incidents and cases that they come in contact with, and yet are clearly underresourced and unable to deal with the crying need, with the volume of cases that they confront on a day-to-day basis.

I think it is imperative upon this Government to address the whole funding formula when it comes to Child and Family Services agencies to ensure that each of those agencies has the proper trained workers when it comes to detecting, reporting and addressing child abuse cases.

It is also critical for this Government to look much more seriously at its own tampering, if I can use that word, with the way in which prevention dollars are allocated through Child and Family Services agencies. It is clear that all agencies have identified the need for resources to determine on a community-by-community basis the way in which they can deal with this devastating urgent problem of child abuse. It is clear in our minds, and certainly in the New Democratic Party, that there may be flaws in the system, there may be problems to deal with, but there is no other reasonable approach to the solution than one of helping communities to help themselves. I think that is why it is so critical that we look at adequate dollars in the area of prevention and community outreach so that community groups that know the problems in their areas, in their neighbourhoods, are equipped to deal with those problems as they see fit but on a trained professional basis. Mr. Acting Speaker, there is certainly much more that can be touched on when it comes to dealing with this most serious, critical problem.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

To conclude my remarks this afternoon, let me say again that we appreciate the fact that this legislation has been forthcoming, that this Government has certainly indicated a will to deal with the serious problems of physical and sexual abuse experienced by babies and children, and that we would hope through this indication of will to deal with the problem that it will be soon prepared to come forward with creative solutions to provide the necessary counselling and economic supports that these children and families also require. It is clearly, when we are talking about reporting and about charges in the case of third-party abuse cases specifically, there is clearly a difficult balance to be maintained. Children must be protected. Third-party abusers must be reported. We cannot allow abuse disguised as schoolyard antics to disrupt and terrorize the lives of others.

* (1440)

We certainly recognize as well that the implementing requirements of this Act, of Bill 30, will be difficult, but we must be determined in our efforts to seek to prevent frivolous and vexatious charges against those in charge of young people. Teachers and other care givers must have their rights protected. There is no doubt in that, so it is my hope and the hope of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party Caucus that the reporting to their professional bodies will ensure those interests are protected.

Finally, let me say that it is clear we must always ensure the interests of the children are being addressed first and foremost. This legislation will ensure greater protection for children experiencing or likely to experience third-party abuse. It is critical that we make this legislation effective and implementable in a way that will work, that will get at those serious problems.

On that note, I look forward to the input that we will receive at the committee stage of this Bill, to hearing from community groups and individuals who know these issues on a much better basis than I do, and certainly many of us in this Chamber. I look forward to this Legislature moving steadfastly forward in dealing with the most critical issue of our day, that of sexual and physical child abuse. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), in closing debate.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, unless anyone else wishes to speak on this Bill, I would just like to make a few remarks in closing debate. First of all, I would like to thank the two Opposition Parties for their indicated support of this Bill. I would also like to thank them for the input they had in our consultations. Also, I would like to thank the various agencies and groups, which I listed when I introduced this Bill, for their time and effort in working to make this a workable Bill.

As the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) indicated, it will be difficult to implement. I have given an indication that I will once again go through the consultation process when we are preparing the guidelines for the implementation of this Bill to make

it as smooth and easy to implement as possible. It is always difficult to implement a Bill such as this which impacts so very directly on people's lives, but we will make every effort to make this reasonable and to help to define. It is always difficult of course to define exactly what "reasonable" is, but we will make every attempt.

When discussing this Bill, the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) suggested that we must work with the agencies. He is right, of course. I believe the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) indicated this as well. We have to work with the agencies in implementing this and in working all through the field of child abuse and the field of protection of children because, after all, that is the important reason for this whole exercise. The children are our reasons for doing this, and it is the children who we are all wanting to protect so their lives may be productive and they can grow up in safety.

I would like to indicate, as I have before, that over the past year I have worked very closely with the agencies in developing a spirit of co-operation with them. They have been very helpful to me in helping me with my understanding of this system. I know I have learned a lot about this over the past year, something I had not really been involved in before, and it has been quite a learning experience to me to find out how these problems are dealt with. It is a growing problem, and it concerns all of us very deeply that children are being subjected to the type of treatment that they are. It is appalling, and that is why it is so important for us, as a group of legislators, to work out the best possible solution of dealing with the problem.

I do appreciate the poem read by the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). I will take the opportunity to read it in Hansard. You cannot always hear everything too clearly in the House. I do appreciate it and will take the time to look it up in Hansard and read it again because it sounded very timely.

The Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) was referring to things we can do to help people who have undergone abuse and the department, as the Member knows, is funding various organizations to do this. I know there are gaps. I know there are waiting lists, but we are working to address those needs. There are unmet needs that we know about, but we are working in the right direction hopefully to meet those needs. We have, as the Member will know from attending the same do that I did at the Children's Home annual meeting, that we have put some funding into that organization for a program that works with abused children. That should go a long way to help that, but it will not meet all the needs. I mean, that is something that I do recognize. I think we have come a long way in the last year to meet the needs, but I know there is a long road ahead of us and we are working on it.

We are trying to reach solutions to all these problems, but it seems to me, from my department, that every time we get addressing one problem, another one crops up, but we are working on it.

I just thought I would put those few words on the record and thank Members and the agencies for the work involved in the preparation of this Bill, and thank them in advance for the work that will be done in

producing the guidelines that accompany the Bill because after all, this is the enabling. The guidelines will help the implementation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): By leave, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill No. 30, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, for third reading.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill No. 30, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, for third reading.

* (1450)

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
BILL NO. 30—THE CHILD AND
FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT**

The Acting Chairman (Mark Minenko): The Committee of the Whole will come to order to consider Bill No. 30, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act. Does the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) have an opening statement? Do the critics have any opening statements?

We proceed to consider Bill No. 30 clause by clause. Clauses 1—pass; Clause 2—pass; Clause 3—pass; Clause 4—pass; Clause 5—pass; Clause 6—pass; Clause 7—pass; Clause 8—pass; Clause 9—pass; Clause 10—pass; Clause 11—pass; Clause 12—pass; Clause 13—pass; Clause 14—pass; Clause 15—pass; Preamble—pass; Title—pass. Bill be reported.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

**IN SESSION
COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Mark Minenko (Acting Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 30, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, and has directed me to report the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), that the report of the Committee of the Whole be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

**THIRD READING
BILL NO. 30—THE CHILD AND
FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT**

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader) presented, by leave, Bill No. 30, The Child and Family

Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, for third reading.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

DEBATE ON SECOND READING

BILL NO. 29—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989

Mr. Speaker: Debate on second reading, on the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 29, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989; Loi de 1989 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I just want to stand very briefly to comment on this Bill. I want to speak on it in regard to the Estimates process. As everyone is well aware, we have 240 hours allocated out for the Estimates to go through the departments line by line.

Last year, as a direct result of the last provincial election, it really threw the fiscal track of the Government and the Budget off target. I find it somewhat unfortunate that this particular Government has not made a more positive move or moved more quickly to ensure that we could be put back onto fiscal track and, had they done so, Mr. Speaker, I would believe that we would not be looking at a Bill of this nature. I feel that it is unfortunate and I just wanted to emphasize this, and this is the main reason why I wanted to just ensure that my feelings were on the record.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I know my honourable colleague from Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) yesterday was interrupted from his speech. I believe he only spoke for 14 minutes, and at this point I would request leave from the Chamber to allow the Member for Kildonan to continue his speech, and I will finish mine now. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I note that the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) has already spoken on June 26, 1989. The Rules of the House are that a Member may only speak once to the Bill. The Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), I believe, is asking for leave so that the Honourable Member for Kildonan may speak a second time on Bill No. 29.

Mr. Lamoureux: To finish his speech, because of what happened yesterday.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to allow the Member for Kildonan to speak a second time?

The Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I would assume that you are asking for leave for the Member to speak up to the total of forty minutes with the two speeches.

Mr. Speaker: I believe that is the request made by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). Agreed? (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), by leave.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank all the Members of this House to allow me to complete my speech.

Yesterday, I was discussing the lack of services for rheumatology patients, and I was saying that there are about 170,000 Manitobans who have been diagnosed with rheumatic diseases which range from minor arthritis to significant diseases such as SLE. The implication of these diseases has an impact on the individual as well as their families. For the last one year or so, the waiting period for a simple appointment to see a rheumatologist to seek an early assessment is from 8 to 12 months, and that is unacceptable to the patients.

There was a report prepared by an arthritis self-help group that was given to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in November of 1988. In that report, it was clearly indicated the lack of services and outlining the various proposals. Mr. Speaker, after waiting six months for a response from the Minister of Health, they approached the Official Opposition, and I was able to help them and bring their question into this House. My question still remains, are we providing the adequate health care services after spending about \$1.5 billion. That remains the question. We are the third-largest spenders in Canada and one of the highest spenders in the whole world and still cannot provide the adequate services.

Our population is not as healthy as the other places of Canada. We have a still increased rate of ischaemic heart disease. We still have increased rate of cancer. We still have not decreased the level of communicable diseases, and we have not seen any long-term plan from this administration for the last one year, and that is what we are asking for. We are asking to draw plans so that Manitobans can keep the health care system and also enhance the quality for the future.

As I said yesterday, it is going to be very difficult for future Governments of any political Party to keep up with the cost if the long-term planning is not done right now. That is not the opinion just by myself, that is the opinion of most Manitobans and all health economists, all professionals and all health consumer groups. We continue to ignore that plea, and that way we will not be doing the service to the people of Manitoba if we do not have long-term plans.

* (1500)

Mr. Speaker, an arthritis self-help group is not the only one. We had a request from the Manitoba Head Injury Association. This association clearly indicates

there are about five persons every day in Manitoba who are having head injuries because of accidents. That amounts to about a total of 2,000 patients per year and, out of that, with the medical advances about 1,800 will survive. A significant number from that, about one-third of those patients will suffer either physical or emotional or cognitive impairment, and that is not being addressed. That is having a drain on the families. Human suffering continues to grow with the individual who has had an accident and cannot have his full potential. He or she is not contributing to the best extent to the family and it is having a devastating effect on family life.

(The Acting Speaker, Mr. Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is also having a tremendous amount of effect on the health care budget. I will give you a simple example. There are about 25 patients waiting right now at the Health Sciences Centre. They are occupying acute care beds at a cost on average of \$250 to \$300 for one day for one patient in an acute care bed. For these 25 patients for 365 days, it is going to cost more than \$2 million.

This is mismanagement of tax dollars and, after spending \$2 million, still we are not able to deliver the services they need. We do not have a community-based health care system which will address the needs of these individuals, which will provide them the social structure to progress, which will provide them the physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and other services required to make them more productive and make use of their full potential. Mr. Acting Speaker, some of them are in their early years of age, 20 years of age, the patient is suffering. Their 40 to 50 years of life are being put into risk because tax dollars are not being spent wisely. That is the proposal we are telling them, and I have no hesitation of saying that this Government is not doing a proper job by not developing the community-based programs.

We raised this question today again and we were told that our information may not be correct. Our information comes from a group that has done research, that is involved with the patients, with the families, and some of these individuals were patients themselves. So how can they be wrong? To question the ability of the organizations and say that the information is incorrect is not acceptable. It is becoming very clear that the health care does not have a plan, so we are shooting in the dark. It is harming not only the patients and families, but ultimately it is the responsibility of this Government to manage our tax dollars and that is not being done.

What have they asked? This association presented a report in the first week of February to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), a very good report. They are asking a set amount of money, say about \$100,000, in that range. By spending \$100,000, if we can save millions of dollars and also provide the care these individuals need, I do not see any reason why this administration would not do that.

It is inaccurate, it is unacceptable, and it is irresponsible not to manage the tax dollars. Most of

us were hit by higher taxes and the previous administration was claimed to be the highest tax regime in Canada. But, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have not seen any improvement from this administration. Tax cuts have been given, but the services level has been cut.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the underlying perception in the public's mind is that this administration is not looking after health care to the best ability they can do it. We are prepared on this side of this House and so is the NDP prepared on this particular issue to work together so that health care can be preserved. It is not alarming; it is a crisis. Some Members are always saying that we always say everything is a crisis when in every service in acute care you have a waiting list. You have a waiting list for months and years. There has been no sign of improvement. What do you call it? We call it a simple crisis. After spending \$1.5 billion, if we do not have a good health care system, it is a crisis.

