



Fifth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Standing Committee

on

Law Amendments

Chairperson

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau

Constituency of St. Norbert



Vol. XLIX No. 11 - 2:45 p.m., Tuesday, July 13, 1999

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AMENDMENTS

Tuesday, July 13, 1999

TIME – 2:45 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

**CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Marcel Laurendeau
(St. Norbert)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. David
Fauschou (Portage la Prairie)**

ATTENDANCE - 11 – QUORUM - 6

Members of the Committee present:

Hon. Mrs. McIntosh, Hon. Mrs. Mitchelson,
Hon. Mr. Toews

Ms. Cerilli, Messrs. Fauschou, Findlay,
Laurendeau, Martindale, Ms. McGifford,
Messrs. Sale, Sveinson

APPEARING

Mrs. Myrna Driedger, MLA for Charles-
wood
Mr. Stan Struthers, MLA for Dauphin
Mr. Steve Ashton, MLA for Thompson

MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION:

Bill 40—The Employment and Income Assistance
Amendment Act

Mr. Chairperson: The committee will come to
order.

Chairperson's Ruling

Mr. Chairperson: Before dealing with the bill
or the amendments, I am ruling on a point of
order I took under advisement at this committee
this morning. The point of order was raised by
the honourable Minister of Environment (Mrs.
McIntosh), who alleged the member for
Thompson (Mr. Ashton) had imputed unworthy

motives towards her. I have reviewed the
Hansard printout and find that the honourable
Minister of Environment did not have a point of
order. It was clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: This afternoon, the
Committee on Law Amendments will be dealing
with the amendments. When the committee last
met, it had been considering an amendment
proposed by Mr. Martindale to Section 3 of the
bill, which reads as follows:

THAT section 3 be amended by adding the
following after the proposed subsection 5.7(1):

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Chairperson: Dispense. On my speaking
order, I had the member for Charleswood, who
wanted to put a few words on the record, I
believe.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr.
Chair, I was here just before the committee
adjourned at twelve-thirty earlier this afternoon.
I was very disturbed at that time about some
comments that I had heard being made during
part of the discussion here. Mrs. McIntosh had
been questioning the substantiality of the
amendments that were being put forward by the
NDP and wondered why the NDP were putting
those particular amendments forward.

I was sitting here at this end of the table
across from Mr. Ashton, and his comment, under
his breath, was public perception. I have been
extremely disturbed to hear that particular
comment being made when, in fact, it was being
addressed to the issue of why these particular
amendments were being put forward. It makes
me question the credibility of the amendments,
the motivation behind putting these amendments
forward, the sincerity of them, and the respect of
the people on welfare whom this bill affects.

What I believe I heard was the NDP were putting forward these amendments, in his words, for reasons of public perception. I am very, very disturbed that I heard those particular comments, and I wished I had time at that point in time to bring them forward.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the honourable member.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Mr. Chairperson, this morning I was sitting right next to the member for Thompson as he spoke on the amendments and the bill that was being put forward. The comment that was referenced just now by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) is slightly off base. It was said in terms of the bill itself. It was said in terms of the bill being simply optical. It was in terms of the bill being put forth not accomplishing what the members across the way are, indeed, going to put out in the ads that will inevitably follow this bill.

The member for Thompson was making the point that this is not a substantial bill but that this is an optical bill slapped together at the last minute by this government to use in the upcoming provincial election. The comment that the member for Thompson made was strictly having to do with the bill itself, had nothing to do with the amendments. If we want to continue with the little games that are being played on the other side of this House, on the other side of this table, political games, then I suggest that the Tories continue to do that, but all I heard this morning had nothing to do with the substantial reasons why these government members would not support us in the amendments.

Many times this morning it sounded to me like the minister was actually agreeing with the amendments that we were putting forward, and for no apparent reason, for no substantial, reasonable, honest reasons were we ever told why they were voting against the amendments. So I think it is absolutely dishonest to put forward the kind of comments that were just made by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger). If she wants to quote people from this side of the table, I would suggest that she do it honestly and completely. In this case, it was very clear that the comments by the member for

Thompson (Mr. Ashton) were based solely on the bill, not the amendments.

Mr. Chairperson: Let me thank the member for his comments, but could I remind members that we are at this time dealing with an amendment which I attempted to read. Maybe I should have read the whole thing, but it was dispensed. I hope the members remember what the amendment was about. We will go on hearing that amendment at this time.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Chairperson, yes, I would like to speak to my amendment and remind all honourable members that we support the obligation sections in the bill. We believe that people have an obligation to work or to be searching for work or in a program or in treatment, but we want the government to put forward good programs and accessible programs. Unfortunately, the government is voting down all our amendments, and we cannot support an unworkable bill.

We are trying to make this workable. The minister keeps saying that our amendments she agrees with, but they are not needed. We are saying to her if she agrees with them, then pass them, but the government refuses to do that. So we will get on to clause by clause.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Mr. Chair, speaking in support of the amendment, I want to underline our concern that social contracts in any society are comprised of duties and obligations, responsibilities and privileges on both sides of the contract between the citizen and the community. While members opposite seem to have had difficulty understanding that parallel concept, in fact, all of our amendments are aimed at making this bill a bill that is a parallel bill, that imposes expectations that are part of being part of a civil society, but also then imposes on the society as represented in the state the obligation to make it possible for citizens to fulfill their obligations.

So it, I think, is the true test of this legislation as to whether it is serious or not, and I reference the remarks, I think unfortunate remarks, of the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), who questions the sincerity of the amendments. In fact, the point of the

amendment is to test the sincerity of the bill because if the bill is sincere, if the minister and her government truly intend this bill to be workable, they would have welcomed the amendments, including the current amendment which is in regard to educational opportunities.

So the test of their sincerity, the test of whether this bill is serious legislation or not is met or not met by the degree to which they agree that if they wish citizens to meet some obligations, they as the representatives embodying the state in the form of the government also have obligations and responsibilities to meet. They have shunned everyone of them saying, oh, this is policy, or trust us, this is available, or trust us, we will not cut off benefits unless, or trust us, education programs are out there; believe us, they are there.

I am sorry. In a civil society the rights and obligations need to be relatively clear on both sides so that the rules of the game are accessible to both sides. That is what the intent of all of our amendments were, was to make sure that there are parallel obligations on both sides of this debate.

* (1500)

I want to close on this particular amendment by pointing out that while the minister claims that there are lots of educational opportunities available, we have just had a Statistics Canada report which we are as capable of reading as the Free Press, and other commentators have read that report, which points out that Manitoba has an absolutely dismal record of making post-secondary and community college courses available to any Manitobans, let alone low-income Manitobans, Mr. Chairperson.

The numbers are already in the record, but this is why we want an obligation in this legislation in regard to education programs, precisely because this government has not only not met its obligations to lower income people, having 12,000 more of them on the rolls than when they took office, they have not met their obligations to ordinary Manitobans who in the thousands are on waiting lists for post-secondary education and training.

So that is why this amendment is important, and if the minister really wished this bill to be effective, she would support the amendment and we would get on with debating the legislation.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): It is fine for the New Democratic opposition to be critical of our government's programming and supports for individuals who are in need. I only look to the comments and the point that my honourable friends seem to be trying to make that says that the welfare rolls are higher today than they were when we took over as government. What they neglect to indicate to Manitobans is that we went through the worst recession in all of history in the early '90s, other than the Depression in the '30s, Mr. Chairperson, and if they looked back to their track record through the 1980s, when they were in government, the welfare rolls continued to grow year after year after year even when the economy had turned around and things were going well.

Mr. Chairperson, for two decades the unemployment or the welfare rolls continued to grow under a New Democratic administration. They never went down when the New Democratic Party was in government. The only time the welfare rolls started to go down was after welfare reform in 1996, and that was because we took a much more aggressive approach to trying to ensure as the economy turned around and jobs became available that people were matched with those jobs.

What the New Democratic Party neglects to mention also is that we are supporting to a greater degree 2,000 more disabled individuals, and that number will continue to grow. There is no question or no issue around support for the disabled, I do not think, with any philosophical approach, whether it be Conservative or New Democratic. We know that Manitobans most in need need to be supported, and we are very sensitive to that issue, but, again, the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), which he so often has done, selectively brings information not only to this committee but into the Legislature day after day that is wrong. When the facts are checked and all of the information is put on the record, we find that he has been absolutely wrong and just goes on to continue to selectively bring

information that he thinks supports his political agenda.

I want the record to be very clear, that under a New Democratic government, even during good times, the welfare rolls continued to increase year after year, and that is because of the New Democratic philosophy that is articulated in both the resolution in 1997 that was presented to their party at their annual general meeting, but the resolution that was presented in the Legislature says that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider refusing to implement or participate in any employment programs which force social assistance recipients to accept employment which they have not freely chosen or which force social assistance recipients to involuntarily participate in work programs as a condition of eligibility for their welfare allowances.

Now, I guess I might ask, and, I mean, I know that it is unusual, I suppose, for the opposition to need to be held accountable by having government ask them questions and have them respond to those questions, but I seem to be hearing the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) speaking out of both sides of his mouth with the comments that he put on the record a few minutes ago that is very contrary to what he says they have always believed, because it is not reflected in that resolution that was put forward to the Legislative Assembly by the New Democratic Party in 1997.

