



Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XLII No. 51 - 1:30 p.m., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 1993

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 28, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

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

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

WHEREAS over 1,000 young adults are currently attempting to get off welfare and upgrade their education through the student social allowances program; and

WHEREAS Winnipeg already has the highest number of people on welfare in decades; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has already changed social assistance rules resulting in increased welfare costs for the City of Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is now proposing to eliminate the student social allowances program; and

WHEREAS eliminating the student social allowances program will result in more than a thousand young people being forced onto city welfare with no means of getting further full-time education, resulting in more long-term costs for city taxpayers.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding of the student social allowances program.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a ministerial statement.

It gives me great pleasure to announce today a new opportunity for all Manitobans to invest in their province. Due to the tremendous success of Manitoba Hydro Savings Bonds and continued interest in investing in Manitoba, I am pleased to announce the first issue of Manitoba Builder Bonds Series I for 1993.

The people of Manitoba have shown pride in their province by investing in excess of \$1.2 billion in the four HydroBond series. As important, over \$125 million has been paid in interest exclusively to Manitobans, interest that otherwise would have been paid to lenders out of the province and indeed out of the country.

Like HydroBonds, Builder Bonds will be available to Manitobans only for as little as \$100. Builder Bonds are available for a five-year term, and purchasers can choose to have their interest compounded over the five-year period, paid monthly, or to have the interest paid annually. Builder Bond Series I will go on sale Tuesday, May 25, with the interest rate being announced May 21. The interest rate will be competitively priced with the principal and interest on all bonds fully guaranteed by the Province of Manitoba.

Proceeds from the sale will provide a local source of funds to keep Manitoba growing and build Manitoba's future.

Mr. Speaker, as Manitobans continue to enjoy the benefits of the success of HydroBonds, I now encourage all Manitobans to share in this new exciting opportunity with Builder Bonds Series I.

Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Finance for his announcement here this afternoon and say, on this side of the House we support the proposal of the Minister of Finance to proceed with Builder Bonds.

Mr. Speaker, we had a program announced in 1987, the Manitoba Investments Savings Certificates, that I believe raised money for the Province of Manitoba. We have had the HydroBonds that have been announced over the last couple of years by this government. I suppose that HydroBonds are no longer necessary in light of the developments across the way with their project that they had in hand, but I think this is a good idea.

Mr. Speaker, it is always better for us to have Manitobans investing in their own economy. It is always better for Manitobans to experience the interest rate benefits for investments here. It is always better to take away as much as possible speculation in the foreign markets—whether it is the American dollar and its exchange rate that can fluctuate as it has over the last couple of years and affected the Manitoba budget, or in previous years where we have done well or done poorly on the Japanese yen or Swiss money. So I certainly support borrowing in Manitoba from Manitobans and having the capital stay here.

* (1335)

I would point out, too, that there are no stated objectives in the release of the minister today. I would have thought that normally when one issues a bond issue, there is a stated objective of how much money you want to achieve. We will await the actual results, Mr. Speaker. We will not have any way to evaluate it against the expectations of the government, but we—[interjection] Perhaps the Premier (Mr. Filmon) could settle down a bit.

I would like to again say that we support the local borrowing from Manitobans.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in the House on this issue before and have been somewhat supportive of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) on his issue of HydroBonds. However, my support began to dim as I looked at the interest rate that was being paid well above market, and I looked at the commission rate that was being paid well above the average. It is no wonder he got the kind of response he did; he paid those people selling it far more than they could get selling other instruments.

I raised the question with him in Estimates last year: From the perspective of the Province of Manitoba, is this a good idea? We are paying more in terms of the advertising, the front-end load on

these bonds than we would if we were using other instruments.

The Minister of Finance, at that time, said, yes, it was true, but it was necessary to do that with the HydroBonds early on because they were a new instrument and you had to do extra advertising and everything else in order to promote the sale of them, but that those costs would decrease over time. Well, I now note that "over time" has come and we now have a new issue, so the Minister of Finance can run new advertisements and have his face on TV talking about his new series. So I have the same concerns.

I also share the concern of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) from the perspective of these being announced as an investment in Manitoba's future, to help build Manitoba's future. I, too, would like to see how that money is going to be employed. We have asked this minister many times the results of the other investments he is making through the Vision Capital Fund and we have yet to receive a single bit of successful information or information that indicates a successful investment by this government in five years. So I am a little skeptical, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Eddie Connery, the former MLA for Portage la Prairie.

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

Also with us this afternoon, seated in the public gallery, we have from the Crestview School twenty-two Grade 5 students under the direction of Ms. Patti Lohr. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh).

Also this afternoon, from the Elmwood High School we have 12 students under the direction of Mr. Bob Skene. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Education System Reform Report Release

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Education released the long-awaited report dealing with reform of our education system.

Mr. Speaker, we were shocked to see that there was absolutely no response of the government in terms of what positions they would take. Then we were also very surprised to see that this report was given to the government in February of 1993 but withheld from the members of this Legislature until well after the provincial budget was debated and passed.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): Why did they have this report since February of 1993? Why did they not make it public so that we could evaluate the various decisions the government was making in Education on the basis of the public input that was provided all across Manitoba? Why was this report withheld from members of this Legislature and the public, so that we could debate in a comprehensive way the many cutbacks that took place in Education in this last budget?

* (1340)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, because the report had to be translated. The report had to be translated into French. That translation was not only to be technically correct but correct also in tone.

Mr. Doer: It does not take 12, 14 weeks, Mr. Speaker, to translate a report.

Clinician Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government did not want their budget cuts in Education to be positioned against the public input that the Department of Education received through their task force report.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education how she can justify making a decision to cut clinicians for special needs kids in rural Manitoba—the hearing specialists, the eye specialists, the behaviour clinicians—how she could cut those kinds of special needs programs in rural Manitoba in light of the fact that all the way through this report there are recommendations to provide equal services for those children, for those communities, equal

services for special needs kids, equal services that do not diminish the resources available to school divisions for those other children in their school divisions, how she can justify one recommendation with her cuts of this budget.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, just an additional response to the first question based on the translation. The translation also had to be approved by the committee. The committee had to take the opportunity to view it to see if it met their views of intent. Then, where there were any additional changes to be made to meet the requirements of the committee, that occurred.

In the area of clinician funding, Mr. Speaker, again I will remind the member that this government funds those clinicians. We fund those clinicians through our funding formula. There have been 19 school divisions that have been operating on that system. Now other school divisions will access the funding for clinicians, and they will be able to hire clinicians within their own area or join together as a regional group.

I will also remind the member of our commitment to special needs. Special needs funding was in the range of \$53 million in 1991-92. It has risen to over \$81 million this year. This government not only maintains its commitment to special needs funding, it increases its interest in special needs funding.

Partnerships

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the minister had this report in February. The decisions were announced in March and the budget was contained in the—[interjection] Well, surely the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is not saying that the government ignored the report they had when they made the decisions in their budget. I guess that is what the government is saying. Of course, that is consistent with every other decision they have made in this budget—do not study it; do not consider it; just go ahead in a trickle-down fashion.

I would like to ask the government how they could proceed with unilateral action on all the school divisions in Manitoba, unilateral action determined solely by the provincial government, when the report clearly states that the public of Manitoba want the government to work in partnership with all the providers of education in our system.

They want education legislation to be designed to promote partnership and to ensure that formal mechanisms are in place for such partnerships to function. How can they proceed in such unilateral ways when partnership is clearly the direction in which Manitobans want to go?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we certainly believe in partnership, and that is why we are now asking for the opinion of Manitobans, the direction of Manitobans, based on the numbers of recommendations that occurred in the report that was released yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, as well, we also speak for taxpayers. On this side of the House, we have a continued concern for the amount of money that taxpayers can provide, and that is why we did cap the special requirement at a 2 percent increase.

Emergency Room Physicians Patient Safety

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, given the situation at the emergency wards of the community hospitals, can the minister assure this House that patient care in the emergency wards will not be jeopardized or compromised in any way at any of the affected hospitals?

* (1345)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that is the entire hope of not only myself as minister but this government and I believe of all members of the Legislature.

To assure that is the case, the College of Physicians and Surgeons has, as recently I believe as today, indicated the training requirements for staffing of emergency departments and reminded all of the hospitals that they must assure that adequately trained physicians are present to provide those emergency services during the hours of operation that they have indicated they will be able to accept code red emergencies, and those primarily are cardiac involvement.

In addition to that, in addition to the College of Physicians and Surgeons expressing their requirement on standards, the community hospitals and the teaching hospitals in Winnipeg met, as I indicated yesterday, and further fleshed out contingency plans to assure patient safety as long as this was to be part of the dispute.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that response. We too have a copy of the letter from the College of Physicians and Surgeons indicating that, specifically in the case of cardiovascular emergencies, the public should be advised whether a hospital can provide that care. The public should be advised of that.

Mr. Speaker, my question therefore to the minister is: Can the minister assure this House that there are no staff at any of these hospitals who do not meet these minimum standards providing care?

We are advised that at least in one institution, physicians are working who do not have these minimum standards.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am intrigued with my honourable friend's position here because we were advised this morning by the College of Physicians and Surgeons that they would be communicating, as my honourable friend is obviously in receipt of, the correspondence which would indicate the minimum requirements of physicians working in emergency departments.

The inquiry was made directly when we were so advised as to whether the directive was a result of the present situation. The answer was no, that they were putting out this directive anyhow and in the process of repairing this, they wanted to assure that there was adequate standards being met in any of the hospitals accepting code red emergencies.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the minister—I do not know if the minister has a copy of the circular. I will table it for the minister's information, but my question to the minister is: Can he assure this House, regardless of the fact of the notice, that all hospitals are meeting this minimum standard?

We are advised that, at least at one hospital, there are physicians who are operating in emergencies who do not have the minimum standards as designated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I cannot be any more specific than I have been with my honourable friend already. We want the hospitals to assure that they are staffed to the College of Physicians and Surgeons' requirements for accepting code red. That is why there is some significant co-operation between ourselves, the college and the hospitals to assure that is the case.

If my honourable friend has some specifics, maybe instead of sort of holding out a "what if" or a potential rumour, if my honourable friend had specifics that he wishes to share with me in private, I will be fully prepared to answer the specifics.