It becomes the responsibility of this Government in a minority situation. I do not think any Manitoban will oppose them if they have a good plan. We will applaud them. We applauded a lot of their initiatives, but still the critical will is lacking to make a rational decision for long-term planning. That is not coming, and that is unacceptable.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it was very interesting in the Speech from the Throne and also the few statements made by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) that they are interested in health promotion and health prevention.

Mr. Acting Speaker, my simple question is to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). Various studies have indicated that Lotteries funds come from a lower- and middle-class income, and to fund a universal program on the backs of a few individuals is not a universal health care system. Why would a specific section of the community fund a universal program?

As the levels have already reached their peak, how much money are you going to get from Lotteries funds, and ultimately who will suffer? The communities who have been dependent upon Lotteries funds for their enhancement in this country, for the enhancement for their culture, for their heritage, and enhancement for their education activities, and to integrate into the mainstream society, they will suffer. This administration is not serving both the categories of people. They are not serving the multicultural community. At the same time, any program run by Lotteries will definitely suffer, because there is not even a single program which will not require ongoing funding. So who is going to be responsible after next year?

(The Acting Speaker, Mr. Parker Burrell, in the Chair.)

More specifically, this \$10 million fund announcement was made and there is not a specific fund allocated out of that \$10 million, and no one knows the plan for a year or two years or three years, it is missing. I think it is keeping a lot of people in the dark and not letting them know the policy of this administration. It is not very clear and health care should not be funded by Lotteries funds. That has proven wrong in the past and

it will prove again, but why do we have to go on the wrong path? Why can we not just correct ourselves and fund only those programs with a one-time funding, if there is a major need, a major crisis, but not the ongoing program for health care?

Mr. Acting Speaker, let us talk about communicable diseases. Communicable diseases in the past and in the present and in the future, will play a significant role in terms of how our tax dollars are spent, how we can save money in terms of tax dollars. When it took nine months for this administration for a single AIDS brochure, we do not expect anything better. The outreach program at the street level is not functioning yet. If you do not teach the street kids and the school children about AIDS, how can you prevent this disease from spreading? There is an older method, the only way is through prevention and no other way of preventing this terrible disease, which ends in death, nothing else. We will see how this Government addresses that issue of AIDS now.

* (1510)

Health promotion and health prevention, in this area there is one major section which was announced by this administration on a Breast Cancer Screening Program, an excellent program. We proposed a resolution in this House about eight or nine weeks ago. We are pleased that this administration followed our proposal, but a proposal has to have for this dollars attached to make it productive in the long run. With only \$160,000 in the present budget, how can they justify to provide the Breast Cancer Screening Program for all women above the age of 50? That is impossible. If there is something missing which we do not know, then the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) should tell us that he has money hidden somewhere, but let us be clear so that we can save tax dollars and at the same time provide the best care possible.

The example of breast cancer screening is very good in British Columbia. Mr. Acting Speaker, it is proven that it will cost \$4 to \$8 for a breast screening program, but if you need the services where you need a diagnostic test for this similar situation, it would cost about \$80 to \$90 per test. We will not only miss the breast cancers, we will not only miss the complications of the cancer and ultimate death, but we will also be wasting taxpayers' money if this issue is not addressed right now, and that will be a mismanagement of tax dollars. That is not it, that is not an actual criticism, as has been put outside by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) that we are just being critically negative. We have proposals, very solid proposals, and he should follow on them.

Mr. Acting Speaker, another interesting area, very interesting, is the Hearing Conservation Program. I ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), according to his book he has decreased salaries in this area by 4.1 percent. How can he justify providing services in this special service area which deals with the elderly, which deals with the children who are having problems with hearing from the beginning? How can he justify cutting the budget in this area? That complicates further with the speech therapy services. The Minister of Health

(Mr. Orchard) yesterday said, while the services have increased, the lists have increased more than the services, 300 patients waiting, 300 preschooler children waiting.

Each child would cost not only the family sufferings and problems with the teachers. In the long run, it will cost more money to keep them at the school level at their full intellectual ability. That point has been missed. How can he justify in saying we have the best health care system when you cannot provide these children with the services they need now? They are not going to wait for three years, four years, because after five years they go to school. Last year alone, there were a number of children already reached the age of five, so even excluding those numbers we have still 300 patients, 300 children waiting, and that is unacceptable. We are not going to buy that, and no one will. Each child's family is upset.

How can he justify putting all this \$200 million somewhere else and not providing these services which will save you the money in the long run? If we are wrong, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) should prove to us that this is not right. The burden on the families because of the child who is not functioning at the optimum level is tremendous. It is a cost which will add to the families. It is a cost that will add to the taxpayers. It is a cost which will add to their families, to the social structure in the long run if the issues are not addressed now. Mr. Acting Speaker, that is missing.

As I said the other day, we were pleased with the home care, for the continued care increased by 9.8 percent, a significant increase that will definitely help the patients to keep them outside the hospital, in the community with all the support programs. Still there is not a single word of long-term planning in terms of day hospitals, in terms of extended care back in the community. It is cheaper that way, and also it is more productive for individuals to have a full potential for their life. That is not being addressed. If you add the number of patients who are in Winnipeg hospitals right now, about 25 percent of them, who could be either in a personal care home or in an extended care facility. How can we justify spending money and keeping these individuals when they do not want to be in the hospital, the families do not want them to be there, they want them to have their full potential? That is not being addressed. It continues to deteriorate. The long-term planning is missing.

Mr. Acting Speaker, how can we justify not to have a plan for elderly individuals for now and for the future when they are about 11 percent to 8 percent of the population? The needs for health care have continued to grow because of the services they utilize, because of the diseases that come with the natural part of the age, some of the social aspects of the age, and some of the complications as a result of the various illnesses, that is not being addressed.

The other area that was addressed in the Throne Speech was the environmental health component. The environment health component has increased by only 4.1 percent, and that is after adjusting the rate of inflation. It is not even a cut. It does not even make sense, saying that we have raised the amount.

Environmental health, environment as such, is one of the most important issues now. It affects all levels of life. Co-ordination between the Department of Environment, and Department of Health, Department of Family Services, is essential, and that is missing. We have not seen any co-ordination from this administration.

The other area we addressed during the last Session was mental health services. I was extremely pleased that some improvement was done, and we applaud the Minister for that, that so many initiatives were done that will help mental health for the long term. It will not only save taxpayers' money, it will help the families and patients who cannot speak for themselves. That area was ignored. That area was ignored because these individuals who cannot even look after themselves, how can they be politically active and come forward and bring their problems to the politicians? They do not do that. They are already suffering with a mental illness and the stigma attached to that, and the social complications are tied to that. It is a matter of deep concern to us. We are pleased that all the Members in this House have paid attention last year, and we have been able to achieve some improvement there.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the other area of concern is the drug and alcohol abuse. A lot of diseases are due to the secondary cause of chronic use of alcohol over a period of a number of years which ultimately ends in cirrhosis and death. The social problem attached to alcoholism which is to a severe degree, which is hidden, how do we address that to provide the various programs? In this budget, there is only an increase of 1.5 percent for the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba. How can we justify it? How can we justify and say it was a good budget, it was a good plan? It is not, because you will spend more money in the long run. It is a simple calculation. You do not have to be a genius to understand these things. These things happen every day. The patients are occupying beds because of chronic alcoholism.

* (1520)

The community program for alcoholism will not be able to keep up even with the rate of inflation. With an increase of 1.4 percent, how can we justify and say that we have a good program? The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has failed to see that aspect as an important aspect. I think it is being ignored. Maybe now they should change their mind and put some money where it counts.

Mr. Acting Speaker, last year we were accused, not even once, a number of times that we spent a few minutes on Manitoba Health Services Commission. Mr. Acting Speaker, the first time in this Legislature with that three-Party structure with the Estimates process, we spent 35 hours and time was not used the best possible way. Then we were left with no choice not to have further discussion with the Manitoba Health Services Commission, and we are being accused day after day. That is not the honourable way of projecting the real things. We will make sure this time we have equal discussion on all aspects of Health, which we plan to do.

Let me just conclude by saying that, as a Member of the Legislature, health care for all of us is an extremely important issue. It crosses all Party lines and, as I said, nobody has the right answer for everything but if a collective effort, if effort is appreciated by all the Members in this House and outside this House, all the community groups, all the professional groups and all consumers of health, and if we had a plan which we can give to them and say, we are going to preserve our health care system, then we will be doing our job. But that plan is missing and we are looking forward to seeing from this administration a plan for the future. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Plohma: I am pleased to join in the debate on Bill 29, the Interim Supply Bill for the Province of Manitoba. I would like to raise a number of concerns that I have, particularly as it relates to my constituency and transportation issues, particularly in this province, as they apply to the provincial Government's responsibilities in rural areas of this province.

Clearly, the Government is of the opinion that transportation cuts made at the federal level are strictly a federal issue and are not of a primary concern to the Province of Manitoba. I disagree with that. I believe that the provincial Government has a major role to play in this area and must be standing strong against a policy that is in place by a federal Conservative Government that is helping to destroy the rural areas of our province and, of course, the rural way of life right across this country.

There is an organization called "Rural Dignity" which has been set up to combat these policies of the federal Government because they believe it is serious. It is a national organization set up primarily as a result of post office cuts, but one that has definitely recognized the impact of other Government policies on our rural areas in accelerating the decline of our rural areas and the exodus of people, the young people particularly, from our rural areas into urban areas where they can find employment and training. That is a regrettable fact that is taking place at the present time and one that I believe the Government could do a great deal to reverse, at least to stop the trend, both at the federal and provincial levels.

We have seen this policy of accelerating decline take place, I believe, as early as the early '80s and perhaps late '70s under the Trudeau Liberal Government in Ottawa, but certainly it has accelerated under the Conservative Government because of their policies of deregulation, privatization, of free trade as well, but particularly the policies that require Crown corporations to make a profit in order to continue to operate.

I agree that Crown corporations, as well as all Government departments, have to operate as efficiently as possible. That does not mean, Mr. Acting Speaker, that they should throw service aspects of the Crown corporations, regional economic development aspects, therefore job aspects and safety aspects of these Crown corporations, out completely—does not throw them out completely because of their tunnel vision which is geared towards the bottom-line profits only.

That disregards the history of our country and disregards the foundations of our country, the

foundations of these Crown corporations upon which they were based initially, why they were formed by people in our country who had some foresight and understanding of the uniqueness of our country, the fragility of our country, the fact that we were held together in an artificial way because of our geography by transportation and communication mechanisms, particularly transportation over the years, the railway, the transcontinental highway as well, Trans-Canada Highway, all of these, both of those I should say, held our country together until air travel became a very important form of transportation in this country. They still hold our country together and tie our country, our trade together in this country, and they are rapidly being undermined by Government policies that, as I said earlier, are geared only toward bottom-line profits.

We see that at the federal level, as I said, but I believe there is a very significant provincial role here that leadership must be shown to have the federal Government reverse these policies that affect the rural areas and to initiate policies at the provincial level and in joint planning with the federal level.

This Government has undertaken the formation of a Rural Development Department, it seems by name only, rather than activity and policies. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) probably is saying, well wait, give us time. Of course that is what they all want to have is more time to develop programs, and there is some legitimacy to that.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) said he could not correct all the problems in one year yesterday in the Health Department. The fact is he has to be making progress, and there has to be significant steps forward. We have not seen those steps forward in the Rural Development Department in this province, by this Government, up to this point in time. We, therefore, feel it is incumbent to offer the Government suggestions and to have them move forward as quickly as possible, because our rural areas are deteriorating as a result of agricultural disasters over the last while, but also as a result of federal Government policies, in transportation particularly, post offices as well that have affected the economic vibrancy of our rural areas.

* (1530)

We have, for example, seen as a result of CN layoff announcements on the maintenance-of-way employees some 98 jobs lost in the Parklands region. Mr. Acting Speaker, you can appreciate the importance of this to the Parklands region where we are seeing almost 50 percent of the maintenance jobs in CN being lost to our communities. Benito is losing two families as a result of this; Birch River, four; Grandview, four; Mafeking, four; Minitonas, two; Pine River, two; Roblin, four; Sifton, two. Many of these are in my constituency. Many of them will be in the expanded constituency that I hope to represent after the next election, which will include Grandview, Gilbert Plains and Rorketon.