So it appears to me that the opposition again wants to have it both ways. I get significantly frustrated, Mr. Chairperson, in listening to the rhetoric that comes out of the mouth of the member for Crescentwood when he has two different positions on this issue. If you want to talk about playing politics with an issue, this is an absolute flip-flop for political purposes, and we still do not know whether the New Democratic Party or caucus or some of them or all of them might support this legislation. [interjection]

Well, Mr. Chairperson, the member for Crescentwood says it is driving me nuts. I guess I look at the smoke and mirrors and the amendments that the opposition seems to be

putting forward that all start with no applicant, recipient or dependant is required to comply, and that is exactly the same kind of language that they used in their resolution. What they are wanting to do is put language into legislation that will give the opportunity for legal challenges to get in the way of having people accept responsibility and some obligation to contribute in a positive way to society, because the New Democratic Party does not believe that people should be required to do anything, that they have complete rights with absolutely no responsibilities.

That is what their resolution says. That is what the beginning of their amendments say, and, Mr. Chairperson, we have come to a point where we have put programs in place so that we can now implement welfare reform. So the programs are there. We do not need to legislate every program. We need to ensure that there is the sensitivity there and there is an obligation. None of us disagree with the fact that there is an obligation to provide programming. We provide \$350 million a year in social assistance, plus we provide much programming through the Department of Education and Training and through my department to ensure that people and families and children receive the kinds of support that they need.

So I would say to members of the New Democratic Party and to Manitobans that we will be judged based on the programs that we have in place and that we have put in place that enable us to bring this kind of legislation forward, because we can support families and children as a result of the early intervention and the additional resources that have been put into training programs, that have been put into child care and have been put into early intervention for parents and families.

Mr. Chairperson: Let me seek a little advice from the committee. On a number of occasions this morning and this afternoon, I have spoken to the members about relevance. Relevance is, when we are speaking to an amendment, we should be referring to the amendment. All members have been guilty of drifting away from it, so I am not going to point my finger at any one member.

Let me say that if the committee so chooses, you may decide that that is the type of committee you want, but I would seek advice, because I am getting tired of bringing forward this matter and saying "relevance" if everybody is going to ignore it. So I seek the advice of the committee at this time.

* (1510)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Chair, actually I was just going to raise a point of order on a similar matter, and I must admit I came in somewhat late to the committee. I was in the House, and I had thought we had actually gone through the amendments and got the bill as a whole, which is probably where most of this discussion could take place. I realize all of us, and I am not blaming anyone, we have all probably got into the bigger debate. I think we may be jumping ahead, so we may be wise to deal with some of these amendments, get them over more quickly, and then we will get into, I am sure, a very full debate. It is not a question of getting it over quickly; it is a question of following the normal procedure. Normally, we do not have this wide-ranging debate on—

Mr. Chairperson: So can we deal with the amendments at this time and then get into the general debate that the members seem to be carrying forward when we get to the end of the bill? Is that agreed? [agreed]

At this time we are dealing with, shall the amendment pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea,

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Martindale: A count-out vote, Mr. Chairperson.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 3, Nays 6.

Mr. Chairperson: Six to three, accordingly defeated.

Mr. Martindale: I move

THAT section 3 of the Bill be amended

(a) in the proposed subsection 5.81(1)

(i) by striking out "the Minister of Finance" and substituting "a government-approved child and family services agency that has jurisdiction in the place where the child lives",

(ii) by striking out "by the administrator of the fund" and substituting "by the agency"; and

(iii) by striking out "by the administrator" and substituting "by the agency"; and

(b) by striking out the proposed subsection 5.8(2).

Motion presented.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): I was wondering whether that particular one was distributed.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, it was distributed. If you do not have it, I will see that you get a copy. Mr. Martindale, to explain the amendment.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. The reason for this amendment is so that decisions are made not by someone on fiscal necessity or on behalf of the government's fiscal agenda but based on the needs of children. We would like to amend the bill so that independent decisions are made by people knowledgeable regarding the needs of children, namely a Child and Family Services agency.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not know, I guess if we had had the opportunity again to spend some

time in the Estimates of the Children and Youth Secretariat, we would have had an opportunity to explain the whole process that has been undertaken in developing all of our new early intervention programs and all of our new supports to children and families, and they are not necessarily the Child and Family Services mandated agencies that are delivering those supports.

They are community organizations, community based and neighbourhood based. They involve members from the health system through public health nurses, not mandated Child and Family Services agencies. I have to tell you quite frankly, they will admit that the workers within the agencies are sometimes the most hated people in the community. They are hated more than the police because they are the people that come in and snatch and grab their kids and break up families.

You know, I see the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) again shaking his head, but I want to tell you that I have had that discussion with social workers within the agencies, and so what we are trying to do is ensure that there are community-based solutions to the issues. We are involving mentors, we are involving public health nurses, we are involving educators, we are involving early childhood educators in a lot of the programming that we are doing around early intervention.

So my choice would be to ensure that we have a team of expertise and professionals that are administering the fund, not a mandated Child and Family Services agency. They might be a part of that team, but they are not going to be the sole distributor of the funds to families. We want to get to families before they need the services of a Child and Family Services system and the protection or the apprehension of children. We want to be up front, working with those families in a holistic way.

That is the whole intent of the Children and Youth Secretariat, and that is the whole intent of setting up a specialized unit that has the expertise from all social sectors involved in helping to find the right supports for that parent that needs the support and the right supports for those children that are living in that family

where there may be some sort of dysfunction, whether it be on a temporary or permanent basis.

So everything that we have done involves a more holistic approach than just the Child and Family Services system and the mandated agencies. We want the experts that cross sectors involved in making healthier families and healthier communities. And our mandated agencies may be a part of that process, but they are not going to be the only people involved in helping to build healthier families and healthier communities. That is why a specialized unit needs a cross-section of expertise involved in supporting those families.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I have similar concerns with the amendment. Assuming for a moment that this is not simply another smoke screen, if one looks at the bill as drafted—

An Honourable Member: The amendment.

Mr. Toews: No, at the bill, at 5.8(2). The minister may appoint one or more administrators, who meet the requirements set out in the regulations, for the purpose of administering the special fund referred to in this section.

So this does not preclude government approval of a child caring agency to carry out some or all of these responsibilities in certain areas. Now that is the way I read the bill. I hear what the minister is saying, that she would like a broader cross-section of the community to administer it, and I think that the way this has been drafted, in fact, gives that flexibility to the minister to meet particular needs in particular communities. I am thinking especially of isolated communities where they may well have a specific type of agency present in the community but not of another kind.

The minister, I understand, may appoint that particular type of administrator. So what I would have a lot of problem is to limit the flexibility that this act does give in meeting the specific needs of various communities. So I do not see the benefit of the proposed amendment to limit it specifically to a Child and Family Services agency.

There seems to have been a measure of mistrust by the member by saying that, well, we cannot have the Minister of Finance doing it. Now there are all kinds of legal requirements why the Minister of Finance has to hold funds. Even putting that aside for the moment, the irony is here, they say, well, we cannot have the Minister of Finance but we can have a government-approved Child and Family Services agency. I mean this is a lot of nonsense over nothing because they will not accept the input of the government directly but says, well, the government can endorse a specific agency, which in my mind leads to just an inconsistency with what is being proposed here.

So "the minister", it says, "may appoint one or more administrators." I do not know what the regulations are going to say, but I assume that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gilleshammer), who is responsible for this money, better have appropriate administrators in place. This really goes around the point.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Environment): I am just wondering, with a lot of these amendments, we all know that you pass an act, then you develop regulations, and then you proclaim the act at the point when all the regulations and everything is in place. That is standard procedure.

Occasionally, rarely, but occasionally regulations and so on would be prepared prior to the passage of the bill, but normally the bill will pass and the regulations are developed, usually in consultation with the appropriate people, and the proclamation comes into effect once all the regulations are ready.

* (1520)

I wonder if a lot of these are premature, a lot of these amendments. The minister has indicated that a number of the early ones, they would be being addressed in regulation after consultation with appropriate people. This process is kind of pre-empting the standard, traditional, regular, parliamentary way of developing regulations.

So I just throw that out for consideration of committee members that maybe some of these

should just be left to the development of regulation. It would be more appropriate and more thorough and more timely and more correct in terms of procedure, I think.

Mr. Sale: Just very briefly to the minister, there is only one agency in our province that is charged with the best interests of the child as their primary obligation, and that is the child welfare system. Every single inch of our province is covered by a mandated agency which has as a primary obligation the best interests of the child. So I think it is entirely consistent that if monies are to be set aside from social assistance for children that the agency that administers those monies should be the agency charged with the best interests of the child, and that is Child and Family Services.

The second comment, I was interested and disturbed to learn that the minister's view of the child welfare system is that all it does is apprehend children and that it is hated and that basically it has no other capacity. Both under the NDP government and I had thought even under this government there was an attempt to use Child and Family Services agencies, particularly in our aboriginal communities and the aboriginal mandated agencies, to do child support, family support, preventive work, interventive work that does not result in apprehension but results in the kind of supports that the minister has, I think, bragged about, and perhaps rightly so. So I do not see these agencies as a negative. I never have.

Mr. Vice-Chairperson in the Chair

I think that if they are seen that way it is because sometimes they are not funded adequately and they are reduced to doing only emergency work. That is a shame, but I do not believe that The Child and Family Services Act makes them the kind of purely interventive agency that the minister characterized in her comments.