In the meantime, Sir, I have to assume that all hospitals are abiding by our desire and the College of Physicians and Surgeons' desires that emergencies are operated by physicians qualified to accept code red emergencies.

Should my honourable friend have different information, please provide it to me in confidence, and I will provide him the assurance he seeks.

Reduced Workweek Cost Savings

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

This government has consistently over the years cast itself as the party of fiscal restraint. However, the facts tell a different story. The fact is, this year's real deficit, when one adds back the \$200 million from the fiscal slush fund and the hundred million dollars that the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) revealed in his budget speech, is \$862 million, the single largest deficit in the history of the province. This year, the government says they will save \$15 million on the reduced workweek legislation to deal with civil servants; yet on April 21, the minister indicated he could not define what essential services were.

My question for the minister is: How did he decide that the reduced workweek would save Manitobans \$15 million before he had even determined what services and employees were to be designated essential, or was this again the same type of financial wizardry that we have been—

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

* (1350)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member plows a long furrow to finally come to the question.

Firstly, let me state that I acknowledge that for the year ended, there was a structural deficit, before taking the \$200 million away, of \$750 million, and the net was more in the area of 560, and that is a large number. That is why I found it very perplexing that the members opposite would not realize the

tremendous effort put in by this government to take that structural deficit from 750 down to 367, basically in half, and probably the only government in Canada to do so, and no longer having money to withdraw from the savings account.

With respect to the question, how is it that we put a figure on the savings to be achieved through the reduction in the period worked, Mr. Speaker, we simply took the \$3.6 billion in the public sector and we apportioned some roughly 4 percent saving. We did that within the civil service, roughly \$600 million, applied a 4 percent saving, and that gave us roughly a \$25-million gross saving.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I think "roughly" is the key word there, because the government has not obviously taken into account the things which are going to happen in the coming year.

Overtime Policy

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): This week it was revealed that people were golfing on Fridays and then getting time and a half on Saturdays to do the same work in one of the Crown corporations.

My question for the minister: How much overtime will be added to the government budget, including the Crown corporations, as a result of the reduced workweek in essential services, or did the government bother to calculate that—obviously not—before coming up with this prediction, a prediction which looks like it is going to be consistently—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, certainly the MPIC situation is one that we are investigating further. The Crown Corporations Council is looking into that, because of course the mandate that was given to all the Crowns and indeed the civil service was that there would be no overtime and trade-offs with respect to having to take certain days off.

When the member asks specifically how much additional money is being put into the overtime budget because of this, I will tell him specifically, zero dollars.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, there has already been some spent because it has already come forward in the last week, and that was just the first week.

My further question for the minister: Will government employees now be getting overtime

rates after 30 hours because that is now defined as the normal workweek, or will overtime rates go from 37.5 hours, which is the normal course? Can the minister answer that question?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whose definition the member is saying now is the normal workweek. I do not accept his.

The legislation embodied in Bill 22 is powerful. It is very powerful legislation. It allows the government, indeed those other organizations outside of government that choose to use it, tremendous powers, in many respects to overrule collective agreements that are in place.

I say to the member, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to his presentation on Bill 22 which I will be calling for second reading after Question Period.

* (1355)

Education System Reform Special Needs Students

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, we just heard from the minister that she was given this report on legislation reform for education in February prior to the budget that was presented and prior to the announcement that she made on education funding in this province.

The minister now hides behind the translation as the reason why she could not act consistently with the report.

I want to ask her, especially as it applies to recommendation No. 32 dealing with special needs funding, whether she did read the report when she received it, or was it the translation that was the problem there for her as well, and why she did not act consistently in her recommendation on the budgets that was made by this panel. Did she alert her cabinet—

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

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it seems the member from the other side is saying that on the receipt of this report, I should completely ignore what all the educational organizations have requested, and that is to give those educational organizations an opportunity to comment on the report and to also look at how they would look at incorporating legally and organizationally some of these requirements and some of the recommendations and how acceptable they are and workable.

The member indicates that instead of allowing comment by those educational organizations, government simply should have accepted the report immediately and totally.

Service Integration

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I just simply asked her why she acted contrary to the recommendations in the report, the public interest, as requested.

Now she says that she is supposed to—we want her to ignore the recommendations of the public. I want to ask her in that vein since she received over two years ago a report from the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the superintendents, as well as the School Business Officials, asking her to in fact integrate services to the schools through the system of integration that is used in British Columbia on the B.C. protocol. I ask her why she has not now integrated services to those—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, recommendation No. 32 does speak to a co-operation and an integration of services to provide the most efficient service to students, and I have told this member previously that there is a committee functioning to do that.

However, I also have said in this House that there have been a number of movements already and actions taken in that area, and I have already given two examples, one between the Departments of Family Services, Health and Education to look at a 24-hour planning for special needs students.

Work has been done in that area. It is ongoing and we continue to look at other ways for co-operation.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, two years she has been sitting on those recommendations. I ask her now: Will she give us a timetable to co-ordinate the service? [interjection] I am asking her. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) cannot define a question. It is mine. He is having trouble understanding—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Dauphin was just going to put his question.

Mr. Plohman: I want to ask the minister when she is going to bring in a fully co-ordinated and integrated system between Family Services, Justice and the Departments of Health and Education to

co-ordinate services to the education through the schools. When will she implement that system?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I will be more than happy during the process of Estimates to discuss the numbers of co-operative efforts that are already in place between those three departments and other departments in government.

There are many services which are currently ongoing and there are others to be explored, and government will actively work in that way.

Workplace Safety and Health Regulations

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, this government has a history of interference with Workplace Safety and Health committees. It takes explosions like the solvent plant and weeks of questioning in the House here before they live up to their commitment.

My question for the Minister of Labour is: Why is it, when we had regulations on Workplace Safety and Health committees two years ago that were passed unanimously by the advisory council, have we had the minister and his department intervene, and now we have regulations that do not meet the high standard that was previously met to the liking of all the members of the committee?

* (1400)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have to challenge the premise of the member for Radisson. This government does not interfere in the work of Workplace Safety and Health committees in the workplace as she implies. [interjection] Well, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) makes a comment from his seat. Come up with some proof. Come up with some evidence. Like most things he says, and his colleagues, they are more rhetoric than substance.

As I explained yesterday to the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), there were problems with administering the particular regulation that was drafted, and I want to make sure that if I am going to take a regulation forward to cabinet for consideration, it is one that works administratively.

She may not be concerned with how the department operates. The member may not be concerned at all whether or not there is common-sense application in the resolution. She may not be concerned that the people who have to work with it every day had problems with it.

That is just called workplace democracy, which she may oppose. If that is her attitude, I cannot help that, but I have responsibilities beyond her rhetoric.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, Workplace Safety and Health committees are common sense. That is what these regulations enact. We now have regulations that are not to the liking of all the group, but there is still stalling. The regulations are done.

What is the minister afraid of? Why do we not have these regulations enacted?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, the only thing I am afraid of is what everyone should be afraid of, is where we are making our decisions on the basis of rhetoric and not proper information, as so often happens with members opposite.

If the member for Radisson would care to study the issue as opposed to just trying to raise it in the House for the appearance of caring about the issue, she would find out that the genesis of the issue is under our current regulations. There is not an ability to take a particular matter forward that a Workplace Safety and Health committee has not dealt with after three meetings.

The Manitoba Federation of Labour, in my discussions with them, very frankly said they want the ability to get that to the Labour Board. I agreed with that. I have no problem with that. It is how we do it in the intervening steps, and that is where there was an administrative problem we had to work out. I do not think the member appreciates that.

Ms. Cerilli: If the minister wants to talk about rhetoric, read the proclamation and then look—

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

Ms. Cerilli: I would ask the minister to do something positive to commemorate this day of mourning and to tell us the date when the regulations are going to come into force.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, again, it proves I think that the member for Radisson should do a little more consulting. If she is concerned about rhetoric in the proclamation, I would indicate to her that the wording was suggested by the Manitoba Federation of Labour. So I think she and her apparent supporters should talk a little more often.

Point of Order

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The inaction on the regulations and the hypocrisy make the proclamation—

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable minister, to finish his response.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, if members opposite want to talk about hypocrisy, all one has to do is to look at the operation of that branch prior to 1988, to look at the operation of the Workers Compensation Board in 1988, where there were hundreds of files, boxes of files in the basement of the board. People did not even know what they were in. They talk a great line, but in practical fact do not accomplish very much.

Department of Education and Training Audit Contracts

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a report to the Minister of Finance for the members of this House, which I am sure he has, and it indicates a nontendered contract through the Department of Education and Training for \$4,000.

The reason, as stated in the report by the Department of Education, for this untendered contract was to provide audit verification for a number of programs within the department. The reason is that the Internal Management Audit branch of the Education department had carried out the audit previously, but were unable to continue in the last two years because of staff cutbacks.

I would ask the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey): Given that we have spent \$4,000 on this untendered contract, we have not been doing audit verifications so we are not sure how much extra money we have spent in the Department of Education and, in fact, we are looking at a workweek reduction where staff are going to be off even more hours, can the Minister of Education tell this House how these actions justify efficiency in administration?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I gather from the question that the Liberal Party will be voting against Bill 22. They do not want to try and find any savings whatsoever within the salary line of government.

What is obvious is, through the decisions that have been made in the past and given the internal audit function in some departments, we have found

in a number of departments that we are looking at our accounts in a pre-audit sense and we have been functioning well. It has worked well. In some respect, we have been able to reduce some of the staff in that area.

Mr. Speaker, when we go outside of government for a \$4,000 contract, that is only a fraction of what would be required if we had to hire a full-time staff. Obviously the saving is there. The Provincial Auditor is well aware of that process. The Provincial Auditor has the final opportunity to pass judgment as to our pre-audit activity, and it has not been found wanting. The process that we have adopted is one that is in keeping with the Provincial Auditor's wishes.

Reduced Workweek Overtime Policy

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary to the Minister of Finance.

Given his answer, in which to me he reaches an illogical conclusion, can the minister tell me how he can guarantee, as he said in the House today, that the overtime costs, any increases will be at zero?

The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), in his Estimates debate, basically said the overtime policy in his department has not changed, which means if staff need to work overtime to deliver a service, they will.