Grandview is one of the communities I mentioned here that is being I think significantly devastated by these layoffs. As a matter of fact, I am surprised that the Minister of Education, the MLA for Roblin-Russell

(Mr. Derkach), has not spoken up forcefully, publicly against these federal decisions affecting his constituency. Roblin is losing four people, Grandview four. Those are eight layoffs in two communities in his constituency.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Fred is retiring.

Mr. Plozman: He is saying, well, many of these people are retiring, but what he has to remember is that a lot of these golden handshakes that these Crown corporations are giving their employees are resulting in lost jobs. Maybe the person is retiring or some of the workers are retiring, but they are not being replaced, so that income, that job, is lost to that community forever. I think it is a significant loss, and I really find it rather incredible that the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) has not stood up and spoken out against federal policies, even if it is by a federal Conservative Government. I think he should have realized by now that defending Mulroney and his boys in Ottawa and apologizing for them will not get him anywhere in this business, that he has to stand up for the people who he was elected by and that is to stand up for their interests.

So people are sending me copies of—Grandview Promotions, for example, sent me a copy of a letter that they sent to Benoit Bouchard, the Minister of Transportation. In it, they say:

"Your recent decision to abandon the CN section gang in Grandview, among other centres, commencing October 1, 1989, will put a great strain on the economic health of our community. Our town has a population of approximately 900 people. By removing four families, eight adults, we are losing almost 1 percent of our purchasing power of the town. We are certain you will concur that 1 percent is a big loss in any size town or city. By having the maintenance people travel greater distances to maintain the track, maintenance will definitely suffer. Hence, the prospect of more derailments shall become a reality. This will not only increase the cost of operating the line, but also decreases the safety factor for the running crews and any innocent bystanders. We sincerely request that you will reconsider your decision and will keep these section maintenance gangs intact in each community, also helping us to maintain economic stability at this stage of the economy when it is most needed."

That came from Grandview Promotions. We also have a resolution from the Grandview Council. There are letters from individuals coming in and being written to the Member of Parliament, to their MLAs, to other people who they hope will stand up on their behalf because these cuts are truly devastating. It puts more pressure on this Government to respond with rural economic development alternatives. They are failing miserably in that task, if they even recognize that is a task that they should be engaged in, that it should be a priority for this Government in the face of these unprecedented cuts to our rural economic fabric in this province.

The CN layoffs is one example of the disastrous policies the federal Government has put in place in transportation under the guise of deficit reduction. While they spend hundreds of millions of dollars for a new museum in Hull, Quebec, they are making these cuts to the livelihood of individuals, of people, of families with small children and to small communities which depend on those incomes for the economic health of their communities. We see this happening at a time when farming has taken a tremendous downturn over the last few years and hopefully will reverse itself, good weather being one factor, in the next while but certainly not because of provincial policies to assist agriculture during this particular point in time.

So I speak about the transportation aspect to CN layoffs as one, hitting a number of small communities in my constituency and in the Parklands region. Then we have VIA cuts, and we have not seen the start of that yet. As a matter of fact, in VIA we just had the Minister, Benoit Bouchard, at committee in Ottawa saying that he is not going to allow for public hearings into the VIA cuts once he gets the full proposals from management as to the cuts that should be made to meet the Government's set objectives of decreasing the subsidy to VIA, the set of \$100 million or so per year over a four- or five-year period, to reduce the subsidy that the federal Government is providing to VIA Rail. He is not going to subject that to public scrutiny. He is going to make those decisions by regulation, by Order-in-Council. The federal Cabinet is going to make those decisions in private, in secret, and we will be faced with the consequences in our small communities throughout this country.

We are seeing it already. As a matter of fact, at Dauphin for example, seven people will be laid off by VIA because they are going to centralize the crews in Winnipeg. There are going to be people lost from The Pas, Gillam, Thompson, along the way, because what they are doing with the passenger services that are being run from Winnipeg to Churchill is putting two crews on the trains rather than picking up crews and dropping them off along the way. So these employees who are now stationed in Dauphin, stationed in The Pas, in Gillam, in Thompson, and therefore contributing to the economic well-being of those communities with their families are now going to have to move to Winnipeg and be centred there. We are going to lose those jobs because of VIA changes at the same time that we are losing all of these CN people around from smaller communities in the area. Then we are losing the service which is something again that Canada was built upon, the transportation links between East and West and central parts of our country. We are very concerned about what that is going to mean for our country in the future.

Even as we talked of free trade last year, we were talking about the north-south links being stronger than the east-west links. It seems this federal Government is weakening the east-west links at a time that it is strengthening the north-south links and making us more like the Americans, more closely tied to the American economy and American society, which does not make Canadians who want to believe in a strong independent country, Canada, very comfortable at this particular

time, and with good reason. They see Canada's independence being eroded by these kinds of agreements, which are the Free Trade Agreement and the striking of the north-south links at the expense of the east-west ties that bind us together in this country.

So we see the cuts at VIA, we see the cuts at CN, and then we have discovered that even outside of the Crown corporations the Government departments are making major cuts in the small communities. We have seen the ERDA agreements, for example, by the federal Government discontinued in many instances. We are not certain at this time how many of them will be discontinued. I fault again with this Government, this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), this Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson), and this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), who are not standing up to the federal Government and putting forward proposals that will ensure that our rural areas will not be pillaged by these federal Government policies that are being put in place at the present time.

I use as an example transportation. With rural economic development such as the ERDA agreements which is provided in tourism, in business development, in manufacturing and production facilities—a great deal of economic stimulus in the last five years—we are losing that now and again at a very critical time when we see those federal policies of cuts in the Crown corporations taking place, cuts and changes to the UIC, to Unemployment Insurance, which are promoting the exodus of people from rural areas to larger communities for training and jobs.

The changes that were made by the Unemployment Insurance Commission do exactly that. They pull people out of the rural areas. Instead of creating the jobs in the rural areas where they are needed, providing the training in the rural areas where they are needed, and the jobs that have to go with that, they are encouraging people or sending people out of those rural areas to the cities and to eastern Canada where the unemployment rate is low, such as in the Toronto area where they can find jobs.

* (1540)

So it is a capitulation of the responsibilities of the federal Government. Rather than saying, we have to preserve our rural areas, we have to enhance the economic development in those areas, they pull out and say we cannot do it. We cannot do it, so we are going to send the people to the jobs. That is devastating our rural areas. We see that all around us. We see that in the Post Office where they are cutting back on rural post offices even while they are making \$100 million with that Crown corporation. Again it is good to modernize, but to have the loss of these services in our rural areas is devastating for many, many rural communities at the present time, and it is taking place right across Canada consistently.

As I indicated earlier, the flight services now being removed, flight services stations, is not only a job issue and a centralization issue where they are centralizing in larger centres, which seems to be the practice, but

It is also an issue of safety just as all of these other cuts are in transportation. Particularly the maintenance at CN, that is a question of safety. This issue of flight services, it has been demonstrated that flight services attendants in flight services stations, 24 hours a day at these airports, definitely ensure a safer operating environment for pilots, planes coming into those airports. It is far better, far superior to remote services from, say, Winnipeg being provided by radio to these pilots going into these centres.

As a matter of fact, as I mentioned yesterday, the Cranbrook crash which killed over 40 people in the late '70s resulted in the commission by Judge Dubin in which he undertook to make several recommendations to the federal Government at that time. One of them was that flight services stations, with people on staff 24 hours a day, should be in place at all airports with scheduled aircraft. Here we have a case in Dauphin where there are six regular scheduled flights a day, that there will no longer be a flight services station.

One did not exist at Dryden either this spring when the crash occurred killing 22 people. That is a contributing factor that has been found and believed to that crash. It is very much a safety issue, and yet the federal Government continues to do this just in the name of cost cutting. They seem to be totally insensitive to the safety aspects. That is why we ask this provincial Government to stand up on behalf of the communities for safety, for the jobs there, for economic development in those areas and for service, safe service, to stand up on behalf of Manitoba communities but this Government does not do it. It is very much a provincial issue, because if they are not going to stand up alongside of the municipalities who are upset about these kinds of things, then there is nobody to stand up on their behalf. The federal Government can merrily do this and get away with it without anyone raising any controversy about it at all, and it is all so easy for them.

So we have to have this Government coming forward and not criticizing those kinds of questions by saying, they are all federal issues. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is great for that, saying, oh, federal issues. The fact is he abdicates his responsibilities. He trivializes those issues by saying that is what they are, as if he can just dismiss them out of hand that require no provincial action at all. The fact is they require substantial Government expenditures at the provincial level if they are going to reverse and combat that kind of policy that is, in my view, irresponsible by the federal Government. They have to take the concrete steps to reverse those kinds of policies, to develop our rural areas and much more than forming a Rural Development Department. They have to have rural economic development programs that are going to ensure that there is more development.

I just look at one case in point, the Repap sale which destroyed an opportunity for the Acting Speaker, his constituency, which was the loss of a waferboard plant, which would have created some 400 to 450 jobs at that particular time in Swan River. Now we had this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) at committee saying, oh, now we are creating 300 jobs at the chipping facility

at Swan River. First it was 200, then it was 250 and then it was upwards of 300, he said in Hansard. That is utter nonsense because modern chipping facilities create about 10 jobs, that is all they take to run them. This Minister is talking about upwards of 300 jobs because he is counting, double counting the jobs in the forest and in the bush that are there already by a number of small forestry and logging operations which will now simply provide some additional economic activity.

Now that is good, but that is not new jobs. That is what he wants. He wants the people of Swan River and the Parklands to be hewers of wood for this plant. They do not get any value-added jobs. They do not get any high tech jobs or any jobs that occur in the manufacturing facilities. These are bush jobs that they have had for years. That is all that this Minister is talking about for the Swan River area, and they are very upset about this. This Minister cannot dismiss this as frivolous critique. At the same time, he has given away the forest of the Parklands region for 20 years with an agreement with Repap, in which there is no recourse or no special protection for the people locally to have the benefit of the economic activity that should result from a valuable resource.

If the Minister wants provincial issues, there he has one. I believe he did not know what he was talking about in that committee when he said, on many occasions in that committee, that there were going to be all these jobs created, which is not true by the facts based on information on modern chipping facilities. Ten jobs is all it creates in a plant. That is all it takes to run a modern chipping facility. That is what he gave this Swan River area as a consolation prize for the loss of a waferboard plant and the giveaway of that resource without consultation with those people there.

When we lost that, federal funding was being considered by the federal Government through the Western Diversification Fund to develop the waferboard plant, and we would have had jobs there for the people there rather than those people having to take unemployment insurance and relocate because of the changes—relocate, get training, relocate to Winnipeg or to the East to find jobs.

We could have kept those people there had the Governments worked together on a sound basis through sound economic planning for our rural areas. They did not do that. So as a consequence, we see a major loss of potential jobs in the Parkland area of this province, an area that desperately needs jobs, quality jobs, because of the high unemployment and the fact that they have not had major industrial development consistent with sound environmental standards of course over the history of the development of this province.

The Parklands region has suffered over those years and here we had an opportunity to turn that around and the provincial Government does not talk to the federal Government, and loses it, blows it, and throws in all those forestry resources with the deal with Repap, because they did not talk with their federal counterparts in joint economic planning.

I think that is a scandalously negative way to operate by this Government, and it is something that they are

going to have to answer for in the next election. I am sure the Acting Speaker will verify that. That is an issue that his constituents are going to want a lot of answers to over the while. I do not think they will ever forgive this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) for throwing away their economic future so casually without considering the maximum potential for those people in that area. It is most regrettable that has taken place, and we will continue to make the Government accountable for those decisions in the next while.

I say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the provincial Government, at a time when the federal Government is cutting back on the ERDA agreements, cutting back on transportation, does not have a rural economic development policy. They continue to flounder on the issue of rail line abandonment and a policy that would ensure fairness, ensure that the most efficient system of transportation is put in place, an initiative that was taken at the time when we were still in Government. I had the opportunity to be Minister of Highways and Transportation at that time, to discuss with my counterparts in western Canada a policy that we could put forward to the federal Government that would ensure that all Parties were consulted and were part of the decision making. All costs were provided aboveboard so there was not a unilateral decision made by one mode of transportation, that being the railways, of abandoning our railway system, and then perhaps imposing higher costs than they were saving on other jurisdictions, such as municipalities and the provinces.

* (1550)

So we had taken the initiative to put forward to the Minister of Transport at that time, John Crosbie, to ensure that there would be a rail rationalization process in place in this country that would ensure efficiency, would ensure service was protected, and ensure fairness, and consider the social and economic impacts of abandonment.