I think this is an important amendment, because it is the one place where we can say that the best interests of the child will be the determining factor and not some administrator's decision about whether or not a kid needs a winter coat.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I was not going to make any comments, but I would not want the member for Crescentwood to put words in my mouth. I think he has just done that by indicating that I believe the sole purpose for the agency is to protect children, because they have a wide mandate under our legislation and under our government that just made amendments to The Child and Family Services Act. We did not take away any prevention activities from the agencies. So I do not want him to leave on the record and put words in my mouth about the agency and the work that the agencies do.

We know they have a dual role, but we also believe that there are many others within our community who have an interest in the best interests of children, and they do not need a mandate or a law in order to do that. I look to public health nurses, for instance—

Mr. Sale: You are going to have 37 administrators. They are going to administer funds for kids, public health nurses are?

An Honourable Member: Why not?

Mr. Sale: Give me a break.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Oh, well, just a minute.

Mr. Vice-Chairperson: Order, please. Are committee members wanting a recess at this time in order to carry on their conversations elsewhere or can we come to order, please?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I mean, we have early childhood educators that have a significant role to play in the lives of children and families and a very positive influence, and I do not have any hesitation in trying to ensure that they are part of a special unit that is making positive decisions around children's lives along with our Child and Family Services agencies, along with our educators in our education system and along with public health nurses or those that are graduates from the Faculty of Human Ecology that have a well-rounded approach. So I have some difficulty with the comments and the negative implication that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) places around public health nurses, early childhood educators, members of our education system who certainly,

I know from personal experience, have a significant interest in ensuring the health and success of children.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Again, I guess this is just sort of back to the good old days where nothing should change, things should remain the status quo, that there is only one segment in society that cares about children and the rest do not have the competence or the capability to do it. I did not want information left on the record about the agencies, and certainly by the member for Crescentwood's comments I think that he has done a disservice to other care providers with his comments.

Mr. Martindale: I think Child and Family Services agencies would be appalled to hear the minister characterize them by saying that some people see them as child snatchers. I think the minister should have been rebutting that view and saying that they have a mandate to protect children, if there is neglect or abuse, and to point out that in the acts they have a mandate for education and prevention, for resource centres and therefore that—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Can I remind members that I did seek from the committee whether you wanted to be relevant towards what was going on. I have been lenient again. What we are having now is exactly the type of debate that should occur when we are dealing with the bill as a whole. If we continue to rebut each time a member makes a statement—and I do not mind if we are here till fall if that is what you so choose—but this debate should be taking place on the bill as a whole. So I would ask the honourable member to be relevant to the amendment that he brought forward.

Shall the amendment pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairman: No? The Honourable Mr. Toews, on the amendment.

Mr. Toews: In respect of the issue of the Child and Family Services agency about whether or not that is the appropriate agency, I agree exactly

with the Minister of Family Services' comments. I did child welfare work on behalf of the Director of Child Welfare from 1979 to 1985 in very isolated areas and in Thompson, Manitoba. I did a number of cases year in and year out, and one of the concerns indeed about child caring agencies and whether the perception is correct or not is another thing.

I think what the minister was addressing was the issue of perception, and that is the reality of administering a bill. The perception by some is that it is a police agency. There are many other aspects to the mandate of that agency.

So I think the minister is absolutely correct in drawing that concern to the attention of the committee in considering this amendment, because this amendment I think may exacerbate a problem rather than resolve it. So the flexibility by which this legislation approaches the appointment of the administrators will overcome some of the reality, because laws are passed in the context of a real situation. That is what we have to be mindful of. That is why I cannot support the amendment, because it simply does not take into account the reality of some of the perception out there that has been identified by the minister whether it is right or wrong.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the amendment pass?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

An Honourable Member: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed to the amendment, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Martindale: Count out, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: A count-out vote has been requested.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 2, Nays 6.

* (1530)

Mr. Chairperson: Accordingly defeated.

Clause 3—pass. Shall Clause 4 pass?

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I move

THAT the following be added after section 3 of the Bill:

3.1 Section 9 is amended by adding the following after subsection (1):

Definition of "appeal board"

9(1.1) In this section, "appeal board" means the Employment and Income Assistance Appeal Board established under subsection (1.2).

Appeal board established

9(1.2) The Employment and Income Assistance Appeal Board is established consisting of not less than 15 members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Privileges and Elections.

Chairperson and vice-chairperson

9(1.3) The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall, on the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Privileges and Elections, appoint one of the members of the appeal board to be chairperson and one to be vice-chairperson.

Terms of office

9(1.4) Each member of the appeal board, unless he or she sooner dies or resigns or is removed from office by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Privileges and Elections, shall hold office for such term and from such date as is fixed by the

Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Privileges and Elections, and thereafter until his or her successor is appointed, and may be re-appointed for a further term.

Quorum

9(1.5) Three members of the appeal board constitute a quorum.

Remuneration

9(1.6) Each member of the appeal board may be paid, and may accept, remuneration in such amount as may be fixed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Privileges and Elections.

Travelling expenses

9(1.7) In addition to the remuneration for which provision is made in subsection (1.6), each member of the appeal board may be paid, and may accept, such out-of-pocket expenses as are necessarily incurred by him or her in discharging his or her duties as a member of the appeal board.

Secretary

9(1.8) A secretary to the appeal board, and such other employees as may be required to carry on the work of the appeal board, may be appointed as provided in The Civil Service Act.

Payment from Consolidated Fund

9(1.9) All expenses of the appeal board and of its members, officers, and employees, during any year, shall be paid from and out of the Consolidated Fund with moneys authorized by an Act of the Legislature to be paid and applied for the purposes of the Department of Family Services.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: It is out of scope, and it would also have a cost on the public expenditures.

Clause 4—pass; Clause 5—pass. Preamble.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I have an amendment.

Mr. Chairperson: If you have an amendment, could you wait till it has been distributed.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I move

THAT the preamble of the bill be amended by adding the following after the second paragraph:

AND WHEREAS it is a related goal of welfare-to-work initiatives to improve the economic circumstances of Manitoba families;

[French version]

Il est proposé que le préambule du projet de loi soit amendé par adjonction, après le deuxième paragraphe, de ce qui suit:

que l'un des objectifs connexes des initiatives visant à faire travailler les bénéficiaires d'aide au revenu est d'améliorer la situation économique des familles manitobaines;

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Mr. Ashton: We are in agreement to this amendment. Unlike the government, we do not have this rubber stamp that says no every time an amendment is brought in. We believe in welfare-to-work that works. I mean, that is the bottom line. It should be a question of getting people into real work. We have said that throughout the committee hearings. I am sort of curious, quite frankly, why the amendment is being brought in. We had been advised that there were no government amendments, but if they are going to bring in one, we are not going to take out this big rubber stamp that says no just because it is brought in by the government. We will support it. We will hope, in that spirit, that they will do the same thing to our amendments. We still have a couple of more amendments to move.

Mr. Chairperson: Amendment—pass.

Mr. Martindale: I move

THAT the preamble be amended by adding the following after the third clause:

AND WHEREAS Manitoba has one of the highest rates of child poverty in Canada, it is a related goal of welfare-to-work initiatives to reduce the rate of child poverty in Manitoba;

Motion presented.

Mr. Martindale: I think this is an amendment that the government will want to support, because this minister is always talking about a job being the best form of security. Certainly anything that moves people off of welfare and into work, and we support work-to-welfare that works, will have a positive effect on families. The fewer families that are on social assistance, but earning income and paying taxes, then the lower the rate of poverty in Manitoba.

We know that Manitoba has had an appalling rate of family and child poverty. For several years they had the highest rate of child poverty in Canada. Now I think we are virtually tied for second, only after Newfoundland. [interjection]

Well, if the minister would like to put more accurate information on the record, he can do that, but I believe right now we are third, but we are within a decimal point or two of whoever is second, following Newfoundland and one other province. Anything that gets people off social assistance and into paid work would be beneficial in terms of reducing the rate of child poverty in Manitoba. We know, for example, that about 40 percent of all families who use Winnipeg Harvest food bank, 40 percent of all the users, I am told, are children. So if we make this a related goal, I think this is something that the minister would want to support. We supported their amendment with almost identical wording. I look forward to the minister supporting our wording.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I know that from time to time and probably even up till this year we have probably heard some comments from the opposition saying that we are the child poverty capital of Canada. I am not sure where we stand today. I do know that in 1997, the last time statistics were gathered, we were third, not the highest. I am not justifying that by saying it is right or there should be any level of child poverty, but we cannot say this for a fact today.

An Honourable Member: One of the highest.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, these statistics were gathered in 1997. We are almost in the year 2000 now, and we have no more current data that can say that this is right or wrong today.

I have to tell members of this committee and Manitobans that the interventions that we have put in place to try to move people off of welfare and into the workforce with our welfare reform that was brought in, in 1996, and the opposition opposed, and with all of the early intervention programs through the Children and Youth Secretariat, and the C. D. Howe's comments that are saying other provinces should follow Manitoba's example in early intervention and support for families, I have no way of knowing whether that statement is an accurate statement today.

So I do not think that it is anything that I can support because I believe that we are moving in the right direction and that we are addressing the issues of child poverty through our early intervention programs and through some of our welfare reform initiatives, and through maintenance enforcement and some of those things that we are looking at implementing as a result of this new focus. So, Mr. Chairperson, I cannot support something that is based on 1997 statistics.