There is a contradiction. Can the Minister of Finance explain that contradiction?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there are basically two issues here.

Certainly we are looking at all of the overtime costs of government. Whereas we have brought it significantly under control, in spite of some of the position reductions within the civil service, still Treasury Board will continue to review the overtime number within government, and to the extent that we can reduce it further, we will. [interjection] No, we have been doing it. We have been doing it for several years, and we make no apology for that.

The member says, now, is Bill 22 going to cause that number to rise again? The reality is, no. We have budgeted a certain amount for overtime that is needed from time to time in government, and Bill 22 will have no impact on that number.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary to the Minister of Finance.

Will the Minister of Finance then table in the House today, given he has all this data for the last couple of years, an analysis of what the workweek reduction will do as far as overtime costs, given that stand-by and emergency arrangements will have to increase in a number of departments? We would appreciate an analysis.

Mr. Manness: We never said, and I never said when I introduced Bill 22, that there would not be some areas of government that would be exempt from Bill 22. There would be areas where indeed we would not be forcing through the 4 percent reduction. That would be taking into account—[interjection] Mr. Speaker, I said, during second reading of Bill 22, Corrections is a good example.

Corrections will continue and will not come under the effect of Bill 22. I said that in speaking. So I do not know where the member is coming from in her comments. I do not know what she is trying to state. Throughout \$600 million within the civil service, roughly there will be a \$25-million saving, almost purely 4 percent.

No-Fault Auto Insurance Implementation

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

The no-fault auto insurance experience in Quebec shows that eliminating fault for accidents cuts overall costs, meaning that victims can receive greater compensation without increases in premiums. The government has not acted on the no-fault recommendation of the Kopstein report, and for nearly three years this minister has sat on the Tillinghast report which clearly outlines a savings of a pure no-fault auto insurance system.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister: Is the government, is the minister, now seriously considering the implementation of a pure no-fault auto insurance system in Manitoba as recommended by both the Kopstein and Tillinghast reports?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I have said on a number of occasions, and I am sure the member has read the papers as avidly as anyone, that we are looking at a large range of options and that, obviously, has to be one of the things that we would consider.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I thank the minister for that answer.

* (1410)

Government Position

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I wonder if the minister could advise the public of Manitoba when can we expect a decision from the government on a no-fault system for Manitoba?

Manitobans do not want to face continuously escalating Autopac premiums, Mr. Speaker, and as the minister said, with bodily injury claims rising dramatically, we are going to have further sharp increases.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I certainly would not want the member to be able to avoid the concerns that he has expressed about the potential uneasiness that the public of Manitoba has about automobile insurance costs, but the member attempted to put on the record a few days ago that the cost of repairing the tin was what was driving up the costs.

The corporation followed up on the information that the member put forward and inspected the vehicle, Mr. Speaker, and the items that were missed by the private estimates that he put forward as being savings, first of all, the right front door frame repair was not enclosed. The right front door jamb was not enclosed.

Autopac Cost Controls

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, we not only want costs not to escalate, but we want to have costs—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate.

Mr. Leonard Evans: How does this minister expect to keep Autopac costs from escalating in the future as they have done each year under this government? How are you going to keep Autopac premium rates from rising in the future, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to let that member continue to put incorrect information on the record. The matter that he raised previously—the estimate from Bunzy's Auto Body

missed the right front door frame repair. The right front door jamb was not included. The right corner panel was not included. Penner Auto Body missed the right front door frame, the right quarter panel, the rear bumper refinishing, the clear coat, the right rear stripe. Couture Toyota—right front door frame, right—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Is it in order for a minister to get up and start answering a question that was not asked of him? I want the minister to know that the gentleman in question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Cummings: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Corydon Auto Body also missed—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), I would like to remind the honourable minister that we should deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

ACCESS Programs Funding

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, I expect that the Minister of Education will be attending the graduation powwow at the University of Manitoba. That is a spectacular and very proud occasion for the university and especially for the students and families.

Mr. Speaker, now that the minister has cut up to 16 percent from ACCESS programs, could she tell the House what message she will be taking to those families and those communities about their prospects for ACCESS funding?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I certainly have attended the powwow. I did attend it last year, as well. It is a spectacular event.

The Government of Canada, however, has changed its funding for native students. Last year, it was this government that provided over \$1 million in supplementary funding to support those students who are currently in the ACCESS program so they would not have to lose their academic year.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, my question related to this year and it related to this government's funding.

I want to ask the minister, who less than a year ago said that the federal government's unwillingness to meet its obligations to ACCESS students is, quote, unconscionable, will she confirm that her policy of withdrawal from ACCESS funding is in fact taking us down exactly the same road as Brian Mulroney?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, we have not withdrawn our ACCESS funding. I have explained to the member that the federal government, as I explained to her last year, has in fact changed the way that they fund. They will not be funding through the provinces. They will be funding directly to the bands, and last year did not support the students who were currently involved in their programs. This government did.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, there is a 16 percent reduction to ACCESS programming.

I want to ask the Minister of Education again, will she restore that funding? Will she take responsibility for the funding of those students in Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, in the past, the federal government funding for ACCESS students was funded differently. They are now funding, not through the provincial government, but they are funding directly to bands.

This government has maintained its commitment to ACCESS students, including last year—and I say again, including last year—supporting those students who would not have been able to continue in their programs. This government provided over \$1 million in supplementary funding for those ACCESS students.

Women's Advisory Council Child Care Consultations

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, in Estimates this week, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) admitted that his Policy and Planning Division was not asked to provide an analysis of the ability of parents with child care subsidies, most of whom are women, to pay the additional \$1.40 a day in child care fees just imposed by his government.

Did the Minister responsible for the Status of Women ask her Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, under its mandate of advancing the goal of equal participation of women in the economy, to look at the potential negative effects of this surcharge on

this necessary component to women gaining economic equality?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, indeed we as a province have increased substantially the amount of funding that goes for child care in the province of Manitoba, something that was woefully underfunded when the New Democratic administration was in power in this province.

We presently now fund child care at about four times as much as the Province of Saskatchewan does for a population very similar to Manitoba. So, Mr. Speaker, this government has increased and has committed more dollars to child care over the term of our administration, and we will continue to make child care and Family Services a priority.

Ms. Barrett: Did the Minister responsible for the Status of Women then ask the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council to study the impact of the change in eligibility for access to child care while looking for work from eight weeks to two weeks, and what effect these changes—

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

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my first answer, our commitment is clear to the women in Manitoba by the initiatives that we have undertaken in many, many areas and by increased funding, not only in the child care area but in social allowances, and we provided opportunities for those who were not receiving their health benefit card to have access to health benefits while they moved from social assistance into the workplace. We have increased funding for shelters throughout the province and many, many initiatives in the area of violence.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to women is strong.

Student Social Allowance Program

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, since the minister did not ask the advisory council for either of those things, did the Minister responsible for the Status of Women ask the Women's Advisory Council to investigate the probable or possible economic impacts the elimination of the student social allowance would have on the women of Manitoba who are attempting to get out of the cycle of poverty? Did she ask their advice—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, it was one of the recommendations from the advisory council indeed that had this Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and this government extend the health care benefits for up to 12 months for those women who, under the NDP administration and up until this year, did not have access to health benefits as they moved from social assistance into the workforce. So that has been a very positive move that has been applauded by the women of Manitoba.

* (1420)

Children's Dental Program Meeting Request

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

A few weeks ago, and since cuts have been imposed on the rural dental health program, I would like to ask the minister if in fact he is willing to and has met with the organization to discuss the rescinding of his decision to cut the program in rural Manitoba.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Not as yet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Evans: Mr. Speaker, will the minister meet with the groups, as they have indicated they would like to? Will he meet with them as soon as possible?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I always accept wise advice.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, will you call second readings of Bills 26, 27, 28, and then adjourned debate on second readings, Bills 16, 23, then 22.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 26—The Expropriation Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness, that Bill 26, The Expropriation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'expropriation), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of these amendments to The Expropriation Act is to address concerns raised by the Department of Government Services regarding duplication in the current adjudicated process for determining the compensation payable on expropriation. The amendments will also help to reduce both the length of time to resolve claims and the corresponding accrual of interest on compensation awards.

Although the Department of Justice is responsible for amendments to this act, the Department of Government Services is primarily responsible for the administration of expropriations undertaken by the government of Manitoba. Under the current system, compensation is usually determined before the Land Value Appraisal Commission. However, while the expropriating authority is bound by the certification by the commission, owners who are not satisfied with this decision may also have compensation determined by the Court of Queen's Bench.

Proceedings before the Court of Queen's Bench are a duplication of the function already provided by the Land Value Appraisal Commission, which is a specialized tribunal on land compensation matters.

This duplication has two major consequences. First, allowing expropriated owners to have their case adjudicated in two forums results in a duplication of legal, appraisal and consulting fees. Second, the resulting delay in settlement increases the amount of compensation being paid by the expropriation authority.

These amendments will make decisions of the Land Value Appraisal Commission binding on both the expropriating authority, as they are now, and the expropriated owner. Both parties have the right to take this decision to the Court of Appeal when their appeal is based on issues of fact and law. I would also like to note that with these amendments, the limitation period for making applications is reduced to two years from the date the expropriation authority takes vacant possession of the property.

The other proposed amendment to this bill deals with setting the statutory interest rate paid on compensation awards. The rate of interest payable on outstanding funds will now be based on the rates set under The Court of Queen's Bench Act or prejudgment interest. This would reduce interest costs in periods of declining interest rates because

of the delays encountered by having interest rates set by regulation on a yearly basis.

The benefits of these amendments will be substantial cost savings to expropriating authorities and fewer delays in resolving matters. Also, a more frequent adjustment of interest rates will better reflect current interest rates. It is important to note that these amendments will not impair the right of an expropriated owner to have a full and fair hearing on the amount of due compensation for the expropriation of land.

With these brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I recommend this bill for second reading. Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 27—The Environment Amendment Act (2)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 27, The Environment Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, my comments will be quite brief on these amendments. They are intended to be able to provide absolute assurance that certain aspects of our stubble burning regulations or, as referred to in the bill, the crop residue burning or remains of vegetation, that we have the complete authority that we may need to use in order to make sure that all of our intentions will be able to be carried out in order to provide protection for the health of Manitobans who might be affected by the smoke as a result of the burning of the vegetation.