That has not yet been implemented. I asked the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) why it is taking so long, and why he has not brought forward a report to this House saying that he is pleased to report that this new initiative has now been adopted by the federal Government. Instead, they continue to allow this thing to dangle for months and years. At the same time, their maintenance cuts are taking place at unprecedented levels in this country, which is going to make a lot of this abandonment a foregone conclusion because there will not be any alternative. There will be unmaintained lines that just cannot be kept.

What they are doing is abandoning by neglect. This Minister now has a tremendous challenge in front of him to try to make this policy, to put a stop to this policy that the federal Government is embarking on and following in the footsteps of previous Governments at the national level, including particularly the Trudeau Liberal Government that was in place over those years of abandonment of our rail lines and the deregulation that was started with Lloyd Axworthy, as a matter of fact, in a very aggressive way. I notice that some of the Liberal Members are reacting to that.

I have to say that I would much rather see Lloyd Axworthy as the Leader of the Liberal Party than a

couple of his eastern counterparts, I have to admit that, especially from Quebec. At the same time, I want to say that he is no angel. He certainly made a lot of decisions that hurt us during the time that he was in business in this country.

The Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) is no angel either when it comes to making decisions affecting Manitoba. We have seen the destructive decisions that he has made and neglected rural areas of this province and this country, but Lloyd Axworthy, the one potential leadership candidate, did initiate very aggressively, before the '84 election, the transportation deregulation which he was moving on as quickly as the Conservatives. They just stepped into his boots and moved right ahead.

He had a lot of positive aspects about him, a lot of positive policies that he put in place and programs that did help Manitoba, but that was one that did not. The deregulation of the airlines industry in the short term may help and there was a way to do it, but it has also impacted and will potentially impact on safety. We see this at some of the congested airports, and we see it happening in the railway industry where so many employees are losing their jobs as a consequence of his initiatives at that particular time.

Let me just go back to the provincial Government's role in this whole issue. They have to recognize that when they have a Minister responsible for the Western Diversification Fund, in this case Charlie Mayer, a Manitoban, presiding over the demise of our rural areas of our country—I found it rather interesting to see an article recently that talked about his passion for rural development and preserving our rural way of life. It made everyone reading it think, my, we really have a guardian here, Charlie Mayer. I could not believe that I was reading about the same person who I have seen in action insofar as the policies that the federal Government puts in place.

There is no activity for rural economic development. There is nothing to save our rural way of life and our rural communities. We do not see initiatives that are being taken by the federal Government in concert with the provincial Government to reverse what is happening, the economic stagnation and decline of our rural areas, the exodus of people.

Instead he is presiding over decisions made by his colleague in Cabinet that are hurting our rural areas, in the post office, in transportation, areas of this country in rail line abandonment in CN and VIA Rail, and all of those other major cuts that are taking place to our rural areas. The Western Diversification Fund is not reversing that.

He is not putting initiatives into rural areas. As a matter of fact, they dragged their feet on the waferboard plant at Swan River and lost it because the province was not talking to them at the same time, and they were not working together on economic development, so we have one going off one way, one going off the other way. They do not get together, and they say they know how to do that because they are both Conservative Governments. What a farce! I have never seen anything more unco-ordinated in my life as I saw with that decision made by this Government, when they

sold the Manfor plant and lost those jobs in economic development for the Parklands region of our province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as opposed to initiatives in rural areas of this province other than a few highways being built, what we see is cutbacks in marketing for tourism which is critical to the future of this province, cutbacks in rural economic development of 8 percent. This is the Budget that this Minister is proud of, this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Where is he when he should be protecting the rural areas of this province? He does not seem to be evident and neither do all of his colleagues from the rural areas when they allow marketing to decline by nearly 8 percent for tourism and rural development to be cut by 8 percent.

Then on top of that, they preside over the greatest cut in history of the Department of Agriculture, particularly one area that they could do more in, and that is the area of those bankruptcies, those farmers who are going under because of insufficient funding and return on their operations, and debt that they have incurred over these difficult times in the last number of years and the high interest rates. Many, many, farmers are suffering a great deal at this time. They are looking with hope to the weather we have, grain farmers particularly, but they are in desperate straits. I believe that there are more auction sales and more bankruptcies taking place now than ever before in this province.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): You are wrong as usual.

Mr. Plohan: The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) will be able to put on the record what the facts are in that because he says that he knows what the facts are, so he will have that opportunity.

The fact is that these auction sales are taking place. Farmers are going out of business. We have a mechanism that can help, one that he fought vehemently against and his rural colleagues, the legislation that established the Farm Mediation Board that was put in place in this province by the previous Government.

* (1600)

They have cut back the Special Farm Assistance now, I believe, to \$1.5 million, where it was at \$5 million, which was designed to assist the Mediation Board in putting together packages that would ensure that farmers would continue to operate, rather than go bankrupt and lose their livelihood completely and have to move away from the land, move out of the communities, as is taking place. We wanted a system that would ensure that we would preserve our rural areas to as much an extent as possible. We do not see any support for that mechanism by this Government.

We have cases now where they are uncovering that the banks have been overcharging farmers dramatically in interest charges over the years. We have one situation, and it is before the courts, so I do not want to make a lot of comments on it. An individual in my constituency has some very good information, I think,

that is going to prove that the financial institution in question did overcharge him by hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last number of years in interest charges.

There are others coming to light now as a result of the work of the Mediation Board, where they started to look into why it was that these farmers were going under despite their best efforts. They are finding out more and more, despite the fact that these banks are trying to hide this information and hold it back. They do not want to give it up and show it, because they show the variable interest rates that they were charging when many farmers felt they were being charged a consistent rate of interest right across the board at a much lower rate according to what they signed up for.

That variable interest rate has resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars of additional charges to some operators. I believe, over the next while, we are going to see a number of these cases come before the courts where the banks are going to have to divulge this information. I think that this Government, this Finance Minister, should bring forward amendments and changes in the way the Mediation Board, an authority for the Mediation Board to operate, that would ensure they can request and receive all information from the banks as to the interest charge on loans over the years. They should have that information without question. That should be one area that the Mediation Board is instructed to review with every particular case that comes before them of hardship by individual farm operators. I believe that they will uncover more and more cases of overcharging of interest by financial institutions.

This Government should also be aware that there are some significant hardships being incurred by a number of small school divisions in this province. School divisions, when I say small, that do not have the financial base to pay for services that are routine in richer school divisions with a wealthy tax base in which to finance the programs.

I look at some with a high mill rate and low dollar amounts per mill, such as Duck Mountain in my own area of the province, in my constituency. The Duck Mountain School Division is facing closure of schools, facing an inability to continue to operate and to offer a high quality of education because they do not have the tax base. There has to be a review by this Government for the boundaries for school divisions in this province. They should not wait with that. They should bring that forward quickly and get on with the process of involving local people in a review of school division boundaries, to determine what the most efficient configuration and most viable configuration would be for those school divisions. That is something that is overdue in this province, and it is something that this Government now must take action on. Just as we have a boundary review for our constituencies, in that case every ten years, it is something which could be done on a regular basis, maybe every 15 years or 20 years for school divisions, because it is certainly needed at this particular time. I urge the Government at this time, and the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), to review that issue and ensure that the school divisions are given

the kind of attention that they need in terms of the financing of education so that we can have an equal opportunity for education right across this province to the greatest extent possible.

I had the pleasure this past weekend of taking part in the graduation ceremonies at Winnipegosis in my constituency. I found at that time a tremendous spirit in that school. I found it very regrettable that they have to continually struggle to make ends meet in that school division and in a deteriorating financial situation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have enjoyed participating in this debate. I look forward to better times and better action on the part of this Government.

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): I would like to take the opportunity to say a few words on this debate. First of all, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to set the record straight on some matters, some of which I addressed in the Throne Speech.

Our caucus, our Party, has been under attack from Members opposite and Members to the left as well during the past several months, for instance, this catch phrase that they seem so taken with and love to throw out, you know, the lust for power. I did point out in addressing the Throne Speech that it is perfectly normal and there would be something lacking if any new Leaders here did not want to seek power because unless the Party has power, its policies for the good of Manitobans, as that particular Party sees it, cannot be implemented. So I would say that every one of the Members opposite, and not all that long ago and for some seven years, lusted for power. I do not use that in any pejorative sense.

One thing I overlooked mentioning at that particular time in the Throne Speech was another accusation that is beloved of Members opposite and Members to the left, referring to our Leader, a quotation that they continually bring out saying, "What is good for Sharon Carstairs is good for the Liberal Party."

An Honourable Member: That is what she said.

Mr. Patterson: Yes, that is right. That is what she said, Mr. Acting Speaker, but what the Members opposite and to the left and the media have yet to point out is that this is taken completely out of context. The Members know full well, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) looks surprised. He knows full well that she was making that comment not as the Leader of the Official Opposition leading a Party in this House, but she was making it as a member of the Liberal Party in reference to how she would vote for some as yet undeclared candidates for the leadership of the Party, speaking strictly as an individual member of the Party about to exercise her right to vote at a leadership convention.

Mr. Manness: That is like me saying I can speak individually outside of the Government. It does not work that way.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): It does not work that way, Allan.

Mr. Patterson: Well, that is what the Finance Minister and the Minister for Family Services say, but nevertheless it is taken out of context. Every Member opposite, every Member here has the opportunity, or most do, to vote as individual members of the Party in a leadership convention, besides which, I might point out, she was speaking of the federal Liberal Party at any rate and not the Party here in Manitoba. So she was speaking, and let me repeat for the record, in her capacity as someone who will have a vote at a leadership convention and has made up her individual decision. So let us lay that one to rest.

* (1610)

Also, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Members opposite love to refer to our use of the media as rather learned journals, you might say, from which we get our research or which we use for research. Well, I would make no apologies for that either. There are other sources. Our research department and our Members do use them as well. However, I would suggest that the Members opposite should thank us for using the media as a resource very frequently and sometimes occasionally in Question Period.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

Because regardless of the veracity or shortness of the statistics applied or whatever in the media, it might be right or might be factual or it might not be factual, the fact remains that there are tens and tens of thousands of Manitobans out there who are reading it and wondering themselves, well, what does this mean. We unfortunately, all of us, I would say, have too much of a tendency to accept the printed word, anything we see in print as being necessarily true. That just does not follow. So by asking questions frequently based on material that appears in the media, we are giving the Members opposite a great opportunity. If it is wrong, they can set the record straight. If there is something to it, they have the opportunity to say what they will do to address the particular problem. So I, therefore, say that the Members opposite should be thanking us for using this research vehicle, amongst others of course.

Also from the left, Mr. Speaker -(Interjection)- Well, they can read it in due course. Frankly, I must admit that I get a little fed up at times with the rather messianic diatribe that comes from Members to the left with undue frequency. We are proud to have them, good addition. At any rate, this rather missionary fervour to the left gets a little annoying at times, having to listen to it. They keep putting themselves across or purport to be the protector of the poor downtrodden worker, the common man or woman and so on and so on. They seem to forget that other groups, other Parties, other individuals, have just as much concern for fair play, fairness of the workplace, as they do.

I might point out that in regard to some of the comments that Members on the left have made about my caucus here and the attendance of two of us at the ground breaking at the Union Centre a few days ago, we have every bit as much concern for the working people, so to speak, as does the Party to the left.

I, myself, my father was a railroader, and I was brought up in a union household. My father was a union member before any of the Members to the left were in knee pants or even a gleam in their father's eye, so to speak, and long before the breakthrough of the Wagner Act in the United States and the PC 1,003 here in Canada during the war, that enabled labour to make significant and needed gains. I might also say that a few times in my past life, that I have done a bit of manual work every bit as hard or harder than many of the Members who purport to have the interests of the working person at stake.

Now in this respect, Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party is making a great deal of noise or has been in the last few days about the final offer selection and our support of the Government Bill to have it repealed. I will address this more fully when that particular Bill comes up for debate. Nevertheless, again I want to put to rest some of these unfounded accusations that the Members from the left throw at us.

Final offer selection is not something that is going to make or break the labour movement. It is something that has been filling a crying need that it has had for decades and decades. Very simply, the Bill that the Government is proposing can be supported on very clear and rational grounds, without getting into any great diatribe of rhetoric on either one side or the other, on the left or the right. So at any rate, Mr. Speaker, we will address that in more detail when the time comes.