Mr. Ashton: Just briefly, I am very disappointed in the minister's comments. We do have one of the highest rates of child poverty. I know the government has tried to rationalize it away. The First Minister, in the last election said, well, that is because of people living on reserve, who are Manitobans as far as I am concerned. I was very disappointed in those comments, but we do have one of the highest rates. The minister has said as much herself.

Quite frankly, whether she wants to debate that or not, which is a fact, the other part of the operative clause said it is a related goal of welfare to work initiatives to reduce the rate of child poverty in Manitoba. Surely, that is something we can agree on.

* (1540)

You know, the House of Commons agreed on a statement on child poverty a number of years ago. Unfortunately, they did not act on it, but to my mind if you are talking seriously about anything to do with welfare and particularly when we do have a significant increase, the number of people on welfare under this government's jurisdiction, I mean I do not understand why the minister would not put that in there.

You know, we did not get out the "no" stamp when she brought in an amendment to the preamble. Now, she has brought out that big "no" stamp that any time we bring something through on this bill, she is rejecting it regardless of whether it is factually true or a legitimate statement. Quite frankly, I think we are all disappointed that the minister will not even go as far as putting a statement on child poverty into this bill. I think that speaks volumes to what the real intent of this bill is.

Mr. Toews: Now, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) indicates that there is a big rubber stamp "no" that comes out. Well, that is not correct, but having said that, I do not think I can support this particular amendment.

First of all, I think it is misleading, and is it not typical of the New Democrats to try to portray Manitoba always in the worse light. That is always what they do, and even if it is misleading, they would like to see Manitoba run down. It is their job, I guess, that they have felt that, well, do not say anything nice about Manitoba, only say something negative even if it means misleading. I think the minister has pointed out that this, in fact, is misleading. They want us to support something that is misleading. I cannot support that.

You know, they have come out with a preamble in a statute, not only that is misleading, it is cast negatively, rather than even perhaps considering some kind of a positive alternative. Had they come forward with a resolution that says something to the effect, and WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of youth employment in Canada, it is a related goal of welfare to work initiatives to continue to provide employment opportunities for youth in Manitoba. I mean that is positive, it is true and it

sends the right message instead of the negative type of issues that the NDP have come forward to. So I know that this is nothing but a political smoke screen that the NDP are putting forward. They are trying to hide the fact that they flip-flopped on this bill so many times and on this concept so many times.

I see the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) shaking his head. Well, I need only remind the member for Burrows that he brought forward a caucus report to the 34th Constitutional Convention of the Manitoba New Democratic Party. Secondly, he brought forward a private member's resolution condemning workfare.

Point of Order

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, on a point of order, relevance is obviously the issue. We are debating whether or not we should have in the preamble a commitment to reduction of child poverty, and I would just ask you to call the minister to order so we can get on to finishing the amendments and debate the bill in detail, which is what I think he is doing now.

Mr. Toews: Well, on the same point of order, I was simply saying that rather than always casting things in a negative light and trying to mislead the people of Manitoba about the true state of affairs, why do they not ever come out with something positive when it was so easy? I mean I sat down here in a couple of minutes and put it into a very positive light.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. On Mr. Sale's point of order, now the honourable minister when he started off in his presentation was being very relevant. He started to drift in the last few seconds, and I was just about to bring the minister back on line. I am sure the minister is on his way at this time. So the member did have a point of order. If the minister could come back on line with the amendment.

Mr. Toews: Mr. Chairperson, I was simply pointing out that this is not the kind of statement that I could support. It is misleading. It is negative. It is not accurate. It is not in the best interests of the bill.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairperson, I wonder if you could ask the members for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and Burrows (Mr. Martindale) to please be quiet. I would appreciate it. I cannot hear over them.

An Honourable Member: You have the mike.

Mrs. McIntosh: I know I have the microphone. I cannot even hear my own self. I would like to be heard.

Mr. Chairperson: If honourable members could just tone it down so we could hear the honourable minister at this end, I would appreciate it. The honourable minister, to continue.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, in regard to the amendment that is currently before us, we talked about the relevance of the statement as to where we stand in the nation in terms of child poverty, and regardless of where we stand today, it will be different—

An Honourable Member: Three out of 10.

Mrs. McIntosh: I would ask respectfully that the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) be called to order. He and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) have not had the courtesy to be quiet for quite a while throughout these committee meetings—

An Honourable Member: Look who is calling the kettle black.

Mrs. McIntosh: —and would the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) also be quiet. Mr. Chairman, could you ask them to do that, please, before I continue?

An Honourable Member: I will make you a deal, Linda. I will not heckle one more time in this committee if you agree to this.

Mrs. McIntosh: Do you see what I mean, Mr. Chairman, what he has just done?

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Madam Minister, I will call the members to order, but I would ask that you not listen to them quite as intently. We have been allowing a little bit of

leeway here, and I am going to draw the line. I will draw the line in a little bit. I would ask the minister to continue with her statement and I would ask the members if they could refer from debating at this time. Each and every one of you will be recognized to put your voices on the record when you so choose. At this time the honourable minister has the floor, and I would ask you to give her that leeway.

Mrs. McIntosh: We respect the ruling that says that they cannot heckle and I am not supposed to listen when they do. I appreciate that.

Mr. Chairperson: That is not what I said.

Mrs. McIntosh: It is not. It is a new rule, but it is a good precedent to have established, and I thank you for establishing that precedent.

Mr. Chairman, in regard to the irrelevancy of the—

An Honourable Member: You are in trouble, Marcel.

Mrs. McIntosh: I am not listening to them heckling. I am obeying, but they are not, Mr. Chairman, of your ruling.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I think there is a misunderstanding of what I had said. If there was, I apologize, but could I ask members to refrain from debating the minister at this time. The minister is attempting to put forward her views on the amendment brought forward by Mr. Martindale, and I would like to hear those views.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Madam Minister, to continue.

Mrs. McIntosh: I think, Mr. Chairman, that my remarks are not desired to be heard by the members of the opposition, so I will state them for the record. The record they can read if they wish, and right now they continue with their babyish name calling, which the member for Thompson was doing with his singing, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, which was just absolutely ridiculous. [interjection] He is calling my reaction to this childish. What a baby.

Anyhow whether or not these figures on child poverty are relevant today, I will speak loudly so the record can hear over the heckling from the opposition, who is not obeying your order, Mr. Chairperson, and I would indicate that whether or not these statistics today are relevant, they certainly will change. They are about to be put into an act, if the opposition has their way, that can only be changed by an act of the Legislature.

So I do not think it is appropriate to have in the act references to statistics that are (a) three years old; and (b) subject to change on a monthly or daily or weekly basis. I think it is inappropriate and, therefore, the amendment should be defeated.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Madam Minister. Is it the will of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Martindale: Count out, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: A count-out vote has been requested.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 4, Nays 6.

Mr. Chairperson: Six to four, accordingly defeated.

* * *

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I move

THAT the preamble be amended by adding the following after the third clause:

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member is bringing forward another amendment. Could I have a little bit of order here.

Mr. Martindale: I think I will repeat it.

Mr. Chairperson: Please.

* (1550)

Mr. Martindale: I move

THAT the preamble be amended by adding the following after the third clause:

AND WHEREAS it is an underlying principle of welfare-to-work initiatives that it is a social obligation of all employable persons to work;

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: The amendment is in order. The honourable member for Martindale—Mr. Martindale.

An Honourable Member: The new riding of Martindale.

Mr. Chairperson: We had Thompson earlier, and now we have Martindale.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I think all of us should remember that our place here is temporary, not permanent. None of us should forget that.

On the amendment, we have been saying over and over again that we believe that people have an obligation to work or to be searching for work or in a program or in treatment, and we put forward amendments to improve the bill because it is a flawed bill. As we have said, this bill was cobbled together in one day in the Premier's office and sent over to Family Services for drafting and for speech writing. It is still a

flawed bill because the government has not accepted any of our amendments, and we think that in fact it is too bad that the preamble comes last, because it would have been better if we could have put this on the record at the beginning, but unfortunately the preamble is voted on last or second last before the title.

We support the idea of obligations in the bill, but obligations are meaningless without linkages to adequate programs, so we would actually hope that all of our amendments would be taken seriously by the government to improve the bill, but unfortunately they did not, so this remains a deficient and incomplete bill. Since this is in keeping with the intent of the bill, I think the government will have a hard time voting this one down.

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is an amendment that we would like to recess and take a few minutes to discuss. We might consider a friendly amendment to this to clarify it, but we will need a few minutes to discuss that.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to recess for 10 or 15 minutes? [agreed] Fifteen minutes. We will reconvene at 10 after.

The committee recessed at 3:52 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 4:15 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Committee will come to order. Madam Minister, you have the floor.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, regrettably we are not able to support this amendment to the preamble. I think that everything we have seen so far with the amendments that the New Democratic Party has made to this legislation is an attempt to weaken the focus on personal responsibility.

Really what this is all about, what this legislation is all about, is people accepting personal responsibility for trying to improve their circumstances, and we are here to try to

support that activity through programs and initiatives that we have introduced. But the language in this, like the language in many of the other amendments that have been put forward, is, I think, merely attempts by the New Democratic opposition to have this kind of legislation tied up in court with legal technicalities that will only benefit the lawyers and those individuals who the New Democratic Party has supported in the past that have indicated clearly through their resolutions to their party and their philosophical belief that everyone has a right to welfare without expectations placed on them.