Mr. Speaker, there is one specific reason why we had to make this amendment, and that is that while any number of government employees can be appointed as environment officers, there was a quirk in the existing bill that meant that RCMP officers were not classified as government employees, and while they could enforce under a number of areas on behalf of government, that there was some question whether or not they could enforce as environment officers for the purposes of this act. They certainly could provide enforcement under a

number of other sections, particularly emergency measures that were used last fall.

That is the primary reason for opening up the bill for this amendment, and at the same time we would use the opportunity to make sure that the other aspect of the burn regulations, which is that in specifying a specific time and providing notice of that time that we have the absolute authority in order to be able to make that a legally binding notification, rather than go to publishing the regulation in the Gazette under The Regulations Act. We have to be able to have quick and ready access to providing the notice this fall.

An example would be when burning is not to be allowed in the northwest quadrant of the city, the number of municipalities that might be in that quadrant would be specified and said no burning should be allowed this day or for a bank of days. That is very specific and was not necessarily properly accommodated for in the manner in which we were able to write regulations under the previous clauses in the existing act. Those capabilities are adjusted in this amendment in order to assure ourselves that there will be complete authority to use that type of notification in order to convey the intent of the regulation to the affected people.

Very simply, Mr. Speaker, I believe that covers the aspects of this bill that are the important reasons for us bringing forward this amendment. I would look forward to speedy passage from my colleagues in the opposition, because while these regulations are to be in effect primarily following August 1, we also have other authority that we have given ourselves in order to implement them on six hours notice. I know that we all want to make this workable and I appreciate their co-operation.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* (1430)

Bill 28—The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act (Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le Conseil

interculturel du Manitoba), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to have the opportunity to speak on The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation holds the promise of a new beginning for the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the ability to determine a future course which is based on the needs and wishes of the community without interference or control by government.

Mr. Speaker, last June, this House unanimously passed The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act. Through the consultations leading to the act, a strong consensus emerged that the MIC needed to be carefully and fully examined as to its role, mandate and structure.

It was also clear, however, that there was no one answer to these issues. Many suggested that we engage an external, independent consultant to conduct such a review and report back. As a result, Don Blair was hired to conduct research and consultations to assess the role, the mandate and the structure of the Manitoba Intercultural Council and make recommendations, including any necessary amendments, to The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act.

The consultant developed and distributed almost a thousand questionnaires to individuals and organizations and held over a hundred personal interviews and consultations and submitted his report in December of 1992.

After carefully considering the Blair report in its entirety, we accepted the recommendations and distributed the report to some 800 organizations and individuals throughout the width and the breadth of this province.

With the report, when it was distributed, I included a letter which stated, in part, and I want to quote from that letter: that the report has concluded that there is a consensus that there is no longer a role for government to play in the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I would agree the time has come for government to turn MIC over to the communities it serves. Following this consensus, it would be my intent to support MIC's functioning in accordance with the views of its membership, eliminating any grounds for a perception of government control and insolence. By accepting the main recommendation,

to withdraw government's involvement in MIC, we are working to achieve the goal of empowering the ethnocultural communities of Manitoba to enable the community to lead in meeting the needs of the future.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation now before us in the House embodies our commitment to accept the recommendations in the Blair report. This legislation reflects our ongoing commitment to the continuing development and evolution of multiculturalism in our province.

We have demonstrated time and time again that we are prepared to take positive steps to ensure that our cultural diversity is recognized as one of the greatest assets we are privileged to enjoy in Manitoba and to reflect that recognition in our policies and in our programs.

Our government has done much in the promotion and advancement of multiculturalism. On May 15 of 1990, Manitoba's first-ever policy for a multicultural society was announced, including four initiatives designed to address the opportunities and challenges of a multicultural society in all of the activities and operations of government, and for government to engage in more effective partnerships with all parts of our diverse cultural community. We have fulfilled all four very important initiatives.

The first was a designation of a Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, and as minister, Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to have had the opportunity to introduce many positive new initiatives, which have found favour and support amongst Manitobans. Reflecting that multiculturalism is the responsibility of all departments of government, I act as an advocate within government to ensure that policies and programs throughout government reflect our policy.

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

This co-operative, collaborative approach to implementation of the multicultural policy has been seen in several initiatives. On May 11, 1992, my colleague the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) unveiled the Multicultural Education Policy which recognizes that understanding, accepting and building on our cultural and racial diversity is crucial to our economic, social and community success.

The second undertaking in our multicultural policy was the establishment of a Multiculturalism Secretariat. This originally found its basis in the report of the Manitoba task force on multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is for all Manitobans toward a horizontal mosaic, which was commissioned in 1987. The task force felt that one single individual, a multicultural co-ordinator, could not perform the function of co-ordinating the implementation of a multicultural policy. It was proposed that an administrative infrastructure was required to advise me and the Multicultural Affairs Committee of Cabinet and co-ordinate the implementation of government policies among other functions.

The secretariat works with the community at large to develop and enhance partnerships between communities and with government and is responsible for working throughout government to identify, prioritize and implement actions to contribute to the achievement of the multicultural ideal.

In February of last year, we announced a unique awareness program launched by the Employment Standards branch in partnership with the secretariat to better inform ethnocultural communities about employment standards laws in Manitoba. Volunteers from ethnocultural communities are trained by the Employment Standards branch to set up information sessions, forums and workshops in the community on workplace rights and responsibilities. We have had some very outstanding and dedicated individuals from the Filipino, aboriginal, Vietnamese, Polish and Laotian communities take part in the program with further communities to come in in the months ahead.

The secretariat assisted in restructuring the citizenship division to include the establishment of the Immigrant Credentials and Labour Market branch, established, among other things, to deal with this issue. Recent changes to program recognition, now credentials recognition, will enable us to better respond to the needs of recently arrived Manitobans who may have special needs in gaining Canadian credentials.

In looking to the future, Madam Deputy Speaker, we can see the need to promote Manitoba as a good place to live, to work and to raise a family, as we encourage immigrants to choose to come to our province. We need and want more immigrants to come here to become contributing members of our society.

Our commitment to ensure that services are available to new immigrants has been reflected in a number of projects within my department, and we also have ongoing projects with probation services, Family Dispute unit that will provide for treatment groups for individuals convicted of spouse abuse who may not be fluent in English. Facilitators have been trained and groups started in five language groups. This project has also been carefully adapting material so that our cultural differences are acknowledged and laws and individual responsibilities are described. It will be a model for all of Canada and has already garnered a great deal of interest.

Similarly, our project with the Driver Testing offices resulted in the translation to 24 immigrant languages of the beginners drivers test. As well, this test is now being field tested in simple English to make it more accessible to all Manitobans no matter what their mother tongue is. The multipurpose form, the legal document signed upon successful completion of the road test, has now been translated into five languages with another 19 scheduled.

* (1440)

The third initiative of our multicultural policy was the opening of an outreach office. I was pleased to be able to officially open that office on May 14 of last year. This is an easily accessible store-front office which provides practical assistance to groups and individuals in dealing with departments and agencies of government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fourth initiative was to establish a legislative framework for the policy. The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act proclaimed October 24 of 1992 is, as all members of the House are aware, a very important piece of legislation indeed. Through consultations held with the multicultural umbrella organizations and various individuals throughout the community and throughout the province, I heard time and time again that it was most timely and most necessary to introduce legislation that did address multiculturalism. Consensus emerged on many thoughts, ideas and suggestions for that act. We listened and we acted in response to what was being said, including a clear statement that this Assembly is committed to the promotion of racial harmony.

We have continued our efforts to combat racism, an issue which is of major concern to the community

as a whole, and we have within government appointed an antiracism co-ordinator and an outreach worker. We have developed and adopted a code for a respectful workplace within my department which is now being offered throughout the civil service by the Civil Service Commission. We established a grant program, the Bridging Cultures Program announced in December of 1991, which provides grant support to ethnocultural organizations for projects that combat racism and promote citizenship.

We have undertaken funding for the City of Winnipeg for the 1994 Year of Racial Harmony which will encourage the community to undertake projects and initiatives to promote racial harmony.

Many of our community organizations, Madam Deputy Speaker, have conducted activities designed to combat racism and promote racial harmony. Each and every one of those people that has provided some input and some organization into the initiatives that have been going on in the community is to be commended for individual and collective efforts to address this most serious issue. The dedication and commitment of community groups, organizations and individuals who have devoted so much time for the betterment of our society is to be lauded, supported and ever encouraged. I hope that all members of the House on a regular basis do that.

We have seen the business community, labour organizations and voluntary and other private organizations promote respect and appreciation for our cultural diversity to encourage full participation by all Manitobans in all aspects of our society and to recognize the benefits of a multilingual, multicultural society. Multiculturalism is one of our greatest strengths, and as a province we must strive to ensure the realization of the full economic potential that this asset can bring to Manitoba for all Manitobans to make Manitoba stronger.

The recognition of the economic aspects and impact of multiculturalism continues to grow, and we must explore, promote and seize these opportunities. It is important to realize these opportunities are increasing almost daily. As we see major portions of the world undergo rapid transformations, we are coming to understand our unique advantage. Our knowledge of languages and cultures of the world enable us to better compete locally, nationally and internationally in this ever-shrinking global marketplace.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I said before, the bill before us today responds to what was said by the community. It is essential that the community be able to determine its own needs and develop the structures necessary to meet those needs free of the perception of government control and influence.

We recognize that we cannot dwell on the past; we must focus on those new and emerging issues which challenge all of us today.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council has played, and I am sure will continue to play, an important role in our community. There have been many, many individuals who have served with dedication and commitment over the past 10 years, and I know there will be many more to come in the years ahead.

Clearly, there is much to be done and many great challenges lay ahead for both the community and the council.

The community, Madam Deputy Speaker, will continue to come together in discussion to focus on the needs to determine what role they want the council to play in meeting those challenges.

I know that there is the leadership and strength within the community to rise to the challenges ahead to seize the tremendous opportunity to form and develop a fully community-based organization, fully representative of the ethnocultural communities within our province.