This New Democratic Party that purports to be so concerned about the workers, and we were addressing some of this in Question Period today, the suffering that a good many workers are undergoing through income that they do not have to meet the ordinary costs of living from day to day, because of this horrendous and unnecessary and unacceptable delay in the handling of appeals to the Workers Compensation Board is a direct result of the past administration. Now we have said that the present Government now has had a little over a year to address the problem and a little more progress could or should be made, but nevertheless we must acknowledge that they inherited the problem. It was not a mess that was created by themselves, and the workers are suffering for it. So do not hold up this particular Party as being the only one with an interest in the working people of Manitoba.

The same Party, the New Democratic Party, should also realize and should admit that while most workers are trying to give and do give a decent day's work for a decent day's pay, and there are a few workers that swing the lead, on the other hand, it must also be recognized that all employers are not big bad boogeymen out to build up wealth for themselves at the expense of the downtrodden worker. Most employers are paying decent wages and giving decent working conditions to their employees. On the other hand, we must admit that there are a few as well that do exploit their employees. It works both ways, Mr. Speaker, and the Party to the left should recognize it.

The House Leader for the New Democratic Party, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), a day or two ago in his speech on this Bill, more or less cast aspersions on the fact that the Member for St. James

(Mr. Edwards) and myself attended the ground-breaking ceremonies for the Union Centre, a few blocks down on Broadway. We were very pleased and glad to be able to do it. I might also say at this time that I think the union movement in Manitoba and Winnipeg from the plans and the model of the building, drawings that were shown on display at the Union Centre reception later, is going to be a tremendous, very beautiful and worthwhile addition to Broadway. The building is well designed and it is such that it ties in with some of the more attractive buildings on Broadway, such as what I still think of as the Monarch Life Building, and now the North American Life. Their union movement is to be commended on this.

Well, to get back, Mr. Speaker, to comments on the— the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is in great voice. In agriculture, let me point out that in the budget there was no change in research funds so, with inflation, that becomes a real decrease.

An Honourable Member: Who made you do this?

* (1620)

Mr. Patterson: Oh, the Member from you know where. So you might ask, where is the commitment of this Government to the farm economy? The Government is avoiding its responsibilities, Mr. Speaker. You know it is well recognized that agriculture, along with many other industries and the economy generally, is changing around the world. Things are more competitive on a global scale, so we in whatever field need to be innovative and develop more efficient ways of doing things. So to cut back on research in this particular area gives our farmers a handicap, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture is of course one of the strengths of Manitoba, so we should be capitalizing on agriculture rather than attacking it.

Mr. Speaker, just looking through the Budget, another area, the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba had an increase of 1.7 percent, which in real terms of course is a decrease. It has always been a concern to me, the tremendous amounts of money, hundreds of millions of dollars that Governments at all levels take out of alcohol, or the consumers of alcohol we might say, and the relatively small percentage of that is pumped back into any kind of research on the effects of alcohol, research and programs to alleviate and prevent the social ills that alcohol can and does cause.

The matter of Workplace Safety and Health, Mr. Speaker, a reduction of 1.3 percent, again in real terms this would be a decrease. Now what might we say about the reduction in Workplace Safety and Health? Well, with the increased legislation and controls over hazardous materials in the environment and at the workplace and with the regulations that we have in The Workplace Safety and Health Act here in Manitoba, one would think that there would be at least a modest increase in that particular area because it calls for far more frequent and tighter inspections than probably have been carried out heretofore. The recent fire in St. Boniface leads one to think, at least leads one to conclude, that tighter measures and control regulations in this area would prevent many such events.

Industry, Trade and Tourism, Mr. Speaker, had a significant increase of almost 7 percent, which is to be commended because this is an area that bodes well for our future, and that needs to be developed and addressed so that there will be more jobs created, and Manitoba will just have a more robust economy.

However, the co-operative and credit union development regulation had a reduction of some 11.4 percent. The individual Manitobans, or rather groups of Manitobans who might want to develop a co-operative and credit union, thereby creating jobs and a pool of savings to be used for further development in the province should be given support as well rather than being cut back. There might be some philosophical reasons for this with the Members opposite vis-a-vis the Members to the left.

The Fiscal Stabilization Fund, this slush fund that is set up so that the Government can have a nice, smooth graph of the deficit and its movements over time, conceptually one cannot argue with this too much. It is good to lay something by for a rainy day, but it really does not make sense to borrow money and pay interest on it and then put it away for the rainy day. The approach would be when one has excess income, windfall revenues, such as have been received this year from the mining and the equalization payments from Ottawa, use this to pay down debt, and then in time if it is enough to pay down the debt completely, great, all well and good.

Maybe in another two or three years, if the debt is not reduced completely, then continue to pay it down, and then when there are surplus funds coming in, the decision can be made to either spend it or save it or some combination of the two. This of course is what the situation was with Alberta some years ago when the oil prices were high and the industry was booming. The province was able to wipe out debt and have surplus funds that it then put into the Heritage Funds, which can then be drawn on. So putting up this Stabilization Fund, as we have it here, Mr. Speaker, is I would say, a bit of smoke and mirrors.

Finally, large sums of money are pulled from the northern economy, largely in the mining taxes, of which we have had these significant gains or windfall this year. We would certainly hope that the prices of nickel and other metals continue to be such that there would be significant revenues coming from there in the future. These large sums of money are pulled from the North and very little of it is pumped back in the North where it is actually generated.

(The Acting Speaker, Mr. Parker Burrell, in the Chair.)

The people in the North, they want to see the fruits of their labour and they want to see some of it returned to them. They feel exploited. We found this, Mr. Acting Speaker, on our caucus tour of the North shortly after the new year. In talking to northern groups in all communities, they just felt that they are sort of left out of the mainstream. They pay the same taxes as individuals or businesses or whatever as we do in the South, and yet they do not get the same services. These millions, tens of millions, hundreds of millions of dollars of mining tax revenue comes down here to help the

whole Province of Manitoba, and the Northerners do want to receive their fair share.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

With that, I will close, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for this opportunity to set the record straight, and say a few words on the Budget. We look forward to the Estimates process.

Mr. Manness: Just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Given the fact that there is a very spirited debate and discussion going on in this Bill, I wonder if Members would be prepared to consider waiving Private Members' Hour at five o'clock so that we might continue the in-depth deliberations around Interim Supply. I wonder if there would be leave in the House to consider that.

* (1630)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, maybe perhaps we can continue the debate on this particular Bill, and the House Leaders can get together and come to some type of consensus on whether or not we would like to waive Private Members' Hour.

Mr. Speaker: Would there be unanimous consent to waive Private Members' Hour?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), on a point of order.

Mr. Manness: I hear the Member well, and if it is his intention that we come together in the next 20 minutes and there is an agreement, we then will rise and make that statement. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has no problem with that.

(The Acting Speaker, Mr. Parker Burrell, in the Chair.)

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): I am very pleased to take part in debate on Bill No. 29. We certainly do not want to indicate that there will be any long delay in passage of this Bill, but certainly Members want to have the opportunity to make certain comments on the Government's progress, or lack thereof, in a number of areas.

There were a number of issues -(Interjection)- the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) from his seat indicates that I may want to repeat my speech or make my speech the same one I made in the Budget. I want to indicate, Mr. Acting Speaker, that there were a number of issues that I was unable to cover during the time that I spoke in the Budget Debate and a number of issues that I want to touch on today.

A number of them affect rural Manitoba and in fact the Province of Manitoba. One of the issues, and I am very pleased that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) is here, deals with specifically the question of assessment and the whole process of moving the

assessment process to the point of making some decisions in this province, bearing in mind that the City of Winnipeg has moved to bring its assessment data base up to, I believe, 1985 levels and the rest of the province having to make those decisions.

I want to urge the Minister of Rural Development to bring forward some of the recommendations that his department had been working on within the timetable that was set out a number of years ago so that changes can be discussed in this Chamber and outside of this Chamber, and have the input of municipal councils and the citizens of this province on assessment reform, which I believe most Manitobans are waiting for.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

Maybe there are many who would not recognize all the full implications and the need of moving on with reform. Generally speaking, municipal councils and many of the citizens have agreed, a number of years ago, that the time is long due that reform take place. There is a whole host of issues in the assessment field that are of course crying for reform, many issues that have been on the desks of separate Ministers going back to the days when I was Minister of Municipal Affairs. The problems are still there. The timetable and the work is progressing, but we have not heard from the Government as to whether they are moving ahead with bringing forward the legislation and making sure that the timetable that was established a number of years ago is continuing on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, as well, bring to the attention of this House and to the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), whose department I have been keeping abreast of issues dealing with the workings of municipal councils, but in particular of one municipal council or the council of an LGD, in which I believe requires consideration by the Government and by this Legislature to look at very specifically, two areas. That is whether municipal councils should be subjected to the Ombudsman Act in an overview of the decisions that they make. We have in this Chamber allowed municipal councils, through our legislation, to have certain latitudes and I have no difficulty with that.

There are municipal councils which have taken onto themselves, I believe, decisions and powers which are having implications on their citizens. Certain attitudes of municipal councils lead one to believe that they believe that they are infallible, that there is no room for compromise and their decisions are final.

A case in point, Mr. Speaker, is within the LGD of Armstrong, within the Interlake, where council in that area has in fact taken upon itself to allocate lands which were originally tax sale lands reverted to the Crown for administration and subsequently council requested that these lands come back to council for administration.

I think the Government now has to take a serious look at considering two points, one whether municipal councils should in fact be subjected to the Ombudsman scrutiny as provincial departments are, and I believe that the time has come that most councils are mature enough that there can be scrutiny by the provincial Ombudsman just as provincial departments are.

The Ombudsman, if there is a citizen complaint against a particular department, does take action by recommending to the Minister and to the department that either administrative changes be made, whether rights of those individuals be corrected by the department if those rights, their rights, have in fact been violated. If those actions or corrective measures are not undertaken, then a report is put into his annual report and publicly the Government, the Minister and the department are chastised. I think that is fair and quite frankly what I have seen over the last number of years, I believe that most municipal councils would view their actions and have you view their actions very much in public, in the public arena. They have reporters in many councils, sitting in on their meetings, and would not object to their decisions being reviewed, and suggestions and recommendations made by an Ombudsman would be viewed in a positive manner.

I think the Government—it is incumbent on the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) to take that question and have some serious discussions with municipal councils but, Mr. Speaker, the ultimate decision lies with the Government as to whether it is time that the role of the Ombudsman be expanded to all levels of Government here within the province, both provincial and municipal. I think it is time those discussions take place and looked at seriously.

* (1640)

The case in point in this whole area is the allocation of lands, some of which are requested back and some of which are not and one cannot determine how the council makes its decision when to take back Crown land from Crown Lands Branch and when they do not and for what reason, because in some instances they have left the administration to continue on their Crown lands, and in some instances they have said we want to administer, and have written in.

In this case in point, they did. The fact of the matter is, everyone in the community and the council knew that private lands owned by two elderly brothers, namely the Tustin brothers out of Narcisse, were being purchased by a German family who emigrated into Canada, set up a dairy farm about five or six years ago, and now their two young sons, one of whom became an adult this year, wanting to keep their sons on the farm with them, decided to expand from the dairy operation into a beef operation.

The beef operation was a neighbouring operation, and they made a deal conditional upon purchase of not only their private lands but also their cows and calves and improvements on the Crown land, conditional upon their receipt of the, I believe it is, six quarters of Crown land that they had on their lease.

That was written into the deal, but there was one hitch, Mr. Speaker. The two elderly gentlemen who were selling the land did not want to spend money on doing the appraisal of their private lands as one condition of the unit transfer under Crown lands policy. They did not want to spend that money. In this process of course, they were having discussions with members of council. Members of council, including the reeve and several

councillors, indicated to them as far back as 1987 that if they gave up their leases council would request them back and make sure that the purchaser of their private lands would be allocated the land that the council would take back from Crown lands.

They went so far as to pass a resolution to that effect. It is in council minutes, never rescinded. Then 1988 comes along and the purchase by the Pfund family is concluded with those conditions, but the Tustins do not want to do the appraisal. They have been given the assurance by councillors that the land will be transferred, so they surrendered their lease.

Crown lands staff of course know that this has happened, and they advise council by letter saying these people have purchased the private lands, their cattle, their calves and their improvements, so you should be aware of this, council. In the meantime, they provide them with a lease, a one-year conditional lease, because obviously the elderly gentlemen, the Tustin brothers, are no longer eligible to hold the leases since they have sold their private lands.