This, again, is an amendment that is already clearly articulated in the preamble that talks about personal responsibility. I notice by this amendment that the New Democratic Party, again, does not believe that people have a personal responsibility to improve their circumstances through welfare-to-work programs or workfare, learnfare, or addictions treatment. So, regrettably, we cannot support this amendment.

Mr. Toews: I just want to add a few comments on the record as well. When one looks, first of all, at the proposed amendment, there is a certain seductive attraction to it. But when you, in fact, read what it says, it detracts indeed from the principles set out in the act. If you look at the first whereas, the first paragraph in the preamble: whereas the goal of Manitoba's income assistance program is to provide assistance to those in need while at the same time promoting personal responsibility, financial independence and employment.

So here, what it is essentially saying—and it is typically, I think, the socialist approach to legislation and to responsibilities in society—saying that it is not the individual who bears any responsibility, it is a social obligation. So it is not a personal responsibility of someone to go out to seek and accept work or to go out and seek and perform a community service activity. No, it is a social obligation of all employable persons to work. Whatever that means.

What we do know it means is it is inconsistent with the principles of the act that stress personal responsibility, and regrettably I

think this will detract from the substantive principles in the act and, therefore, I could not support this amendment.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I would just like to point out that we were listening to the presenters very carefully, and in fact the language in this amendment is from the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg whose presenter said that people have a social obligation to work, and we are talking about employable people. Just to explain it to the Minister of Justice, we believe that this refers to individuals who have an obligation to society, and that is why we are bringing in this amendment. We do not expect the government to pass this amendment because they will do anything to defeat our amendments because they do not want our amendments to pass. Even if they privately agreed with them, they are not going to make any changes because they have closed minds. They have made up their mind. This is a political bill, and they are going full steam ahead regardless of what any of the presenters said or what any of our amendments say.

* (1620)

Mr. Ashton: I just want to indicate my disappointment, particularly in this amendment. I mean, this is in scope, it deals with the preamble. It was a constructive proposal made at committee by the Social Planning Council. I think it captures the essence of what is needed to deal with the situation we are in in this province. There are more people on welfare today. We have discussed this before. Despite all the things the minister said, there was no recession in 1988, no recession in 1999. Even if you net out the additional number of disabled, there are more people on welfare today than when this government came into office. The solution of getting people off welfare and into work, to my mind and to our mind, is clearly a two-way street and throughout these amendments and including this we have tried to capture that.

It is one thing to talk about the welfare recipients. We have talked about that in various different elements in terms of debate on this committee, but the reality is this government's record is for 11 years not only are the welfare roles increased, some of the key programs that

were very effective in the past to get people into work have been cut. I mention New Careers, which was probably one of the best programs we have had to deal with that—Access. These are programs that make a difference, for example, in the communities I represent where you do have high degrees of unemployment, not because of the fault of people. I mean, people in Thicket Portage and Pikwitonei did not choose to cut CN jobs. They did not choose for the fur lobby to attack the fur industry to the point where you cannot trap in many communities and do anything other than make a small supplemental income. They did not take out the freight assistance. They did not deal with fish stocks that mean that a lot of people cannot fish in that sense, in the same sense as they did before, and they also did not choose to make some of the changes to Employment Insurance legislation, which is not this government's decision but is also impacted on them in terms of seasonal industries.

The bottom line is that is why we believe this amendment captures the kind of two-way street you need. This is a two-way street. If you are going to get people off welfare, into work, you need commitment from the people, you also need it from the government. That is why we should have in this legislation what was recommended to this committee, social responsibility. That is a two-way street, and that is what we as a party believe.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Mr. Martindale: Count out, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: A count-out vote has been requested.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 4, Nays 6.

Mr. Chairperson: Six to four. The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Preamble as amended—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Ashton, this is the opportunity to do this, what you were doing.

Mr. Ashton: On the bill as a whole, I have had the opportunity to attend a number of the committee hearings. I think it is important as we deal with this bill to recognize what I think most of the presenters recognized as well. I mean, this is a government—I just mentioned this a few minutes ago—that has been in government for 11 years, 11 long years. During that period of time this government has seen the welfare rolls increase by 12,000 people. I will tell you how bad it was, Mr. Chairperson. According to the government's own polls, which we have obtained—they have been released by the government—the people of Manitoba said that this government was doing a lousy job in getting people from welfare into work. I mean, for all of the talk and the rhetoric and 11 years of this government, the people of Manitoba can add up that 12,000 more people on welfare means that this government is failing at the task.

Now, we could get into debate at length on why that is the case. We will certainly be debating this in committee. One of the reasons is the conscious decisions made by this government. This government cut New Careers; this government cut Access; they cut the student social allowance program, eliminated it. You know, I have for the last couple of years had people come into my office—I say this to the minister and to all members of the government

here—who are 16, 17, because of family reasons not living at home, and you know what? They ended up on welfare. They could not go to school because the student social allowance program was eliminated. I want to put that on the record. This government took away one of the mechanisms by which—a lot of these people were single parents, and we have had to go approach the minister on various different things. The bottom line is, in terms of the student social allowance program, the government cut that. So the government has made repeated cuts.

I said at the beginning of this, some of the comments, let us face the reality. For 11 years this government has followed a tactic of basically warehousing the poor, and I say that directly. They have taken out all the supports for education; they have taken out the job creation programs that used to exist in many of the communities with high rates of unemployment, such as the Northern Youth Corps, once again taken out by this government. You know, what they have done is they have taken away job programs, they have taken away training.

We are at the point, in terms of addictions, in spite of all the references in this bill, there are huge waiting lists for addictions. I know that. I have had people in my office; I have talked to people in my community.

The fundamental point here is this government, after 11 years, has 12,000 more people on welfare because of its policies. It is just amazing to hear them huff and puff and run their election ads and come in this committee and talk about this, that and the other. I mean the record speaks for itself, and the people of Manitoba know that this is the party that has done more to increase the welfare rolls by its own actions than anything else.

Now we are in this session. The government obviously was afraid to call the election so they sat around and maybe they looked at this poll and maybe they just sort of phoned up Mike Harris and said, you know, you have got to help us out here, what are we going to do after 11 years. Guess what they do? They come up with an ad and a bill, and it has been

amazing to watch the minister as we deal with this, as we go on. We suspected as soon as we saw the bill that this bill was hastily put together, brought in at the tail end of a session, trying to develop something to back up their pre-election advertising.

By the way, Mr. Chairperson, I point out that a lot of those ads that they have been running, they still do not have any bills attached to a number of their so-called platforms. I mean, after 11 years, these are not new ideas. This is a sort of an attempt to recycle something, anything that will create an election issue to give them enough courage so they will go face the people of Manitoba.

We had a couple of choices when we dealt with this bill. We had a couple of choices on this particular bill, and I say to the minister we brought in 12 amendments. I believe 10 of those amendments were in scope, if I am correct. Ten of those amendments, and what did this minister and this government do? How many of those amendments did they adopt? Not one.

By the way, they did bring in their own amendment. I mean, surely by bringing in their own amendment they were admitting themselves that this bill was a long way from being perfect. But we brought in a dozen amendments. [interjection] Well, we agreed with her amendment. We did not bring out the rubber stamp with a "no" on it just because it was brought in by the Conservatives. If it made sense, we supported it. We brought in 12 different amendments, and I can say, Mr. Chairperson, that it is obvious as time went along that this government had one agenda. It is not getting people from welfare to work. They want a one-way street. They want to set up something to back up their advertising. It is all politics.

I can tell you, Mr. Chairperson, that we are a party unlike the Conservative Party that will deal with these matters in terms of the principle of what is involved, and we will not fight an election on the backs of the poor and the vulnerable.

We heard presentation after presentation in this committee from people who are vulnerable

people. I heard presenters come before this committee who said: we do not want workfare, we want work, just give us the chance. I can take the minister to my communities. To give people a chance, you have to have a two-way street. The people in Thicket Portage and Pikwitonei and my community are not unemployed by choice. They are unemployed by circumstances beyond their control. The way to deal with that I think would have been to approach this in terms of what we said which was the social responsibility. There is a social responsibility of the people on welfare. There is a social responsibility of the government.

* (1630)

I say to this government and to this minister if this was a substantive bill, if this was to deal with the fact that there are 12,000 more people on welfare since this government came into place, they would have accepted amendments. They would have put in place some of the specific mechanisms that our critic and our caucus brought in.

I cannot emphasize enough how rushed this bill is. We had the minister saying in committee to presenters that they are going to be consulting with the disabled and others in the fall. After the horse is out of the barn, they are going to close the barn door, and they are going to chase after that horse. They are going to say: we are going to consult with the disabled. There were people who came into this committee and asked serious questions about who it was going to impact on.

The minister said: do not worry, we are going to consult in the fall. This bill will be in legislation once it has passed, and I would assume fairly soon, in which case in the fall the bill will be a fait accompli. We brought in an agenda, a two-way street. We made it clear in terms of the obligations of both sides, but we are not going to fight an election on the backs of the poor. We are a party that in government has spoken with actions, not words. We brought in programs like New Careers and Access and many of the programs this government has cut.

We understand fundamentally that in a civilized society one of the goals should be the elimination of poverty. This is a government

that would not even bring in an amendment committing to this. One of the goals has been to reduce child poverty. The reason is they want an election issue. If they have to take the poor, take the disabled, they have to take the people who are vulnerable and if they have to completely ignore any substantive debate, they are willing to do it. We are not.