Indeed, the community has shown its determination and ability to do so throughout our history. We are privileged to have ethnocultural organizations throughout our province which undertake diverse activities and programs which meet the needs of the community and enhance the quality of life we now enjoy. The dedication and commitment of countless thousands of volunteers who give so freely of their time to ensure that Manitoba is a better place for all of us to live.

I look forward to the support of all members of this House for early passage of this legislation to enable the Manitoba Intercultural Council to embark on its new beginning and to meet the needs of the communities it serves.

We are truly, Madam Deputy Speaker, empowering the ethnocultural communities of Manitoba to make the decisions on the structure and mandate of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. The communities are able to come together to make these decisions free from the influence and control of government.

One of the three fundamental principles of our multicultural policy is to enhance the opportunities present in our diversity by acting in partnership with cultural communities and encouraging co-operation and partnership between ethnocultural communities.

This principle recognizes that it is essential that we all work together to achieve the multicultural ideal and to ensure that programs and policies are meeting the needs of the community. It reflects, Madam Deputy Speaker, the necessity of ethnocultural communities working together within an ethnocultural community, in partnership with other ethnocultural communities and with government.

We look forward, Madam Deputy Speaker, to continuing to work together with the community to achieve our shared goals and aspirations; to meet the challenge of living together in harmony and equality; and to achieve the ideal of a multicultural society based on the principles of pride, equality and partnership. Thank you very much.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 16—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 16 (The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Is the leave being requested to permit the name to be allowed to be standing in both names? [agreed]

Thank you. For clarification of the record, is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River

(Mrs. Wowchuk) and the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton)? [agreed]

* (1450)

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like leave to speak on Bill 16.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think this is kind of an auspicious occasion that I have been given the opportunity to speak on Bill 16 after the minister's rather spirited defence of her decision and the government's decision to delay release of the results of the public consultation on the amendments to The Public Schools Act and the directions we should be taking in Manitoba education.

It reminds me that Bill 16 was also tabled in this Legislature after the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) had received the report of the advisory group and understood what was needed and what was being asked for in terms of the educational system in the province of Manitoba.

The minister knows and the government knows, and now the public of Manitoba knows, I guess, what consultation really means to this government, and what consultation means is a means of attempting to pacify people while the government goes about its own agenda of slash and burn, of undermining in one way or another the province of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have spoken on other occasions about the failure of this government to put in place an economic agenda which will support the aspirations of Manitobans looking for work, Manitobans who want to contribute to the economy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 16 contributes to the undermining of the education system, the foundation on which those people are going to build their opportunities in the world of work. We often say that our youth are our greatest resource, and sometimes even we hear words like that, similar words, from the Minister of Education and from the government. But what the government chooses to do belies its real commitment to the education of our children and, I add somewhat sadly, commitment to the public school system in particular.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that this government, over its six budgets, over its five years, a little less than five years, has not only failed to support the public school system but has chosen without regard, in my opinion and the opinion of many, for the implications for public schools, has increased funding to private schools

by approximately 150 percent, perhaps even more than 150 percent.

I shudder to think that not only has this government increased funding substantially, that there remains taxpayers' dollars to be committed to private school education. I am not sure whether it was the Liberal Leader, the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), who led the charge to increase taxpayer funding to private schools. The Liberal Leader I believe was the first to publicly campaign on the notion that somehow the private schools should be entitled to 80 percent of what public schools were receiving on a per-pupil basis. The Liberal Leader did that, and her colleague the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) perhaps supports it, perhaps he does not. We have not heard him speak on this matter, but the fact of the matter is that there was not one scintilla of consultation with those in the public school system about the implications of that—

An Honourable Member: Scintilla or iota?

Mr. Storie: It is a foot and a half.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member did not know that a scintilla was a foot and a half and now he knows. So he learned something here today.

The fact of the matter is that neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives deemed it important enough when they decided to move to 80 percent funding of private schools to consult, to start to review—[interjection] I did not hear. They did not think it was important that Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Teachers' Society or the parents of the 200,000 public school students deserved an explanation, deserved some sort of a review of what that would mean in the long run to the public school system.

I guess I can say as a former teacher in the public school system and as a parent whose children attend public school that I have grave reservations about the government's policy and about the policy that was enunciated by the Liberals in terms of not only the quality of education in Manitoba but, more importantly perhaps, paradoxically the quality of life in Manitoba. Because, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that some of the symptoms that we begin to see in cities across this country, certainly in cities in the United States, stems from a reflection of the fact that we have forgotten that the way to bring people together, the way to create tolerance and

understanding is to have people live and work together.

I have always said that the public school, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the only social institution that brings people together from all religions and all races and requires them on a daily basis to co-operate, to work together, to learn together, to be together. I believe the end result of that is tolerance and understanding of what it is like to be with people who are different, to be with people who may speak a different language, who have come from a different place, who understand the world in a different way. But what the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) sees and what the Liberal Party apparently sees is a series of schools based on a philosophy, a religion, a cultural group, a policy of exclusion, a policy which denies fundamentally the reality of Manitoba which we talk about often, and that is the multicultural reality of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this in my opinion is a serious matter, and Bill 16, in my opinion, and the government's policy with respect to private school funding undermines that important characteristic of the public school system which brings people together and creates tolerance. That is why it is so disconcerting to know that the Minister of Education is now putting roughly \$20 million-plus into the private school system for not one more student, although it is certainly possible that we will see an escalation in the number of private school students in the near future. Why would that be? That would be because of what Bill 16 does, because the government in its wisdom is choosing to underfund the public school system in a very serious and, I think, an inappropriate way.

Unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, that will only escalate the process of creating a two-tiered education system in the province of Manitoba. As we underfund the public education system, as we eliminate some of the existing additional programs that are available in some, and only some right now, of our public school system, we are going to only encourage people to look for alternate ways of providing education to their children.

Madam Deputy Speaker, instead of taking on the task of creating an education system that is based on equality, that says a student in Flin Flon is entitled to the same quality of education as a student in River Heights; the same quality of education is the right of a student in Leaf Rapids or South Indian Lake as it

is in Brandon, Manitoba; the reality is that that equality is being undermined.

Every time this government cuts funding, every time this government spends another taxpayer dollar on the private school system when it could be used to support the public school system, the public school system is being undermined. Its future is being eroded. Madam Deputy Speaker, I think we need to ask ourselves what is going to be the long-term implication of that for our society.

* (1500)

If we look down the road, if we understand that there are right now private schools which have not even applied for support from the public purse but who will be eligible as a result of criteria established by the Conservative government, we recognize that the potential for the escalation of the number of private schools is significant. We can see in five years and 10 years, if we allow this to continue, a society in which we are in fact segregated by virtue of our income, our ability to pay, by our religious background or religious orientation, by our cultural background, our country of origin, or a host of other identifying characteristics.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not think members on that side understand the implications of that kind of process. It is conceivable that individual religious sects, which hold no particular sway in Manitoba at this time, may be eligible at some point in the very near future for public support; that the Church of the Aryan Nation, by virtue of meeting the rather, I was going to say, liberal criteria that were established by this government, may in fact at some point in the very near future become eligible for funding.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact is that there are no obvious, at least, impediments to any interest group, any ideological group, beginning a private school in the province of Manitoba and at some time in the future at least asking the province and the taxpayers to support it. I think that the public school system is much too important to be treated in this frivolous kind of way.

When the former Minister of Education embarked on this new policy of 80 percent funding, I asked him on a number of occasions to begin the process of identifying the possible implications of this policy. What was going to happen to enrollment in public schools? What was going to happen in terms of funding? Was the change in funding model likely to increase the number of private school students?

What was going to happen to the school divisions in the province which were already struggling to provide basic services, never mind the services that are provided in some of the wealthier school divisions? What was going to happen to the government's, at least, apparent commitment to a quality education across the province as their dollars flowed into the treasuries of private schools rather than into the public school system?

Well, there has been no consultation on those issues, and to my knowledge at least, the provincial government, the Department of Education, has done no thorough review of the ramifications of this policy and the cost to the public school system as a result of this policy. We know in dollar terms now approximately how much money is being funnelled into private schools. What we do not know is what the implications are and what the consequences are for public schools other than to say that apart from the money not being available, that \$20 million-plus not being available for the public school system—and it is a little ironic that the provincial government this year provides approximately \$16 million additional funding to private schools versus the 1987-88 school year.

That figure just happens to be, coincidentally, the exact number of dollars, \$16 million, which are being withdrawn from the public school system this year—\$16 million. That is the figure that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) used when she announced her reduction in education funding. Madam Deputy Speaker, we can only surmise at what damage is going to be done to the public school system as a result of that reduction, that \$16-million loss. We know that all of the goals and aspirations of those divisions who are currently struggling just to provide a base education can forget the hope that they may have had that they are going to be able to offer their students some additional and optional courses and programs in the future.

Certainly, in some divisions, we know that schools now offer quite exceptional band programs, vocational education programs, business programs, student services and supports. We know as well that there are too many divisions that are struggling to provide their high school students with the minimum 20 credits that are required to graduate.

An Honourable Member: Antler River.

Mr. Storie: My colleague mentions one Antler River. I was in Antler River. I am glad my colleague mentioned that, because I was in Antler River School Division. I was in Waskada School back in December, at which time the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), the member who is responsible for that area, was in attendance, and the school division chairperson and the superintendent were on stage talking about what the government's funding formula was going to mean to that division.

Of course, you can imagine their surprise when the superintendent said that as a result of this new formula the contribution from the Province of Manitoba to the Antler River School Division would be by 1996-97 approximately 55 percent.

So here is the lunacy of this proposal and of this government's approach to quality education. We have a government committed to providing 80 percent of public school support to private schools and 55 percent support to a school division in southwestern Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that kind of subverted logic when you are talking about the public school system is difficult to understand. Those kinds of statistics could be replayed across the province. Each school division is going to see significant, negative implications because of the approach the government has taken to public school funding.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the funding issue, I think, is critical. I wanted to spend a few minutes, however, talking about the broader social objectives that we have for education. I hope that I have made it clear, and I would like to see some members opposite, perhaps the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), talk about the role of education, the role the public school plays in socialization, in giving us that common understanding.