Of course, council during this process has already written to Crown lands saying we want these lands back when they become vacant, so the Crown lands has no authority to advertise them and put them on the list for lease, even though they know what has happened in the agreement. The lands have to revert back to the LGD by agreement and by request. The lands come back to the LGD. The LGD, rather than recognizing their 1987 resolution, decide to advertise these lands because—and here is the crunch—they say now that the lands have been surrendered. We have to advertise them by virtue of the Crown land policy that they are following.

That is the issue that they have raised. The fact of the matter is, in every instance where there is a transfer, whether it is a unit transfer, whether there is a lease change, a surrender has to take place. Even if the Tustins had complied with Crown lands policy, they still would have had to surrender their leases, albeit with condition that the agreement they signed with the Pfund family would transpire. They would have had to make that surrender. So council, and in their letter to myself said, well we follow the Crown lands policy so we had no alternative but to advertise. So they advertised it and by some formula I have yet to understand, and in fact I have asked council to explain, they have used "the issue of need" as to how to allocate these leases. Well, that is another issue as to how they have arrived at that whole question of need.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): I agree. It has been a constant nightmare to me.

Mr. Uruski: I hear the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Harry Enns) saying it has been a constant nightmare to him. He is one of those who should not speak too loudly on the question of Crown leases and the like, because there is no doubt that those of us who do lease Crown land really live in glass houses and cannot throw too many stones. - (Interjection)- Pardon me? No, I have never, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I say that in declaration here that I, for one, am not and have not

had any Crown land leases within our farming operations.

What has occurred is that the council, in its allocation process and its meeting with myself, (a) indicated that they did not know about this agreement between the Pfund and the Tustins, yet everyone in the community does. Everyone in the community knew that the Pfund purchased their land. Crown Lands advised the council by letter, prior to allocation of land, as to the circumstances that the Pfund purchased the improvements on the Crown land and purchased their land and the like. Crown Lands even went so far and gave them a one-year lease. I believe that had the council not requested those lands back, the Pfund would have received these lands under the present allocation policy of Crown lands. Had they had to compete with those individuals who did apply for the Crown lands, they would have been the successful applicants for the Crown land even though they would have had to go through the point system in Crown Lands and not dealt with that matter on a unit transfer.

Mr. Acting Speaker, effectively what has happened is that council has not recognized the agreement, has not recognized the unit transfer, and quite frankly I question the assessment of need in their allocation process. I have asked them for the basis of their decision of how they have arrived at need. I will give you one example of really what happened. One of the families who was allocated a portion of the Tustin brothers' leases a year prior, gave back five quarters of Crown land, returned it back to council. If this family was in great need for this land, why would they—and council gave this to me in writing—have returned five quarters of Crown land back to the council a year before and this year they are in need, and now they were allocated this land?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Sounds like hanky-panky to me.

Mr. Uruski: I do not want to and I have not accused anyone of any, and I use the Minister of Highways' (Mr. Albert Driedger) words, "hanky-panky," but certainly the question begs to be answered. On what basis was the decision made?

* (1650)

Many of the farm community in that area do and have, in fact, requested council to rescind their decision and recognize the agreement. I urged the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Penner) not to allow that by-law to be passed, have his staff sit down with council and review the circumstances. In fact, one other area that has to be dealt with by the Government, and that is the question of the appeal process. Under Crown lands, the allocation under the provincial Crown lands policy, the allocation of lands is made by the bureaucracy. The Civil Service does the allocating of Crown lands. If there is an appeal against the allocation of those Crown lands, then there is a citizen-appointed board by the Minister of Agriculture separate from the bureaucracy which hears appeals against that decision and makes its recommendation.

Here what we are finding, and I guess this goes beyond just this area in municipalities, because that whole question of how do municipal councils deal with the question of assessment appeals, the council is its own allocation committee. Then if there is an appeal against a decision they sit in judgment and they act as judge and jury on their own allocation. That is highly an area of conflict in which a council cannot, in my mind, be not accused of being unbiased and being involved in a conflict of interest.

When I attended that meeting, I have to tell you that several of the councillors went so far as to accuse myself as having been responsible for a bad provincial policy, and that is the reason now I was coming to them, asking them to rectify a bad provincial policy. The provincial policy has survived several administrations, both NDP and Conservative, and the unit transfer policy remains to this day. That really was not an issue, but that just points out the sensitivity of councils, of anyone coming and questioning their decision and asking them for a review.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and I believe the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) has to look at this question seriously in terms of how those councils, who request the administration of Crown lands back under their jurisdiction, will deal with their own ratepayers. While on one hand, this council in particular has told me they abide by Crown lands policy, clearly in terms of specifics they do not on a number of instances.

So I ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs to seriously consider this matter and deal with the council in question in what, I would say, in his persuasive manner which I am sure this Minister does have good persuasive abilities, and deal with them and have them recognize and, as well from a provincial policy point of view, examine and look at very seriously a change in policy in which municipal councils should not act as either allocation or a determination board, and also act as judge and jury on their own determinations because that clearly puts them in a conflict of interest. That should not occur. That is an area of provincial policy that this Government should be acting on.

There is as well a number of other areas that I would like to touch on and they deal specifically with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), and I have my doubts that we will be able to discuss these matters until September. They deal with the question of crop insurance. In fact, specifically one individual, and I will put the name on the record because the Minister has had correspondence from him and his family lives in the LGD of Grahamdale, the name of Franz Koop, K-o-o-p is the surname. Mr. Koop purchased the Feed Security Program from Crop Insurance when it began and was, as I understand the situation, placed in the boundary area of Grahamdale north. On the original application, it was placed as Grahamdale central, but I guess when it went into head office someone placed his operation under the boundaries of Grahamdale north.

It never became an issue, Mr. Speaker, until this year because what has occurred is that Grahamdale north, apparently by assessment, did not receive a payout under the Crop Insurance Program, because their

monitoring yielded a greater hay supply than was to be had above the average that was there for their area, and yet Grahamdale central in which all their land and operation is located was judged to be feed deficient and a payout was agreed to.

So the Koop family, and I guess they would not have twigged on this, had the area of Peonan Point on Lake Manitoba, the farmers on that area, not requested a change in their location because their area had originally been under Grahamdale north. They requested their area be put into Grahamdale central which makes sense because of where Peonan Point is situated on the map. They were requested—and when the Koop family started making inquiries about this that somehow they were in Grahamdale north and these were in Grahamdale central, and they were on the same line as Peonan Point. They then found out that all their lands were in Grahamdale central, and not as on their contract or at least their subsequent contract in Grahamdale north.

* (1700)

Letters and correspondence have been going back and forth between those people and crop insurance but as yet there has been no determination by Crop Insurance as to the validity of their case. Mr. Speaker, it is clearly a case where an administrative error has been made and there should be no question in the administration of crop insurance that their claim is valid, that their location really ought to have been Grahamdale central, and the payout that was made for the entire central area be equally applied to the Koop family.

So I urge the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to take heed of that matter and deal with this matter administratively through the corporation and rectify this matter because quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, claims have been paid months ago. In fact, the Koop family did go out and spend thousands of dollars in buying hay and feed for their cattle. When all the farmers in their area received the payment, they would have a loss, a considerable amount of loss of interest alone that they had to pay on the feed bill that they incurred as a result of waiting for this payment.

I do not believe that this matter should continue to drag on for almost half a year, Mr. Speaker, and I urge the Government, and particularly the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to use his discretion in this matter and have Crop Insurance rectify this situation. I know that the Government in particular has been quite silent on the question of the impact of free trade on agriculture, and I believe that is very regrettable.

We have the matter of supply management, especially supply management threatened by the Free Trade Agreement right across this country. It is being undermined. We have continual information coming out that—and there is no way around it, just like the statements of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Hour. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 11 minutes remaining.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Private Members' Hour, I would like to draw Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Morris School, thirty students from Grade 6. These students are under the direction of Terry Serediuk. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS PUBLIC BILLS

BILL NO. 2—THE LANDLORD AND TENANT AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill No. 2, The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le louage d'immeubles, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). (Stand)

BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). Is there leave to let this remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister? (Agreed)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that it is actually practice that it requires leave to speak. I do wish to speak on this Bill. Quite frankly, we have debated this from our side of the House. I know our caucus has debated this issue. The Members of the Liberal Party have, who were somewhat frustrated by the fact that the Conservatives have not put up a speaker on this particular Bill at this date. I do think it is an important Bill. It is important to our multicultural community.

I therefore move, seconded by the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski), that the question be now put.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, no one told me that it was going to come to a question of having the question put today. If that were the case, other arrangements might have been made. If this is the approach being taken by Honourable Members in the Opposition, I suggest that has not been the way this House has operated, certainly for the first Session and we hope not for this Session. Honourable

Members should recall before granting such a request as this that the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) has not even spoken on this Bill as at this point.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There was already unanimous consent to leave this matter standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). That was agreed for before.

Mr. Ashton: She would be speaking on the main motion, or in terms of the motion I have just moved in the House? I believe there may be some confusion.

Mr. Speaker: No. It was agreed upon this matter would remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), Bill No. 13.

Mr. Ashton: I had moved a motion.

Mr. Speaker: No, prior to recognizing the Honourable Member for Thompson, I had put the question to the House, and it was agreed at that time by unanimous consent that this matter would remain standing. Order, please.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): No, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order, I would raise the point of order as to whether it does require leave of the House for a Member to speak. I believe that I was appropriately recognized on the Bill. I raised that immediately, and I do believe that it is in order for the motion that I have placed before the House to be before the House, and I am just asking for clarification of the fact that we would now be dealing with the motion that the question be now put.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), seconded by the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that the question be now put.

This is a debatable motion. The subject matter is—

An Honourable Member: Is it non-debatable or debatable?

Mr. Speaker: It is a debatable motion.

* (1710)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I rise to debate the motion.

I am somewhat troubled by what the combined Opposition has seen fit to do over the course of the last minute or two. We come here, in Private Members' Hour, to discuss certain items, public Bills brought forward by Members of the Opposition, firstly. Secondly, if it is not the wish of Members on either side to address those Bills, to then call resolutions, and we have some,

I believe, 40-plus in number resolutions on the Order Paper. We have a significant large measure of work to do within this one hour called Private Members' Hour, from five o'clock to six o'clock.

I am rather alarmed that the combined Opposition would feel so pressured that they would want to put a motion with respect to one Bill. We have at this time consideration of Bill No. 29, which is the Interim Supply Bill, which confers upon the Government the right to have pay cheques available for Manitobans in the beginning of July. That is an important item that could be debated at this time if there were a will.

We have Bill 27, an integral part of the Budget that is called the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, which gives effect, which gives meaning, which gives law to the development of that fund, an integral part of the Budget laying into place a fiscal framework for stability of Government decision making over years to come. That could be debated during this time.

Mr. Speaker, there are other Bills of great importance to the people of the Province of Manitoba that could be considered during this period of time. Mr. Speaker, the combined Opposition has seen fit at this point to put a question on a specific Bill, that being No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act.

It is not for me to reflect on anybody's motives. It is not for me to reflect on the decision, but I heard when the Speaker of the House called for whether there was leave to let the issue stand in the name, nobody rose. Nobody expressed concern that should be left standing in the name of the person who wanted to have an opportunity to speak to Bill No. 13 at another time, particularly the Minister responsible for Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson), indeed the Minister from Executive Council (Mr. Filmon) who should be addressing that Bill. There were no nays that came forward when it was asked whether or not that Bill could stay standing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say to the Members opposite, if they are going to begin to use the tyranny of the majority to begin to put a question, then I say that is moving, taking this House, which through minority status has to be treated very carefully, where there has to be agreement. Indeed, I asked at 4:30 this afternoon, I asked publicly in this Chamber whether or not there was a will from the Opposition Parties to possibly waive Private Members' Hour in consideration of the important business that we have to do. There was a recognition by the Deputy House Leader, the Whip of the Liberal Party (Mr. Lamoureux) that leave should not be granted for that. I understood why. I left it up to the Whip to indicate specifically whether or not he wanted to grant leave. It certainly is the call of the Opposition Parties to decide whether or not Private Members' Hour should be waived.

I say we, as one Party, are trying to accommodate the expedient usage of the House time and, as the Government, there is an awful lot of work to do. We are about to recess for the best part of two-and-a-half months, as I understand, unless the agreement has been changed. I take it that the agreement is to roughly the middle of September unless it has changed. There is an awful lot of work to do. Members opposite have

been terribly critical of us because we did not start the Session until May. Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to start the Session in February when all the decisions of Government, all the plans, all the budgets, take five months to prepare.