I say to the Conservative Party, they have stooped to a new low politically in this province by what they have done. I think the bottom line here is that there is a consensus on one thing in this province, and I say it is a consensus for pretty well everybody I know. I know a lot of people on welfare and they are good parents. They work hard. They volunteer in their community. A lot of them have been on waiting lists for education and training. What they want, what they need, what society needs is acceptance of a two-way street, a social responsibility.

That is why we moved the amendments and that is why I say the bill itself does not do that. This bill as it stands is left as little more than a hollow political shell. We reject politics at the expense of the poor and the vulnerable and the disabled. I say to the Conservative Party which even in its 11 years in office has not stooped even this low, they may think this is smart politics, but I have a lot of faith in Manitobans who know that the solution here is a two-way street. Not a one-way street that has a political dead-end for this government.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Toews: Mr. Chairperson, I want to add a few comments on the record. I think it is important to look at our comments on an individual basis.

Each amendment that was brought forward, we dealt with it very specifically, expressed our concerns on that very specifically. What became apparent after amendment after amendment after amendment is that the New Democrats are simply trying to buy their past. They are not committed to any kind of reform in the social allowance system. In fact, as recently as March of 1997, on the Order Paper in our Legislature, Mr. Martindale, the member for Burrows, spoke about workfare programs.

Basically, it boiled down to workfare, as he says, is a coercive and oppressive system which robs social assistance recipients of their dignity. That is his position as a private member. So he asked the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to urge the provincial government to consider refusing to implement or participate in any employment programs—and I emphasize that—any employment programs which force social assistance recipients to accept employment.

Let me pause there. It says: "which force." Here they come today making amendment, talking about a social obligation to work. How inconsistent. How inconsistent with what he said about refusing to implement or participate in any employment programs which force social assistance recipients to accept employment which they have not freely chosen or which force social assistance recipients to involuntarily participate in work programs as a condition of eligibility for their welfare allowances.

I cannot help but think that it was not simply the member for Burrows who brought forward this. Caucus looked at this, the NDP caucus, and said, of course, we as a New Democratic Party oppose workfare. We think that it is coercive, that it is oppressive and that it robs social assistance recipients of their dignity. That is their position in March of 1997. To those who may argue that that was simply an aberration, the NDP caucus got out of the wrong side of bed one morning and saw workfare in that light, no, that obviously was discussed to the extent that there was a caucus report, not simply a private member. Even if Mr. Martindale was agile enough to sneak it by the rest of his caucus, which I find it very, very difficult to believe, I do not think he is that agile. Nor do I think he would want to do that. He would want to consult with his colleagues. So, I imagine he consulted with his colleagues, and I dare say some of his policy analysts probably had some input into the drafting of that resolution.

So here we have a caucus report to the 34th constitutional convention of the Manitoba New Democratic Party. This is not simply an individual member. This is a caucus report to a constitutional convention. So this is the caucus coming forward and telling all of the rank and file members of the New Democratic Party of

Manitoba. I do not know if they were the new New Democrats at that time, but they were certainly the New Democratic Party, and here they were, November 14 to 16, 1997. I do not know whether it means that they debated this for two days, maybe they did, but they brought forward Resolution 96(c)10/23 relating to the Canada Assistance Plan. What do they say. They say: encourage the provincial government to introduce legislation guaranteeing the rights of social assistance recipients, including the right to a level of assistance adequate to meet one's need, the right to appeal decisions which limit or deny assistance, and the right—up until this point, I think we may well have something to talk about. We may have something in common. I do not think there is one member on the Conservative side who denies that social assistance has a very important and valuable place in our society. Not one of us would deny that.

* (1640)

Mr. Vice-Chairperson in the Chair

We may argue about the format, for example, what types of rights of appeal in terms of the process and what right and the level of assistance is adequate to meet one's need. We might have a debate on that, but I do not think in principle we disagree that, for example, a disabled person has a right to a level of social assistance. I know that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) indicated that this bill somehow would force disabled people into a workfare program which they would not be qualified or competent to carry out.

Now, as I understand it from the minister, she has been clear that this does not relate to disabled people. We do not take issue with that and I personally do not take issue with that. What bothers me about the resolution as it continues, it says: people have the right not to have to participate in work or training programs, i.e., workfare. They wanted to make sure that everybody knew what the entire caucus was saying. They said: training programs, i.e., which means that is, workfare, so that there is no mistake where the new New Democratic Party stood on the issue of workfare. So they said no one needs to participate in workfare in order to receive assistance.

Contrast that then with the preamble and what this bill says. This fundamentally creates the difference between the old New Democrats and the new New Democrats. What this says is not to in any way demean people, not to make light of hardships and financial circumstances, because all of us in one way or another know what it means to come through difficult economic times personally and as a society.

It says: whereas the goal of Manitoba's income assistance program is to provide assistance to those in need. We agree. I think that the New Democrats agree with that. It goes on to say: while at the same time promoting personal responsibility, financial independence, and employment.

Well, now the New Democrats come forward with a resolution, now the irony, and I have tried to put this into the context of what the old New Democrats were saying or the new New Democrats, because maybe between Marcy '97 and November '97 they changed from the old to the new, the metamorphosis occurred, but it looks remarkably similar.

I do not know where the new New Democrats came from or who they are, but they sound like the old ones. So they come forward with the amendment that says: and whereas—and this is the same Mr. Martindale who brought forward the old New Democrat resolutions and the new New Democrat resolutions, the same Mr. Martindale. Now he says, and he wants us to endorse this: and whereas it is an underlying principle of welfare-to-work initiatives that it is a social obligation of all employable persons to work.

Now, here is the new New Democrat saying what the not-so-new New Democrat said in November of '97 and certainly not what the old New Democrat said in March of '97. And the members are chirping from their seats. Let me go on to explain why I disagree with that because, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) indicated, he talked about a social obligation. This fits in very nicely with what the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) said earlier from her seat. She said: the real problem is you have not gone out to find work for people.

Yes, government has a responsibility to enhance those conditions that allow the development of work and jobs and those types of things, but what the member for Osborne wants us to do, as what the implication here is, is to take people by the hand and as a big sister or a little sister or a big brother or a little brother, take them along and spoon-feed them. What we say is, create the appropriate economic conditions, put the appropriate levels of support in place, and then, for those who are able to work, there is a personal responsibility.

Again, what the old New Democrats never understood and what the new New Democrats still do not understand, Mr. Chair, this is not a social responsibility primarily. The primary responsibility is a personal responsibility. It is a personal obligation. That is what the new New Democrats do not understand, and that is what the old New Democrats do not understand.

But let me continue. The preamble goes on to say in the bill: and whereas a related goal is to ensure that recipients of income assistance do not lose their capacity to become self-sufficient through prolonged dependence on income assistance. What this amendment that the new New Democrats or the old New Democrats or some of them in between were bringing forward is to somehow suggest that, well, work is really an obligation of government to find, like the old Jobs Fund. Remember the Jobs Fund? I do not know if any of you remember the Jobs Fund. [interjection] Did I vote for it? Well, I was not in the Legislature.

Mr. Vice-Chairperson: Order, please. Excuse me, the honourable Mr. Toews, would all members show courtesy to the person that has the floor for their comments? Those that are waiting to be heard, they will be recognized in the order which they have been signalled that they would like to speak. I would like to suggest if persons have a conversation to carry on that they carry on away from the table so it does not interrupt the person speaking, so an element of courtesy, please.

Mr. Toews: So the underlying principle that they want to incorporate into the act is the same principle that motivated the Jobs Fund. The idea somehow that government comes up with a

whole whack of money and creates jobs—picking flowers, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) once characterized it—creating a social obligation, creating a job in this respect. You know how long those jobs last. They last as long as the taxpayers' money lasts. Then each and every one of those jobs ends, as in fact it did end, \$200 million flushed down the toilet of expenditures. Shameful. That is the same kind of philosophy they want to import into here.

An Honourable Member: You voted for it.

Mr. Toews: You know, the member says, well, Conservatives voted for it. Conservatives say, all right, we look at the legislation and this is job creation. We support job creation. But how did the New Democrats deal with the job creation? No jobs there. Conservatives support job creation, but I think what the Jobs Fund and other proposals by the New Democrats have demonstrated are twofold; No. 1, that it is not governments that create jobs. Governments create a climate of opportunity in which business invests and creates jobs and creates all types of opportunities. The second thing we have learned is never let the New Democrats set up a Jobs Fund.

So I am sure that the members from the Conservative side who voted for it learned a lesson the very hard way to allow New Democrats to administer \$200-million Jobs Fund which lasted as long as the \$200 million did.

So what the preamble continues to say: and whereas to further those goals, it is important to ensure that recipients of income assistance maintain a connection with the community and be given an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the community. Now these are preambles, the three in the act that are set out that I can support. It talks about the social need for social assistance. I agree with that. It talks about self-sufficiency and personal responsibility, and it also talks about the connectedness of individuals to the community.

What do the New Democrats want to do? They want to destroy what these principles stand for and they say—

* (1650)

An Honourable Member: Did you marry into money? I guess if you have money, you do not worry about it.