I often thought about what role the public school played in dispelling some of the prejudice and the racism and the intolerance that was obvious in Manitoba only 50 years ago. I know that a number of Ukrainian friends who were second-generation Canadians, their parents may have immigrated from the Ukraine or from parts of Russia. Perhaps there are people here of German descent who can talk about the same stories or people of Chinese descent or Japanese descent, people who immigrated to Canada, to Manitoba from other parts of the world, who came here.

Even second-generation Ukrainians who could speak English fluently were the target of criticism, were the targets of prejudice and racism. They had names for Ukrainian students in the province of Manitoba only 40 and 50 years ago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what happened? I believe, largely because of the influence of the public school system, largely because of the fact that I went to school with people of names representing every ethnic group on the face of the earth, over a period of time it tends to desensitize you to the differences. It tends to heighten your knowledge and your understanding of the similarities, to heighten your understanding of the fact that deep down we are all the same.

We are all equal, and we are all the same. We have the same concerns. We find the same things funny and we find the same things sad and we share a lot more than the superficial differences that sometimes set us apart.

Madam Deputy Speaker, today I do not think there is any Manitoban who believes that the name Derkach, the name Plozman, the name Santos, the name Cerilli is anything but Manitoban. Those are Manitoban names.

That is what the public school did. The public school brought us together, made us work together and made us understand each other. What we are doing now is, we are creating an education system, a two-tiered education system that is based on differences and that is going to take us down a path that is going to ensure that the kind of racially motivated violence that we see creeping into our society, into the city of Winnipeg, into parts of rural Manitoba is going to escalate, because we have forgotten that the education system, the public school system, was one of the institutions that tied us together.

* (1510)

I am not blaming all of those problems on that propensity to isolate ourselves, whether it is in private schools or in cultural and social ways, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am simply saying that the school was the only institution and has been the only institution that provided young people with that opportunity. It was not a matter of choice. People did not choose to go to the public school where they could be the targets of racism or intolerance or prejudice. They went because we had a public

school system, and the end result is tolerance and understanding.

If you want to find examples of tolerance and understanding, if you want to find examples of young people working to prevent racially motivated comments and attitudes and racially motivated violence, then I suggest that the Minister of Education go to some schools in Manitoba where you have that kind of mix, that very pleasing mix that represents Manitoba, and they are in our public schools.

I think that we need to protect that institution with all our vigour, and my concern is that the Minister of Education, and other people have commented that it is hard to understand the commitment of a Minister of Education, who clearly has made a choice which, in my opinion, shows contempt for the public school system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 16, in my opinion, is not just showing contempt for the value of the public school as an institution. I think Bill 16 shows some contempt in other ways, and I want to spend a few minutes talking about the shortcomings of this legislation in that respect as well.

We have talked about the unprecedented cutback. We have talked about the government's decision to keep funneling money into private schools, while it cuts the public school system. We talked about the ultimate end of this legislation as being one of undermining the school divisions' ability to offer choices to their students, and the poorer the division, the more binding, the more restrictive this legislation is going to make that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we know that there are many divisions that cannot offer the options that perhaps Assiniboine South or Fort Garry School Division can offer. But the fact of the matter is that this is going to make it worse. It is going to entrench the inequities that exist in our school system, in our school divisions across the province. It makes no pretense even of attempting to address the problem of those inequities, makes no pretense of attempting to build on the resources that are available in public schools in rural and northern Manitoba in particular.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think people understand that this bill also targets students and teachers, trustees, parents and the public school system to bear the burden of the education cuts. The government quite frankly had choices. Other people have mentioned the fact that the

government, who speaks so glowingly about no tax increases at the same time as it has limited school divisions' ability to raise local taxes to pay for educational programs, has gone ahead and seen fit to increase those individuals' property taxes by four or five or six times the amount that school divisions have been allowed to pass on increases in terms of the special requirement.

Madam Deputy Speaker, of more concern certainly to the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and to the many school districts across the province is the government's clear attack on local decision making. The government in this bill is basically undermining what has been a very, very long period of independence on the part of school boards. They have done it, in my opinion—and I think this opinion is shared by many—in a very underhanded way.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are many types of tyranny, and this government has chosen the type that is disguised as a choice. The fact of the matter is the school divisions basically have no choice. The government has pretended, in its public comments at least, that somehow the school divisions have a choice. They have pretended that by not following the "recommendations" of the minister, that they do not have to make sacrifices somewhere else in the system. The minister has essentially left them no option by limiting the amount of money, the amount of increase that they are allowed in terms of the special requirement. The minister knows that as well as anyone else.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that this move is going to cost us all. There is no doubt that this measure which is only temporary, we know that at some point the school divisions are going to be faced with undoing the damage that this bill created. We know that school divisions are going to have to look at their systems again. I can use some examples, and perhaps I will just so it is perfectly clear to members opposite the kinds of choices the school divisions are being made. It is a Hobson's choice. I am aware of one school division—

An Honourable Member: What is a Hobson's choice?

Mr. Storie: It is a choice in which there is no real winner.

An Honourable Member: It is like being between a rock and hard place.

Mr. Storie: It is like being between a rock and a hard place.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one division in discussing Bill 16 and looking at its options basically decided that they were going to have to reduce staff to meet the obligations under this legislation. You compound that with the implications of Bill 22 which forces school divisions into the same kind of box. So school divisions, the public school system is sitting there having been trampled on twice essentially in the same session.

The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) in a letter that she wrote to individual teachers and concerned citizens is calling it an option, and the word option is emboldened in the letter to make it sound more real. There is no option. That is what I said earlier about the worst form of tyranny that is disguised as choice.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister has not only cut education, but in attempting to impose the reduced workweek legislation on school boards is creating a whole set of secondary problems for school divisions.

Madam Deputy Speaker, although it is disguised as options, school divisions are genuinely concerned, teachers are concerned and many, many parents, to the surprise of some perhaps, are concerned about the implications of the reduced workweek, particularly the recommendations the minister has made about how those should be imposed. Again, another Hobson's choice, do you—

An Honourable Member: Jerry, wait a minute, you were the guy who recommended that the teachers take no salary increase at one time, I think.

* (1520)

Mr. Storie: Madam Deputy Speaker, the former Minister of Education talks about a proposal I made in 1987 to have the teachers take zero. The minister chooses his words carefully because this was not imposed on teachers or school boards. In fact, if the minister wants to discuss this, I think we want the record to be perfectly clear. What the government did was not only increase funding to public schools above the rate of inflation, we introduced an education resource fund of a \$5 million—

An Honourable Member: In lieu of what? In lieu of no salary increases.

Mr. Storie: Madam Deputy Speaker, if the minister will just control himself for a moment, I will explain exactly what the proposal was.

The proposal was that if school boards and teachers, in the collective bargaining process, could achieve a zero increase on the base salary, they could negotiate on all other issues. If they could achieve zero, which would freeze the base, they could access the \$5-million resource fund. It was completely voluntary. It provided an option for teachers and school divisions who had told me that the—

An Honourable Member: How successful were you?

Mr. Storie: Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it was not successful at all. I quite acknowledge that fact. The point is that there was no coercion. The point is there was no imposition of the government's will. The point is there was no interference in the collective bargaining system. There was absolutely no interference—[interjection]

Well, the proof is, of course, that there were no zero percent negotiated increases, that the teachers and the school boards to their—I was going to say chagrin but that is probably not accurate—but unfortunately fell back on the same old system using arbitration. What I was trying to do was inject a note of creativity in the collective bargaining process, and I failed. I freely admit that. I do not regret, however, making the effort. I do not think that school boards that I met with, the people that I spoke to, ever suggested—

An Honourable Member: The point is that creativity, there is nothing wrong with it. Right?

Mr. Storie: Madam Deputy Speaker, of course, there is nothing wrong with it. Certainly, I learned something and I think the Teachers' Society learned something by it, as did school divisions—

An Honourable Member: So acknowledge it now.

Mr. Storie: So acknowledge what? I acknowledge the fact that we were funding education and this government is not. I acknowledge the fact that we were giving inflation—contrary to what the Minister of Education says, we were giving increases at inflation, and as my colleague from Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) pointed out yesterday, this government is not. I mean, you cannot call a 2 percent reduction, you know, matching inflation.

The bottom line is that this whole process undermines the authority of school boards, undermines the confidence of teachers, undermines the confidence of parents and jeopardizes students. That is what it does. In plain and simple terms, every school division, every parent in Manitoba knows that is what it does. You did not have to attend the rally that was here at the Legislature Monday night that was sponsored by the Seven Oaks concerned citizens group, supported by lots of groups from the north end of Winnipeg and other school divisions, to know that that is the result, that this Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and this government is undermining the public school system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not accept that this government did not have choices. I have already said that they are giving private schools, the same people that are paying \$7,000 or \$8,000 tuition for their students to attend private schools are being given a break by the taxpayers of Manitoba for that privilege. That \$16 million could have been used to support the public school system.

I do not know whether the Minister of Education has yet realized it, but if there is genuine concern over the increasing cost of education, and there should be, that the proposal that they have worked in Bill 22 does nothing to change that. Bill 22 does not reduce the base costs, is not going to reduce the subsequent costs, once this government is past this particular phase, once this government is gone, for future governments.

The fact of the matter is that this is a political solution that has been imposed on a very difficult problem. The minister and some members of the front bench over there may feel that somehow this is a politically and publicly palatable—that is alliteration—politically and publicly palatable solution.

The fact of the matter is, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is a charade, that it does not solve the problems in the public school system. It simply creates additional ones. It exacerbates it, if you will.

The unfortunate fact is that Bill 16 is a result of a consistent pattern that this government has displayed, certainly since it received a majority in 1990. I am afraid to say, because I know that you are in some sense attached to that particular group, but I know that you do not share their philosophy, that you share the philosophy of this side, that our

public school systems deserve compassion, that we should not be treating the public school system with indifference, that it deserves better.

We cannot forget that the public school system educates still today almost 95 percent of the students of the province of Manitoba. To say, yes, well, we are going to increase money, taxpayers' money, being given to private schools by millions and millions of dollars when those students are already being supported by their parents to the tune of \$5,000 and \$6,000 tuition just does not make any sense.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wanted to say that this bill is part of a pattern, if you will, that developed shortly after the 1990 election. That is a pattern of heavy-handedness, a pattern of disregard for the authority of other duly elected, duly constituted groups.