So the Members opposite, I tell them now, if they are going to hold us to this House until Christmastime before all the business of the House can be accommodated, then they can expect that it is going to take some number of months before we come back in 1990. I am not one who likes to see the planning of Government continue to be off the rut, Mr. Speaker, to be off the channel.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Manness: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The only point I am trying to make and Members opposite I think know—I think the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) knows that you cannot prorogue the House two or three days before Christmas and be back in February. It is an impossibility, absolutely impossible. It is as impossible as my ability to walk on water. I cannot do it and indeed no Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): Point of order. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) knows full well that we spent about a month debating the Throne Speech and that there is ample time to . . .

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. What is your point of order?

Mr. Roch: My point of order is that the Minister was misstating the facts that he could have been ready for late February as is traditional.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. As the Honourable Member is quite aware, a dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Mr. Manness: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I point out for the record, and I have to recognize that the Member for Springfield is not in Government and is not in Cabinet and therefore does not understand the workings of Government, but I must tell you for anybody who wants to hear and wants to believe, if they want to believe, it is physically impossible to give yourself basically a month, and a month and a half, as for planning, once you have left the House to have prepared the Throne Speech and the Budget forthcoming.

These decisions require a lot of time. This is very much a hands-on Government. This is a situation where Treasury Board is very active, where indeed the planning decisions made are not like as in the case in Ottawa, where all of a sudden there is a closure of a Forces base, and the Minister responsible I think finds out about it after the fact. In this case, we are totally

responsible, we understand our responsibilities. Consequently, the decisions that are made before and during the Estimates and budgetary processes are ones that we take upon ourselves, that we make in great seriousness, and that we stay totally accountable and responsible for. So, Mr. Speaker, for Members to believe for one moment that we can rise a few days before Christmas and then be back into Session in February or March is totally unthinkable. It cannot work.

The point I am trying to make is there is a lot of business to do in this Session. There is a lot of legislation on the Order Paper. There are a lot of important matters to be discussed. I am saying it is going to take some common will and a common desire by all Members of this Legislature to want to work towards some type of timely conclusion of this Session, if indeed there is a will and the desire to bring the schedule back into some type of norm. If there is not that willingness to do so, then from my point of view at least, as one Member of the Executive Council, we are going to continue to have situations where the Throne Speech comes in later on in the spring followed by the Budget.

* (1720)

I think we have got a combined decision to make here. Are we all part of the wish to try and bring this situation back to normal scheduling, or are we all going to continue to try and frustrate the activities of the House and the business that has to be done? I say, we have a choice. We can either do it in a very responsible way or we can continue to try and use, as I call it, the tyranny of the majority at an important time like this to try and cause the question to be put on an issue when the Minister, the representative of Government, is not even given an opportunity to put on the record her concerns and comments. If that is the intention, then at least give notice to our House Leader, give notice to somebody in the Government. It is the intention to put forward a motion that the question be put so that the Government has an opportunity to address a Bill like this on second reading. That is the only point I try to make.

There are other matters that we should discuss, that need to be discussed at this point in time. A lot of good representations and comments have been made with respect to this Act. Consequently, I think that it is important that other people who wish to speak to this Bill have an opportunity to add their commitments and their contributions at this particular point in time.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a few very brief comments in response to what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has just said because it is precisely that kind of trash that we have come to expect from this Minister.

He sits there and he says that the only important business of this House is Government business. Well, the facts are that the Opposition has got a few things to say in this House too.

This Bill was brought forward last Session. It has been brought forward again because it puts into debate

in this House an extremely important principle, and that is the right of communities in this province to have some say in the way things are governed in this province. What this Government is doing repeatedly is stepping back from that principle. It is stepping back with the Victims Assistance Fund. It is stepping back from Crime Prevention. It is stepping back from MIC. I think it is completely irresponsible of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to stand up in this House and suggest that is not important but his business is important. - (Interjection)- That is exactly what he said. You read the Hansard, that is exactly what he said. I am tired of that attitude on the part of this Government. I am tired of that kind of arrogant attitude being expressed all the time by the front bench of this House.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that things are allowed to stand. I must confess that we were not consulted on this motion. I too am surprised that it has come before the House, but now that it is before the House, and given the events in this House in the last few days, I think it is extremely important that we bring this Bill to some sort of resolution, that we hear from the Government where it stands on this Bill, so I am going to sit down and let them speak.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, this proposal, this pressure by the combined Opposition to force a vote on a Bill, I think, is somewhat unprecedented. It sets a very historical precedent where the combined Opposition, now the combined Opposition in the majority in this House under a minority Government situation, has come forward to try and force the Government into a position on a particular situation.

An Honourable Member: Majority Government.

Mr. Ernst: If a majority Government had come forward and introduced closure on an issue like this, can you imagine the screams from the Members opposite? Can you imagine the screams from the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr), the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) if there was closure implemented on a Bill such as this? This is no different.

An Honourable Member: It is not closure.

Mr. Ernst: This is in fact reverse closure by some power hungry individuals who have had a very poor Question Period all week and are trying to force an issue to get their name in the paper.

Mr. Ashton: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson, on a point of order.

Mr. Ashton: The Member opposite is making reference to this motion being a motion of closure. It is not a motion of closure, it is a motion that the question be now put. It is quite clearly differentiated from that, and I would appreciate if the Member would not then move to imputing motives. I find it surprising that Member

from that particular caucus would be talking about power hungry. This was a legitimate move that was brought forward without any particular negative motive on behalf of myself and the NDP Caucus.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Mr. Ernst: To clarify the issue, if the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is so concerned about the fact that it is an issue of closure, let me say it is tantamount to an issue of closure, tantamount to forcing, by the combined Opposition in a minority House, the vote on a particular issue. That is no different than closure under a majority Government situation, no different at all.

Mr. Speaker, we have not had adequate time, adequate opportunity for Members, all Members in the House quite frankly, even though they are prepared to give up their opportunity to debate this particular Bill. Government Members have not had the opportunity yet to debate the Bill properly, thoroughly, particularly when it is anticipated, presumably by their action today, that it will force it upon the Government to deal with it. We have not had that opportunity. The Minister has not had the opportunity yet to debate the Bill fully.

As indicated by my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), we have on the Order Paper 43 resolutions, 90 percent of which have been authored by Members opposite. We have I do not know how many Bills presented by Members opposite to deal with as well within Private Members' Hour, not Government Bills. These are Private Members' Bills, and we are also dealing with Private Members' Resolutions, some 43 altogether. We have lots of work to do.

The fact of the matter is that they need to be debated reasonably. They needed to be debated fully. This is not a game in here, this is serious business. The fact of the matter is when you bring forward Bills and issues before the House they require, by parliamentary tradition if nothing else, by common sense if nothing else, by reasonableness if nothing else, the opportunity for Members to debate the issue fully and responsibly.

By forcing closure in this kind of situation, we are going to see a situation that has I think significant ramifications. We have people who all of a sudden are wishing to force a Bill upon the Government, even though the Minister has indicated that she would this Session be bringing forward multicultural legislation on the Government's responsibility to bring that forward to the House for debate. She has indicated she will do that, yet has not had an opportunity to do that before this kind of closure has been forced.

Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat shocked, quite frankly, that Members opposite would choose to invoke what is tantamount to closure to force an issue upon Members of Government without undue process, without opportunity to debate, without having the benefit of the Minister coming forward with her ideas and her legislation dealing with this exact same issue.

I do not want to impute any motives, because that would be unparliamentary. I suspect that the best

interests of the multicultural community are not behind this motion, that there is something else behind this motion which will be revealed obviously in due course, but I suspect not in the true spirit of providing legislation in this Chamber. We have had, in my short period of time here and it has only been three years since I have had an opportunity to be here, to see this kind of situation occur. It is somewhat of great concern to me and I do not think is in the best interests of parliamentary democracy in this country and in this province.

I would think that, in this case, the Members of the combined Opposition might want to rethink their position, might want to rethink what they are doing, and might want to look more to the spirit of co-operation in this House, look more at trying to deal with the vast majority of business that is still before the House. We still have to deal with the question of these 43 resolutions and any number of other Bills. So, Mr. Speaker, this is of genuine concern, I think, to all Members of the House. It should be of genuine concern. Let them rethink what they are doing and hopefully once rethought, they will have an opportunity to withdraw this particular motion and we can get on to the orderly function of business in the House. Thank you.

* (1730)

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Let me rise to put a few comments on the record because I think it is extremely important in the democratic society, and the importance of fully debating issues, legislation, resolutions, as they come before this Legislative Assembly.

As my colleague from Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has said many times that we should feel, as elected Members of the Legislature, very honoured to be selected from over a million people to come to this place, to put before the people of this province our thoughts on behalf of our constituents. That is very, very true that we should carry out that responsibility very seriously and without any inhibitions, that we should not take the job lightly, that we should fully address all the issues that come before this Assembly. I guess, there are some special occasions, particularly when it deals with the payment of salaries of employees of the province or because of specific timing factors, that somewhat changed the agenda of this Legislature. I think to the best of our ability we should give each Member the opportunity to fully address an issue of concern.

What we have just seen here and I am somewhat surprised, I really am, because we have the Member for Thompson, the new House Leader (Mr. Ashton) for the New Democratic Party, trying to cut new ground and make his way in the Legislature.-(Interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Member refers to our former House Leader, Mr. Gerry Mercier, who as we sat in the Legislature—we were in Opposition when he sat as a majority. There was no way in which we could accomplish that restriction of speech as a lesser number of seats compared to the Government. The combined Opposition to this particular situation can inhibit and stop the debate on a very important resolution or issue before this Legislature.

So you might say it is a ganging up of the Liberals and the New Democratic Party to try to keep the Government from expressing their policy positions or their concerns on the record. Who would have ever thought that kind of a coalition would take place on such an important issue, to muzzle the Government on such an important issue? One has to ask them the question, do they not take seriously the Bill which is introduced? Do they not take seriously the issue?

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): They want to pass it without debate.

Mr. Downey: The Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) says they want to pass it without debate. I would ask them the question, how many other pieces of legislation do they want to pass without debate? How many other pieces? Could they identify for the House and for the public all those issues and concerns that they do not want to debate? Why did they put them on—why are all these on the Order Paper if we are not to debate them?

So, I say, Mr. Speaker, one has to be very concerned about what their motives really are. Again, we are here as legislators who not only are given the opportunity to express ourselves freely, but to make sure the maintenance of that system is preserved. We do not want to take this particular motion lightly from the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in his position that he has put forward—let us just say that we do not. I know I speak for, I am sure, the majority of Members in this House that when they reflect on what is taking place here, they would agree with us that the motion that came forward was ill-advised, that in fact I would expect colleagues of the Member for Thompson to rise and participate in this particular debate to make sure that the issue is fairly and openly debated.

Mr. Maloway: We want to vote.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, they want to vote. They always want to vote. They do not want to debate, the Member for Elmwood says they want to vote. Do we deal with all those pieces of legislation the same way? They want to vote. That is why he came here, he wants to vote. Well, that is an honourable thing to do is to want to vote too, but we have got to make sure that—

An Honourable Member: That is what Walding wanted to do. Remember that?

Mr. Downey: The former Member wanted to vote, too. St. Vital he was from, was it not?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Downey: He wanted to vote too, but he did not want to vote with his colleagues. That is where the problem started. I will conclude my remarks by just saying -(Interjection)- I am getting all this good advice, Mr. Speaker. I am just getting ready to get my second wind.

Let us just make a quick assessment of what has really happened in this Session of the Legislature as

it relates to business of the House and as it relates to expressions of activity as far as the Opposition is concerned. When we go back to the opening of the Legislature, we had a very confused Liberal Opposition as it related to the Throne Speech in not knowing whether they should support it or whether they should not support it. They had the opportunity to listen to debate, to hear both sides of the issue, and they finally made up their minds, the same as the New Democratic Party had the opportunity to debate, listen and make up their minds. That is an extreme part of the process.

I do say that there were a lot of good directions and initiatives that were developed in the Throne Speech that in fact I think clearly indicated to the public the direction that this Government is going. Then we proceeded to the introduction of the Budget which again left not the New Democratic Party in any dilemma, because they knew truly what would happen if they forced an election. The Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) said he wants a vote. Well, that is one vote that he really did not want was back in Elmwood. He wants a vote but he does not want the people of Elmwood to have a vote. I have to be quite honest. I do not particularly want a vote back in Arthur right now either.