Mr. Toews: You know, the member for Transcona sits there and snipes from his seat and asks if I married into money. It is shameful. That is the kind of thing, the cheap kind of comment that he would make. This is an individual who indicated in the course of debate once that he would be in the Legislature a lot longer than I would be, and you know that may well be right. That may well be right. But you know, Mr. Chair, I will go back to the private industry at some time, or I might go back to a government job. One thing that the member has forgotten, he seems to think that he has a lifelong tenure here. He thinks that he is not answerable to the people. If he does not believe that he is not answerable to the people, then he does not have a real job today. You know, that is his responsibility. I know what my responsibilities are. For him to sit there and suggest that, a disdain that this individual has for people who earn money. This person who has a disdain—

An Honourable Member: What did you do with your hands all your life? Have you worked with your hands? Did you get them dirty?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Toews: You know, I want to address what exactly this individual is saying to me. I came as an immigrant to this country when I was four years old. Members opposite keep on saying and criticizing me for where I was born, in Paraguay, and they do it specifically—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Point of Order

Mr. Vice-Chairperson: Order, please. We have a point of order on the table. I have recognized the honourable minister on a point of order. [interjection] Order, please.

Mrs. Mitchelson: On a point of order, I mean I guess, you know, we have listened fairly intently to comments and arguments and philosophical differences that probably divide us and make us

different. That is why we belong to one party and opposition members belong to another. That is all fair game, but when it comes to the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) personally attacking another individual because he does not like what he is hearing about our philosophical differences, I find that despicable, Mr. Chairperson, and I think that he should be cautioned to refrain from that.

I mean I guess again that is the difference between them and us, because if he has to resort to personal attacks because he cannot sell his philosophical point of view, then I say shame on him and shame on all of those who have to resort to those kinds of tactics and put people down because of their background or their circumstances in order to make themselves look better. Mr. Chair, I think the people of Manitoba will judge.

I do not often get upset or angry around points of order, but I think that it quite truly does reflect the kind of bottom feeding members with those kinds of personal attacks will do. It is only because they do not like to hear debate around the philosophical differences that present themselves. With those comments, Mr. Chair, I would ask you to call him to order. It is fair ball for him to put his comments on the record about what he believes on this bill, but it is not fair and I do not condone, I would hope that he does not condone those kinds of personal attacks.

Mr. Ashton: I might have a bit more sympathy for the minister I think if the minister had taken such umbrage when the minister accused the member for Transcona, who worked his entire life on the railway, of not having a real job. You know, I think we should maybe adopt that for all sides here and get back to the discussion of principle on the bill. But I think if the minister reflects, this has been something of an ongoing thing. I do tend to agree that we should be getting back to the discussion on the principle, but it is a two-way street. I just hope we can perhaps focus back on the bill. I think that would be more appropriate.

Mr. Toews: Now, in respect of the comments that the member for Transcona indicated I made, that is absolutely a complete fabrication that I in any way suggested that he—

An Honourable Member: It is on the record.

Mr. Toews: He says it is on the record. I challenge him to bring it here, because it is not on the record. Any such comment I never made, and I challenge him to bring it forward. He sits there smugly saying I made that kind of comment. He knows that it was in reference to his arrogance about him saying that people would continue to elect him and he would be in the Legislature forever, so his arrogance.

Now, the other point that I want to keep on is the issue: have I ever worked with my hands? You know, Mr. Chair, I want to talk about that, because he directly challenged who I am and what I have done for a living in my life. I can tell you that I did not come from rich people. I grew up in North Kildonan. My father was a teacher and he was a minister in a church, and he spent many, many hours doing free work. My mother was the same sort of a person. She was a nurse. I can tell you that I worked throughout my high school. I worked as a kid. I always had a job, whether it was a paper route or whether I worked in a grocery store, whether I went into construction, whether I drove a truck, and for that member to sit there smugly, arrogantly, because he is a socialist, he thinks he is the only one who has ever worked.

Shame on him, because I can tell you, I paid for my own university education. I made it through. I can tell you that I had help from people because they cared about me. My parents cared about me and they gave me free room and board at home, but I can tell you I paid for my education. I repaid student loans, unlike the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), who did not repay his student loans until he was caught. For him to sit there arrogantly, smiling and smirking, thinking it is funny, disgusts me, because that is the difference between a socialist, a guy who says, oh, somehow, because I was a lawyer, I do not know what it is to mean to work on a day-to-day basis, to work long hours, to work on construction, to know all those kinds of things. Shame on him.

* (1700)

Mr. Vice-Chairperson: I am prepared to rule on the point of order. However, the Honourable

Mrs. McIntosh has something relevant to the point of order.

Mrs. McIntosh: Just on the same point of order, I believe it is relevant. If it is not, I trust you will let me know, but I, Mr. Chairman, sitting here, of course, heard the comments that led to the point of order.

Well, the same member has offended me in the same way before, but I think it is time it got on the record that the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) sat there and impugned the reasons why people have the positions they have right now on the fact that we are all rich and that only the member for Transcona knows what it is like to be poor, only the member for Transcona and his colleagues know what it is like to have had to work really hard to overcome poverty.

I am not surprised the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wants there to be no more discussion on this point of order, because every time their members are found out, he wants the matter dropped.

The member for Transcona, if he opened his eyes and looked at the world realistically, would know that many of us on this side have been extremely, excruciatingly poor and have had to do all kinds of things that I doubt he would have the stamina, the guts, or the strength of physique to do. I do not think he can do some of the things that I had to do in my life in order to put food on the table. So I think that his very cruel comments are out of order. He called Mr. Toews some terrible, terrible things.

Mr. Vice-Chairperson: Order, please. I can appreciate that the ambient temperature in this room is adding to the debate, insofar as it is very warm. I appreciate the comments.

There is no point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts. However, I would like to caution all committee members present to choose their words carefully and that the person that is recognized has the privilege of the floor and for that privilege to be recognized, because eventually those individuals that would like to speak would be recognized and treated accordingly. I attempt to deal with everyone fairly and I appreciate the co-operation.

Now, I would like the Honourable Mr. Toews to continue with his comments.

* * *

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will respect your ruling. I want to say that the act has been carefully drafted to reflect the principles that Manitobans believe in. So what the course of the amendments have been today, brought forward by the New Democratic opposition, is simply to set up a smoke screen, to simply avoid coming to terms with what they indicated in March of '97, when they might have still been the old New Democrats, talking about workfare being coercive and oppressive, when their caucus brought forward a report in November of 1997 which indicated the right not to have to participate in work or training programs, i.e., workfare, in order to receive assistance.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

So given a consistent pattern, given a consistent course of conduct, how can we not help but be suspicious of what is really meant and how they, in fact, are trying to undermine this particular act? With those few comments then, Mr. Chairperson, I will allow the debate to continue with some other members.

Mr. Martindale: As the mover of the amendments and the critic, I would like to wrap up, but if the government wants to filibuster their own bill, that is their decision. I guess we cannot do anything about it. But I would like to point out that there is a big difference in the way some pieces of legislation are handled and the way other pieces of legislation are handled. It is quite normal for governments and this government to have public consultation. Sometimes they have public hearings, sometimes they appoint a review committee, sometimes they appoint a task force. They did that with The Vulnerable Persons Act, they did it with The Child and Family Services Act, and the review committee recommendations resulted in a new Adoption Act, and then they bring in a bill, after having lots of time to draft it, sometimes they bring in amendments at committee and they draft regulations. Sometimes in election campaigns, the government advertises things

they have done in the previous four years. They stand on their record.

But we have a very different bill here today. Bill 40, which began with TV ads, reinforced with news releases, then concocted and cobbled together in less than a day in the Premier's office, then sent over to the Family Services department and to Legislative Counsel for drafting. Then we have a three-page bill, unlike Ontario where they have a 45-page bill with probably 45 pages of regulations. You know this was a government that was serious about workfare and the result is substantive legislation, whereas here we have three pages. In fact our 12 amendments are longer than the government's entire bill, but did the government accept any of our amendments? No. They did not want to because this is a pre-election bill.

I would like to briefly comment on some of the minister's comments. In previous debate on clause by clause, the minister rejected our amendments about a Child and Family Services agency being involved rather than the Minister of Finance, and the minister said she wanted community-based solutions. Well, I find that rather ironic given that the government voted down all of our amendments which said community-based access. On the one hand they do not like our amendments; on the other hand the minister wants to talk about community-based solutions. If it was not unparliamentary, I would probably say that the minister was hypocritical.

I would also like to repeat, because I think it bears repeating, that we do not have the details. We do not have the regulations. I do not think the government has even thought about the regulations or the details. In fact, at one point the minister said—let me see, now what were we talking about? We were talking about not replacing paid workers with volunteers, and the minister said there will be something. So we know from this admission of the minister that they do not have the details. The details will be worked out afterwards. Of course, they hope that is after an election. They just cobbled this together without a lot of thought about the something, and so the minister is forced today to admit, well, there will be something. She does

not have the details, because the details are not there. There will be something.

The government wants us to trust them. Well, we certainly are not going to trust them with the details, which was why we introduced amendments asking for changes and for community-based access and other things which the government did not agree with.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) talks about the Jobs Fund and all kinds of things. I think basically he is reflecting the Conservative Party attitude. They really believe in laissez faire capitalism. They do not believe in job creation. In fact, I think this government would rather pay people to stay home and do nothing than to pay people to work, now that there are some work programs, but the numbers are pretty small. It is actually in the Estimates book. They are, as the minister has said on the record many times, 17,300 employable people in Manitoba.