There have been so many examples in the past few weeks of that that it is frightening. I relate only one, and that is, the government's and the Minister of Family Services' (Mr. Gilleshammer) reaction to the crisis centre in Flin Flon. The minister had alternatives.

The crisis centre board and myself met with him and presented him with alternatives, but there was no interest in those alternatives. The government, the minister had made up his mind, and in this case, Bill 16 and Bill 22, the minister has made up her mind along with her colleagues. It does not speak very well of the government's supposed commitment to consultation, to listening to the people—

An Honourable Member: And partnership.

Mr. Storie: —to partnership, to co-operation. Do all of those things simply go out the window as soon as this group gets around the cabinet table? Because, Madam Deputy Speaker, the decisions we are seeing from this government, and as much in the area of education as anywhere else, reflect an ideological approach, a political approach, a cynical approach to policy development in the province of Manitoba. It is unfortunate and I think many of us feel that way, certainly those of us who have been involved in the educational system feel that it is a cynical approach and an unfortunate approach when it touches on the issue of education, when it touches on the lives of the 195,000 students who attend the public schools, the thousands of students in our public school system who are looking for

enhanced educational opportunities, enhanced options, additional services.

The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), I know, did not take any kind of perverse pleasure in axing the 66 clinicians that she axed in her department, but the fact of the matter is that the minister does not have to put up with the repercussions of that decision. It is the public school system that does, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that is unfortunate. Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 16, The Public Schools Amendment Act. It is interesting to note that there have been some reforms before this bill, namely, a new education finance plan that was introduced last year, and for the first time the plan disengages divisions' funding patterns from some historical base and allows them to receive and spend what they require to deliver a given standard of service. This approach is called the resource-cost approach to education finance, and it can be fairer or has the potential to be fairer, especially if all divisions are given the funding they need to deliver a set standard of services but are still left free to determine how they will actually do this in practice. The problem, of course, is that the government of the day sets the standards, which may be fair or may not be fair.

* (1530)

Bill 16 limits the right of divisions to raise funding from their tax base, and that is the main component of this bill. Of course, that is the main thing to which our party objects. We believe that the most objectionable part of limiting their ability to raise funds is the interference in local autonomy; that in spite of the fact that trustees are elected to represent their constituents and the people who voted for them, they do not have total control anymore, as a result of this bill, to levy the kind of taxes that they feel are suitable for their local district. What it means is that the government, through this bill, has decided that they know best, that they are going to determine what the upper limits are and how much money they can raise. We object to this. We think that it is not democratic. It is interfering in the democratic rights of duly elected school trustees.

Just like all of us had to campaign and have our names on a ballot and go to a lot of work to get elected, the same is true for trustees all over the province of Manitoba. They knock on doors. They

meet voters. They talk to people about educational policy. Once they are elected, including any members in this Chamber who are former trustees, then it is their responsibility and I believe their right to determine what level of taxation is suitable to carry out the policies that they were elected for. As long as that system is in place, I believe we have a good system which normally is not immune but independent of political interference. I believe that that has come to an end because this government has decided that they know better and they are going to put caps on. Therefore, they are going to interfere in local autonomy and decision making.

There are some specific issues in this bill which are of concern to myself and to other trustees in this province. For example, several weeks ago I was talking to a trustee in River East School Division. Her concern had to do with surpluses.

Now, I do not know very much about surpluses in school board budgets, but I assume that they are there for a reason. This trustee was telling me that one of the things that they had set aside the surplus for was a contingency fund.

In fact, I think it depends on how you define it. I do not know how much the surplus is in River East School Division. I think it is also a matter of definition. You can call it a surplus; if you are the government of the day you are going to call it a surplus.

I believe the school board would probably prefer to call it a contingency fund or an emergency fund. They may well have it earmarked or designated for special purposes. This is a very common practice in many kinds of organizations.

For example, for three years I was on the board of directors of a housing co-operative. I also was involved with establishing a housing co-op. So I know that it is common practice in the co-operative sector in the housing market to have a contingency reserve, and normally it is 3 percent of your operating funds.

This is something which is mandated by Manitoba Housing—well, it used to be Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, I guess they still exist on paper anyway—and also by CMHC, who provides 75 percent of funding for provincial housing.

They require co-operatives to have a contingency reserve, and it is there for a reason. The reason is that if, for example, all the roofs in your housing project need to be replaced in one year for some

reason, because of some emergency that the money is there to do it so you do not have to go running to government and say, we need money to make these needed repairs. The money is set aside, a certain percentage of the budget is set aside every year in a contingency fund so that when it is needed the money is there.

I suspect that when school divisions have a contingency fund or an emergency fund or even if you call it a surplus, as the government is doing, that it is there for a reason, that it is there to be used in emergencies or for some special purpose for which it has been earmarked. But the government has decided that they are going to require them to spend the surpluses.

Another concern of school divisions, particularly School Division No. 1, is the funding for special needs students and special needs programs. It is very interesting and very disturbing to look at their statistics and to talk to their teachers and talk to their school trustees.

The most recent statistics that I saw which were presented by School Division No. 1 showed that 43 percent of all the special needs students in Manitoba are located in Winnipeg School No. 1.

There is a reason for that. First of all, it is a very large school division, and also it contains almost all of the inner city of Winnipeg. We know that in Winnipeg a lot of the high-needs population are concentrated in that area, and that has to do with socioeconomic conditions. We have a very high rate of unemployment, the very high rate of social assistance caseload, the very high rate of single parents. Many of those people, because public housing is located in the inner city, because lower-cost housing is located in the inner city, that is where those parents with children live.

So those children go to schools in Winnipeg School Division No. 1. Consequently, they have this statistic which says that 43 percent of all special needs children are located in Winnipeg No. 1 School Division. So this is a particular concern and a particular problem and a particular challenge for the trustees of Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

They have responded to that need, and they have responded to that challenge with what I believe to be very innovative programming for those students. I suspect that there are many, many more teacher's aides in classrooms in that school division. I know some of those individuals, and recently I was talking

to a teacher's aide about the high-need students in her classroom, and she was giving me the numbers of students in one classroom who are diagnosed as having alcohol fetal syndrome, and that is a very big concern. There seem to be many individuals who have been diagnosed as having fetal alcohol syndrome. Those children have many problems, and they need the extra resources and the extra teaching staff to assist them. So Winnipeg School Division has responded by putting staff and programs into place to meet the needs of that group.

Another special program they have that is very interesting is the adolescent parent centre where an old school building was completely taken over and renovated, beautifully renovated by School Division No. 1, for adolescent parents, and they bring their babies to school. It is quite fascinating to go on a tour of that school. I would recommend that everybody go on a tour of that school. It is very, very interesting because they have nurseries. They do not have a child-care centre like many schools do; they have a nursery. So there is a room full of babies in that school, and the students spend part of their day with their babies and the rest of the day in a classroom.

That is a particular need to which Winnipeg School Division No. 1 has been very responsive. I think they are doing an excellent job. I happen to know one of the staff there, and I think the staff are very caring and very understanding, and it is allowing adolescent parents to finish their high school education. Many of them in the past probably dropped out, but now, because of more concern by individuals and by the staff and the school division and parents and society, those students are encouraged to continue in school.

Now, there are not just one or two schools, but I believe there are many schools that have child-care centres in the school so that parents can bring preschool children with them to school, have them looked after and continue with their high school education and indeed graduate. It is good to see that that kind of response has been made and that the support systems are in place to encourage them to finish their high school education because we know, statistically, there is all kinds of information that shows that there is a very high correlation between level of education and level of income and that the more education you have, the higher your income. There is also a correlation between

education and employment, that the more education you have, the more likely you are to be employed.

* (1540)

In fact, it is very interesting to compare it by geographic regions. For example, in the city of Winnipeg, if you look at the parents' education in River Heights and you look at their income, there is a very high income area but also a highly educated population. If you look at a neighbourhood like William Whyte in the north end, part of which is in my constituency of Burrows, there is a very low educational attainment level and very low income level and also a very high unemployment level.

So those are some of the current concerns that teachers and educators and school trustees have particularly in the school division that Burrows constituency is located in. There are also other issues that educators and we as an opposition party are concerned about that are the result of the budgetary decisions of this government, not only in the Education department but in other departments as well.

For example, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has eliminated the student social assistance program, an excellent program which was helping students who could in most cases no longer live at home to continue their education. The Minister of Family Services has repeatedly said, well, this was the only one in Canada, the only province that had a student social assistance program, as if that was some sort of rationale for eliminating it, I think the rationale being that he and his cabinet thought that it was okay to be the only province and therefore dropping down to the lowest common denominator. I think that is a very fallacious argument.

If you have the only program in Canada and it is a good program, why not keep it? This is creating a huge crisis and a huge problem for approximately 1,100 students, because the Minister of Family Services is saying, well, some of them can go home. Well, some of them may be able to go home but others cannot, because they have been abused. They have been physically or sexually abused. That is why they have left home, so we know that those students cannot go home and are not going to go home and, if they do, they are at risk.

The minister has acknowledged, I believe, that they can apply for city welfare. Well, yes, they can apply for City of Winnipeg or municipal welfare. The

problem is that the rules are that when you are on municipal welfare you have to be looking for work and you have to be available for work. You cannot be a full-time student during the day and be looking for work. You cannot be a full-time student during the day and be available for work by a telephone or available to go to a job. So those students are probably going to drop out of the educational system.

The minister suggests that they should get a part-time job. Well, some of them probably will get a part-time job, but will they be able to earn enough money from a part-time job to support themselves, to both live and go to school? I think that is doubtful.

First of all, there is a dearth of part-time jobs. Secondly, most part-time jobs pay very low wages, probably minimum wage. It is unlikely that a high school student is going to get either enough hours or enough part-time jobs in order to support themselves so that they can continue in school. I think it is an unrealistic expectation by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

The Minister of Family Services also made changes in the child daycare area which I believe are going to have negative impacts on students' ability to complete school. For example, the daily fees have been increased by \$1.40 a day for child care. This is of concern to parents who are saying that they cannot afford that increase, especially parents on social assistance. So they are going to say, well, if I cannot afford this, I am going to have to take my child out of child care. Many of those parents are either in high school or university or a community college or a business college and they are going to drop out of school.