An Honourable Member: No, no, no, no, no, a vote on this Bill.

Mr. Downey: Oh, a vote on the Bill.

Again, let us deal with the Budget, that it was important that we fully debated the Budget, the removal of taxation off the backs of the people of Manitoba. The Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) shakes his head in the affirmative but he voted against it. Maybe we should have had more debate on the Budget so that the Liberal Party could have had a clearer mind when it came to whether or not they want to take taxes off the people of Manitoba or whether they did not. I guess one would have to assess the fact that if the Member for Transcona was still the Finance Critic that they may have taken a different position. I think the Member for Transcona, as Finance Critic, might have been a little more effective in influencing the Liberal Party as to how they should vote on that good Budget. The New Democratic Party had their minds made up because they knew it was a good Budget, but they knew it was not a good idea to go home to their constituents and see if they could renew their mandate. That was really the bottom line as far as the New Democratic Party were concerned.

I say to the Liberal Party how important it is as new Members of the Legislature—well, relatively new, a year or something—to be able to express yourself, important not to play games with the system. I do not think that the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was trying to really play a game. It would be interesting to know what his motives really were, what his objectives are.

It is nice to see that the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) recognizes, but the important point is that people do change their mind. Debate is important, the Legislature is important. I again say to the Member for Transcona that if he had maybe had another day or

two of debate to listen to the positive input from the Government, he may well have supported the Budget which the people of Manitoba are relatively pleased with.

I say, Mr. Speaker, it is important to maintain debate. It is important that we give each and every opportunity to the Members who have been elected here to express him or herself. I have enjoyed this opportunity to put a few comments on the record as it relates to the New Democratic Party and their wanting to join forces with the Liberal Party to keep the Government from putting forward their side of the story.

I am so ashamed, or disappointed I guess, in the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who I would have thought would have wanted to carry on the traditionalist—that is right—carry on the tradition and is the first one to hide in the pages of Beauchesne to protect the Members of his Party in this Legislature.

* (1740)

I say it very seriously. I think it is important each Member of this House get up and speak against the movement that is put forward by the NDP House Leader (Mr. Ashton) to try and restrict the debate on this important issue. I look forward to other comments that will be made by either Members of the Liberal Party or the New Democratic Party, who I am sure would want to stand and fully defend the right of every Member in this House to speak very fully and effectively when it comes to a resolution or matters dealing with public policy. Thank you. I have enjoyed this opportunity.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, is it a disposition to call it six o'clock?

I am surprised, really surprised at what is going on this afternoon, firstly because we were in the first instance in the midst of dealing with a pretty important matter, a matter that is important to this Chamber and a matter that is the whole reason for this Chamber's existence, that authorizes the Government of the Day, authorizes the Treasury of the day to have the legitimate legislative action taken to allow us to proceed with the business of meeting the Government's obligations, payrolls, programs, the spending of money.

Mr. Speaker, I do remind Honourable Members, really that was the reason for Parliament's birth back in bad King John's day, the whole development of parliamentary democracy. The pro-active intervention in individuals' lives is but a latter-day innovation in Parliaments. The essential question was really before this House and we dodged it to some extent this afternoon, refused to deal with it.

I want to speak about the Liberal House Leader's action, the Opposition House Leader's (Mr. Alcock) action in this regard in a more serious way in a short moment or two. I just want to remind Honourable Members that we were dealing with probably one of the more important types of actions that this Legislature deals with, has to deal with, and that is granting to Her Majesty the money supply required to run Government. That should never be taken lightly, it should never be taken lightly, but we are taking it lightly in this Chamber at this time with the current Opposition.

Then, Mr. Speaker, is the action called on by the Honourable House Leader from the New Democrats justifiable, in just kind of normal traditional practices of this House? The Bill on which he is attempting to use the majority that the Members have opposite and force closure on this matter really begs the question. The Bill, as I understand it, and I have been in the Chamber, a Bill has come up three or four times, it is a matter of important governmental concern and the Members are well aware of it. They have raised it with the Minister responsible on numerous Question Periods. They know that there are specific Government actions being contemplated in this area and then surely to take advantage of the numbers and in lieu of the fact that the Bill has had, in parliamentary terms, a very short period for debate in this House, on those few occasions, three or four occasions that it has surfaced in Private Members' Hour hardly calls for the kind of action, the kind of mischievous action that is being concocted right now by the Liberals and the New Democrats to embarrass those who have the responsibility of governing.

Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of esteem for you, Sir, and for your office and, therefore, I want to be very careful what I say next because I do not for a moment want it to be a reflection on the Chair, but I have grave doubts in my mind as to the legitimacy of the Bill before us, and I base that on my understanding, my 23-year experience of the traditions of this House.

My understanding, if a measure, a direction, a policy question is specifically mentioned in the Throne Speech, as this was, and I quote to you from the Throne Speech delivered on Thursday, May 18, on Cultural Affairs: "My Government is committed to the principle of multiculturalism. Building on the work of the Multicultural Task Force, a Manitoba multiculturalism policy will be released and a Multiculturalism Act developed over the next year." That is a clear indication of this Government's intentions, this Government's concern about multicultural matters.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding, and I certainly defer to the more learned people advising you, Sir, and perhaps it is because the Bill that is being talked about and introduced by Honourable Members opposite does not have monetary aspects attached to it, although I fail to see that can be the case because my whole understanding of the quarrel is that they are attempting to provide precisely that facility to the Multicultural Council that they are talking about, contemplating about, to restore funding rights.

But, quite aside from that aspect of it, it is just my understanding, and I look to some Honourable Members opposite like the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) or other Members—there are not too many Honourable Members in the Liberal benches that I can lean on, on this occasion, but the general practice in this Chamber has been that if an item, if a policy matter has specific mention—I look to the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) who might help me on this—if a policy matter is specifically referred to in the Throne Speech that that often is cause enough for it to rule out Private Members' or Opposition Members' initiatives in that same area. I do not say that is hard and fast,

or that will be found in a written rule, but that certainly has been the practice and that very often has been used by previous Speakers, Mr. Speaker, to rule out the introduction of these kinds of subject matters.

Mr. Speaker, I can also (Interjection) Well, I indicated when I started this that my esteem for you is unending. I will walk many a mile with you on many an issue, Mr. Speaker. I realize that you have provided this House the kind of leadership that it sorely needs as we try to protect us, ourselves, this fragile minority Government, from those who would attack us and use the tyranny of the majority against us. We look to you, Sir, as a well of support and as a fountain of fairness to enable us to carry on the important businesses of state.

* (1750)

Mr. Speaker, so let there not be any misunderstanding that my comments in any way reflect on a ruling that obviously has been made that allows the Bill in question coming from the Opposition to be on the Order Paper. Now let me deal with more directly a little bit with the issue at hand. If this Opposition is serious about testing the will and the confidence of this Government, then that opportunity lies right before them. How have they reacted to it? How has the Liberal Government House Leader (Mr. Alcock) reacted to it?

On Bill No. 27, on the Bill that sets up the Stabilization Fund that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has introduced in this manner, let there be no mistake about it, that Bill is a matter of confidence. That Bill is a matter that will bring this Government down if not supported in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, that is the same Bill, an important Bill, that the Government House Leader (sic) is standing in his name and refuses to debate. What are we led to believe? They want to toy with the act of governing but no responsibility for it, right? They will defer, they will not speak to Bill No. 27, which is a matter of confidence, which can bring the end of this Government, which will bring the end of this Government if not passed.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Transcona, on a point of order.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition has spoken loudly and clearly on the record with regard to Bill No. 27, The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Mr. Enns: That important Bill stands in the name of the Official Opposition House Leader's (Mr. Alcock) name. The Official Opposition Leader has had several occasions to speak to that Bill and has declined, Mr. Speaker.

I am simply relating the differences between the two Bills. We have a Bill, our Minister, responsible for the Minister because of other business, is not in the

Chamber like that, we are being asked to foreclose our opportunities of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Alcock: If the Member is concerned about that, they can pass a similar motion tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is not a point of order. The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, at issue here then is what is the Opposition trying to do in the current tactic that they are employing. They are attempting to bring about a relatively significant Government measure without being prepared to take on the responsibility that goes along with being responsible for introducing, bringing into place, carrying out and implementing Government measures.

It is not often that an Opposition has that opportunity so clearly spelled out for them. If they wish that responsibility, Mr. Speaker, they have the opportunity before them on the Order Paper.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, if they wish to act in a responsible manner, if they want to allow the business of the Government, and nobody needs to remind me or any one of the Members of this Government that our fate lies in their hands. We believe that we have to carry out—we do not believe, Mr. Speaker, we know that our responsibilities are clear. We have taken oaths to that effect with respect to our responsibilities to office and to the people of Manitoba that we are trying to provide the very best Government to.

Mr. Speaker, that is being thwarted at this particular time in the House. That is a shame. Surely the matter that is delaying the passage, the important passage of Supply to enable the orderly conduct of business at this time relative to the other matter that is being raised hardly is of the same order of significance. More importantly, ample provision for debating time is available to us if not prior to the recess of July and August, which I understand we are looking forward to taking, then surely when we resume in September.

More importantly for me, Mr. Speaker, is the kind of very transparent action, lack of responsibility on the part of particularly our Liberal friends opposite, in the matter of how serious they are about their preparation of taking on the responsibility of Government or of whether they would sooner skirt behind the conveniences of the current majority that they have on that side to bring about some embarrassment to this Government or to bring about some opportunities for them to exercise and to remind us of the fact that there are more of them collectively than there are of us.

By all past traditions in this House, and I know the Government House Leader of the New Democrats has objected to the description of this action as closure, with the Leader of the New Democrats (Mr. Doer) in this House, any time and effort, a parliamentary effort technique is used that forces and closes off debate,

that is closure. That is closure, Mr. Speaker, and that is precisely what is being attempted, being exercised upon the Government on this matter today.

Mr. Speaker, there are times when that mechanism has to be used. I suspect that when you examine those occasions that it was used in this Chamber by some of us who are now Government, but it was only used when every other avenue was exhausted, when every Member of the then Opposition had spoken to the Bill at full length, when amendments were introduced to the Bill by Opposition, and then all spoke to a Bill. I refer to particular occasions in this Chamber back some years where closure was finally evoked upon us by the then Government. Closure is a tool that is used sparingly and ought to be used sparingly, not on a measure that has had three or four occasions for debate in this Chamber upon which many Members ought to and should perhaps express their opinions and hardly sets the kind of background or creates the kind of situation in this Chamber for closure to be applied.

I want to express regret, on the part of certainly myself and those of my colleagues, that this form of action was even contemplated by Honourable Members opposite. I believe that they, upon contemplation, will have second thoughts about it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member's time has expired.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, is there a desire to call it six o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

Mr. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I have no difficulty with that, Mr. Speaker. The one thing in the tenure of my period of time in this House has been that you think you have seen it all and you have not seen it all. I always use this expression very often, that the only sure thing in politics is that there is nothing sure, and that is being illustrated here today.

However, Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes that I have now, I would actually like to get into the process a little

bit of what we are doing here as a minority Government, which is a new experience certainly for myself and I think for all Members in this House, and the responsibility that comes with that kind of a situation. I have felt that there has been a genuine desire to make it work.

When you consider the fact that just yesterday we passed the new boundaries, I do not know whether—and our fate is in the hands of the Opposition as a minority Government. We have made diligent efforts to try and make things work. I have had the occasion, as a Member of the back bench in the Government's side and another time as a Member in the Opposition to come forward with Private Member's Bills. Even at the time of my first term in office when I brought, as a back bencher, in a Private Member's Bill had the frustration of having that Bill being stood right throughout, and it died on the Order Paper, which has actually been the case in most Private Members' Bills that have been introduced in this House. You get a crack at it, debate it and ultimately it gets stood because the business of the Government of the Day is the one that has the priority. If the Government did not want to deal with a Private Member's Bill of some nature, it ended up being stood.

* (1800)

Now with the situation that has changed is the fact that we have a minority situation here. It has been very challenging and interesting. Certainly, for myself it has and I think for all Members, including the responsibility that goes with it with the Members of the Opposition, because they will decide the fate. I will tell you something, their decision in deciding what happens with the Government, they can decide when we go to the polls when they want to defeat this Government. They can decide that and knowing, Mr. Speaker, is a challenge for us to be a responsible Government.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Minister will have 13 minutes remaining.