They have 887 positions for all of their Welfare to Work programs which have been mentioned here in discussion. In fact, the Making Welfare Work budget has gone down from 1998-99 to 1999-2000 from \$4.4 million to \$2.7 million, and there is a footnote. If you read the footnote it says the reduction is due to the termination of federal cost-sharing of Taking Charge! expenditures in '99-2000. So we know that there is no new money in the budget for job creation. There is no money for Bill 40, for implementing Bill 40. We have no details. The government will not provide any details. We do not trust them with the details which is why we moved our amendments.

We know that this government does not have a very good record in terms of job creation. We know that in 1993 the welfare rolls skyrocketed to 85,000 people. We know that in 1998 there were 12,000 more people on welfare than 1988 when this government took office. Also the numbers in terms of children depending on food banks have skyrocketed.

* (1710)

So, in conclusion, we thought that the bill needed significant amendments and improvements, and the government did not agree

with us. We are disappointed that they voted down all our amendments. It bears repeating again that the government had obligation sections in the bill, but they do not want any obligations on their government, whether it is for child care or education spaces or addiction programs or literacy or transportation. They do not want to talk about any of those things other than vague promises like there will be something or assuring us that these things will be in place, assurances that we certainly do not trust given this government's record of eliminating training and education for people on social assistance. They would not support our amendments that make moving from Welfare to Work a social obligation and would have made this bill much more supportable, but the government did not support our amendments. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I am intrigued by the comments made about the bill as they have gone around the table and still do not have any clue as to where the NDP are going to end up voting on this. I think it is, although the member immediately before me just said that had we passed the amendments, the bill would have been much more supportable, which leads us to believe that he is not going to support it because we did not pass the amendments. However, the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) says they are going to support it. I suppose it really does not matter in the end whether they do support it or not, except for this, Mr. Chairperson, except for this.

They have made much ado on the other side about the fact that this government has no new ideas, da da, da da, da da, yada, yada, yada, and yet we come forward with new ideas and new proposals such as the bill that is before us now. They then get terribly upset because they say we have brought forward a new idea that was not old enough for them to have known about last year. So they accuse us of, I think the expression the member used was, cobbled together in the Premier's office in the middle of the night, or something of that nature. I do not know what he is talking about, but he seems to be nodding with some sort of quiet glee that he knows something that the rest of us do not know. However, we know that we have talked for a long time about how to move people off welfare

into the workforce, and the member knows that too because he has made some negative comments through the years. He has brought forward resolutions himself in anticipation that this bill would eventually be coming forward. His pre-emptive strikes at this legislation through his own earlier resolutions of course were not effective.

What I find interesting is that as they accuse us of this sort of secrecy closed-door kind of way of bringing forward legislation, and that we do not have the details that usually come in regulation, at the same time the secrecy and the closed-door mentality of the New Democrats has reached all new heights, because they have not even at this point made up their mind yet or, if they have, are operating behind the secrecy of closed doors in alerting the public, the public they claim to care so much about, as to what their position would be. So those who hold the traditional New Democratic position of being against workfare have no way of knowing if they have an advocate or not. I suspect that the New Democrats will do the next step in their strategy to get themselves hopefully at least holding onto their seats they hold now, which is to do everything the Tories do.

It has become quite a laughing matter in the wider community out there, this me-tooism, but the New Democrats I know are fighting in their own caucus over whether or not to support this bill. I think that is why they are pretending to be secret about it. They are pretending not to share their position with the public, because it is supposedly secret, and they are operating behind closed doors without being open with the public who would like to know what their position is, when in reality I think it is because some of their members intend to support this and some do not wish to.

So the member for—[interjection]

I know, Mr. Chair, you have told me not to listen to the heckles, but I have heard the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) say that we are filibustering our own bill, and I think by that what he means is he does not wish us to speak to our bill. I think that is unconscionable, because at least we are not being secretive, as they are. At least we are letting the public know

where we are coming from on this, as they are not. I hope that there is nobody out there counting on the NDP to hold to their traditional position on this, because I think they are going to be very let down. I think the NDP is going to vote for this bill for all the wrong reasons, not because they believe in it or support it, but because it is politically expedient for them to latch on to the coattails of the Tories along with their pretending to suddenly be Tories in order to hopefully get some of that right-wing vote, a disgusting rationale, a disgusting motivation, for making a decision, a compromising of their principles that some might call—well, I can think of a word, but perhaps it is not parliamentary. But let us put it this way: people who compromise their own integrity for a price have a term that normally is applied to them, and some may wish to apply that here.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that it would be really good for the people of Manitoba to know if the New Democrats are going to break with their traditional belief, their fundamental belief to vote with the Tories on this in an effort to gain votes for themselves. They are the ones that are playing politics with it. We believe this is the right thing to do. They have said repeatedly that we are only doing it to get votes. When I hear them say that we are only doing it to get votes, the only message I get is that they believe this is a vote getter. We are doing it because we believe it is the right thing to do. They are saying we are doing it because it is a vote getter. In saying that it is a vote getter they are revealing that they believe it will get votes. Therefore, they are going to try to get some of those votes for themselves.

You know what we call that? You know what the wider public calls that? I know what I am looking at and it disgusts me and, perhaps at least when they had some principles that they held to, I did not believe in their principles, I did not believe in their positions, but at least I was able to respect their integrity. I can no longer do that. I appreciate that the opposition is really going quite snaky here for the record. They are heckling and they are all agitated because they do not like it to be known that they are not open. They are not forthcoming. They are not honest with the public. They are not sharing with the populace that they intend to change their

position, if they intend to change it. They will not tell them if they are going to advocate for their former position if they intend to advocate for it.

Nobody knows what to expect from them, not that we care, but the public I think expects the opposition to have a position. The public expects the opposition to have a position. I think it is very upsetting on behalf of that public that the New Democrats are reluctant to bring forward their position.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I am having great difficulty hearing the honourable minister. It is getting a little out of hand. The honourable minister, to continue.

Mrs. McIntosh: I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, just do not listen to the heckles. That is the new rule.

Mr. Chairperson: That is a get-even tactic. I like that.

Mrs. McIntosh: You bet. Mr. Chairman, I would say that this is a bill that is good. It has much merit in it. It is based upon some good, true principles that we believe in. I hope that the opposition, if they do decide to vote for this, vote for it because they believe in these two principles, not as a way of getting votes for themselves or selling their principles the way a prostitute would sell. I hope that they would let the public know, I think they would like the public to know what their position is rather than hide it from them and keep it secret from them and not be forthcoming, closed government, no openness, no pride in their position, or is it that they are still struggling behind closed doors to fight this thing out?

We have lots of time, have we not? You yourself said we would be here until the end of July. Did you not mean that? Were you pretending again?

An Honourable Member: You are not supposed to respond to heckling. Remember that?

Mrs. McIntosh: Oh, but I can if I want to. Hey, you can heckle, and I have been told not to

listen if it is bothering me. It is not bothering me. I want to have a two-way debate on this. You are rude. You are everything else and you have no principles.

At any rate, Mr. Chairman, I will ask the opposition to support this for the good reasons. Hopefully, they will not be supporting it if they do so for the sake of being another, me too, I am a Tory, give me the vote. They are the only ones who see this as a vote getter and I think that stands to be extremely revealing.

* (1720)

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Mr. Chairman, I am going to make this very, very quick. I would have liked to have gone over much, but I would just like to point out once again, we hear much about the amendments that have been put forward by the opposition. I pointed out earlier that indeed their amendments have been, and it is clearly stated in them, not all, but a large majority of them. No applicant, recipient, or dependant is required to comply.

That is the part that they always throw in along with a little bit of motherhood or apple pie and saying, now, why do you not vote for it?

Plain and simply, they have not made the effort to put forward an amendment that was worth voting for. I do say that, and the people of Manitoba will say, when they vote for this workfare, the people of Manitoba I know will say that they have clearly prostrated themselves by voting for this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Faurshou has a brief. Mr. Faurshou, go for it.

Mr. Faurshou: I believe I am the last speaker.

Mr. Chairperson: No, you are not, so just make it brief.

Mr. Faurshou: Well, I was trying. This was a summation type of response. I did say that this is my first committee that I have had the opportunity to examine a bill as thoroughly as this one has been done. The presentations were lengthy and informative, very wide-ranging in

philosophy and understanding of the social welfare. [interjection]

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the members to just tone it down a bit. The honourable Mr. Faurschou, I keep going, for where you are from, all the time. Mr. Portage has the floor at this time.

Mr. Faurschou: Mr. Chairperson, effectively I would like the same privileges that I extend to other honourable members, and that is one of courtesy and a listening ear, and I appreciate the same being offered.

Insofar as the debate that has gone on this afternoon and for the last three days, it has been one that I have enjoyed. At times though the personal element of the debate is not appreciated and goes below the honourable nature of our offices, and that is to represent and be exemplary of the people who are responsible for our being here. I want to offer at this time to commend the members opposite for their due diligence, shall I say, in bringing forward amendments that were debated here this afternoon. I certainly appreciate that, but my comments earlier were duplicated on all amendments and remain my rationale for not supporting these amendments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the bill be reported as amended?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of reporting the bill as amended, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

An Honourable Member: A count-out vote.

Mr. Chairperson: Do you want a count-out vote?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: A count-out vote has been requested.

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Chairperson: On division, the bill shall be reported as amended.

Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 5:25 p.m.