This is jeopardizing their future. It is jeopardizing their chances to get a better education. It is jeopardizing their chances to get a better job. It is jeopardizing their chances to have a higher income. Some believe this decision by this Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) is one that is going to be detrimental to securing an education for those parents who have children in child care who cannot afford the \$1.40-a-day increase.

The other policy of the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) that we and many parents in the child-care system are very concerned about is changing the number of weeks of paid or subsidized child care in order to find employment, which is being reduced from eight weeks a year to two weeks

a year. I have been getting lots of phone calls about this.

I presume that many other members are getting phone calls about it. I hope that they are getting phone calls from the staff and the board members and the parents of child-care centres in their constituency, because these parents are very upset and legitimately so. They are saying to us, we do not think we can find a job in two weeks. The result is, we believe, that they are either not going to be able to get employment, because they will not have child care or they will not be able to return to university, because they do not have child care.

Child care is one of the most important factors in women entering the paid labour force. I think that is one of the reasons why our caucus has been saying that the policies of this government discriminate against women because many of these policies impact more negatively on women than on men in our society, and this is another example. In fact, it has been all women who have been phoning me about the changes to child care. I hope there are some single-parent men who have children in child care, but I have not had any phone calls from them.

The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has still not answered our questions adequately about the difference between spaces and cases, but we will have a chance to ask him that in Family Services Estimates in a day or two, either on Thursday of this week or Monday next week or the week after, whenever we get to the child care section of his budget. We believe that far more than 400 children are going to be affected by capping the number of spaces.

The minister is decreasing the number of spaces from 10,000 to 9,600 and in their original press release suggested that 400 spaces would be lost, but now we have correspondence from the minister's office, the child daycare office, going out to family daycare centres and to parents talking about the specifics of his policy, and they are no longer using the word "space." They are using the word "case."

The way it has been explained to me by the staff at the Manitoba Child Care Association and by the Family Day Care Association and by parents who operate family child-care centres, they are telling me that in the past, two or three children filled one space because often there were two or three children who were part time and they occupied one space, but in

the future, that is no longer going to be true. It is going to be on a case-by-case basis.

So I have repeatedly asked the minister, does this mean that there might be 800 or 1,000 children who no longer have access to child care? The minister has not answered my question adequately, but I am looking forward to asking more detailed questions in Family Services Estimates. Once again, the point that I am making is that this is a policy of this government which is adversely affecting the opportunities for parents to get education and, in particular, parents with children.

Another current issue which we really do not know where the government is going on has to do with school boundaries. A trustee that I talked to in a division other than the one that I am in says that they are very concerned that this government still plans to change the boundaries in the city of Winnipeg. What they fear is that the minister will remove all the boundaries and make one large school division out of the whole city.

The trustee is very concerned about the implications of that policy. I share those concerns because the result would be, for example, that you may have—what?—eight or 10 trustees or seven or nine trustees representing the whole city. You might even have city-wide districts for those people to run in, and then it would be a matter of those people who had the most money for advertising would have the best chance of getting elected or re-elected in a city-wide school division.

That would totally change the nature of being a trustee in the city of Winnipeg. They would probably be full-time people, which would not be bad in and of itself, but you would no longer have parents or employed people who were doing this, being school trustees, on a part-time basis. You would no longer, I think, have low-income people running for office. The changes would be quite similar to this government's downsizing of City Council from 29 members to 15 members, which meant that the cost to people for getting elected was greatly increased.

We hope that this government and this Minister of Education do not change the boundaries to make one school division in the city of Winnipeg, but we do not know what they are contemplating in that area. We hope that it is an idea that they have abandoned.

We have also been very concerned about a number of cuts in the budget of the Department of

Education, the cut of speech pathologists, the child psychologists and other clinicians. These people provided services to special needs children, and we believe that those needs are not going to be as fully met, if met at all, like they were in the past.

(1550)

Today we have a very interesting story in the Free Press with the headline, Province Unveils Education Report. I am looking forward to reading the report, but the summary is interesting. It says that there were 106 recommendations in the report, that the task force cost \$175,000, and there were 1,172 public submissions.

The story in the Free Press today is by Paul Samyn, and some of the recommendations are summarized here, and they are quite interesting. The ones that I see here I would have to say that I agree with most of them. So we will be looking forward to seeing the minister implement these recommendations over the coming months and the coming years, although we do not want to give them too many years.

The first one that is highlighted in the newspaper report is that the welfare of children is of paramount importance. I think that is kind of a universal statement that all of us could agree with. There must be greater consultation with the public and others with a stake in children's education, and certainly consulting with more people is something that probably everyone can agree with—nothing contentious there.

The next one is that the right to a basic education be defined and guaranteed to all students. I think that is another good recommendation. I think it is quite often helpful to have definitions which can become standards by which you can judge whether or not people are obtaining an adequate education, and perhaps guaranteeing the right to an education may give people certain rights that they can insist on that they may not have now.

The next one I would like to comment on is that children in home schooling receive accredited diplomas if they meet accepted standards. Last Friday I was at a conference. In fact, it was a rather interesting experience because the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) and I were both there and there was no one there from the government.

The people were quite surprised that the government caucus was not represented. In fact, it was a pretty Tory-blue audience, and I think they

were quite disappointed that nobody was there from the government. They were quite surprised that two people were there from the NDP caucus. So that was an interesting experience.

I happened to talk to a parent who is involved in home education, and she was pointing out that they get—I wish I could remember this—either minimal or no support from the Department of Education. I think she mentioned that there is no consultant any more for home education. I should maybe ask the minister if that is accurate or not. But they think that there could be a lot more resources provided to parents of home education. I cannot remember the numbers. I think there are something like 700 children who are involved in home education.

The next one is French Immersion programs be offered where there is sufficient demand. I am rather surprised to see that recommendation. I did not know that was not the case now. I know that in some school divisions like Winnipeg School Division No. 1, any heritage language program must be offered if the parents come forward and if the children are registered. If there is a certain minimum number met, then the school division must provide the program, and in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, I believe it is 18 children.

That is why we have the English-Ukrainian bilingual program, and several other bilingual programs because where there are a sufficient number of students the program must be provided, and the English-Ukrainian bilingual program is the program that my children both graduated from at Ralph Brown School. They attended the bilingual program from kindergarten to Grade 6. There have been tests done of those students to see whether it is an advantage or a disadvantage or maybe even neutral to be enrolled in a bilingual education program, and what the studies of those students have shown, what the testing of those students has shown is that those students have done as well or better than students in a unilingual English milieu. In fact, I think they probably get a better education because their class size is smaller. They very seldom have had more than 18 students in a class, and in many cases they have had to double up and have two grades in one room. That does not seem to have hurt the performance of those students.

This recommendation that French Immersion programs be offered where there is sufficient demand is really no different than the policy of school divisions like Winnipeg No. 1, which says that

parents can request a bilingual program if the numbers warrant it. Perhaps the thing that is different about this recommendation is that if the minister acts on it, it could be available everywhere in the province of Manitoba. It could be a requirement that all school divisions must offer a French Immersion program where the student numbers warrant it. I would like to read the report and get more detail on this and the other recommendations and see why they are being recommended as well as the actual recommendation itself.

The next recommendation highlighted in the newspaper article is that aboriginal language programs be offered where there is sufficient demand. I think that is an excellent recommendation because what we are discovering is that, when appropriate cultural services and programs are being provided, it is very beneficial to those students, and when people have pride in their status, pride in their ancestry, pride in who they are, that is very helpful to their self-esteem, to their learning and to their finishing education.

That is why some school divisions have already responded to this with special programs, for example, Winnipeg School Division No. 1 has an all-aboriginal high school known as Children of the Earth High School. In September they will be establishing the first elementary all-aboriginal school in the city of Winnipeg, so students will be able to go from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in classes entirely made up of aboriginal students. I think that is a good thing.

I know that it has made a big difference in rural communities. For example, my colleague and friend Rev. Stan McKay says that at Fisher River, his home community, they gradually increased the grade levels every year of elementary school and high school on the Fisher River Reserve, and that when the students could take their entire schooling up to Grade 12, that the first year that there were graduates from Grade 12, there were more students graduated in that one year than in the entire history of the reserve, that is students graduating with a Grade 12 diploma.

It obviously made a big difference to those students to be able to go to school with their classmates from the reserve on the reserve, instead of being bussed off. When they were bussed off, the dropout rate was much, much higher. I suspect that we are going to see that kind of effect in the

inner city of Winnipeg, that the success rate of students from Children of the Earth will be much, much higher in terms of graduating from high school, in terms of getting jobs, in terms of going to Red River College, in terms of going to university. I already know that many of their students from their first graduating class have gone to university.

This recommendation specifically refers to aboriginal languages. I think that is a good idea as well, because as they say in the Ukrainian community, language is the key to culture. Culture is very, very important to people, and I believe if aboriginal people have their language, if they are able to retain their language, it will help them to retain their culture.

*(1600)

That is not just something that I personally believe, but that is what the leaders in the aboriginal community are saying, is that we must preserve our languages in order to preserve our cultures. We know that many aboriginal languages are in danger of dying in Canada. With that, they believe that their cultures will die. I think this is a good recommendation that they be encouraged and allowed to have schooling in aboriginal languages.

The next recommendation says: Students have the right to be treated fairly and with respect; students have a responsibility to respect school property and comply with behaviour and dress codes. That would seem to be self-evident. I think everyone can agree with that statement. I think it is a balanced statement, because not only do people have rights but people have responsibilities. I think wherever there are rights there should be and there are responsibilities.

That is certainly true in many pieces of legislation, for example, The Residential Tenancies Act, formerly, the preceding act, The Landlord and Tenants Act. It talks about tenants' rights. It also talks about tenants' responsibilities. The act talks about landlords' rights, but it also talks about landlords' responsibilities. So I think it is good.

It may even go into a code of ethics or a code of standards or some sort of code that could even be publicly posted in every school in the province saying, these are students' rights, and list those rights. You could have a parallel that said, these are students' responsibilities. A couple of them are actually spelled out. Students have the right to be treated fairly and with respect. Students have a

responsibility to respect school property and comply with behaviour and dress codes.

I am not sure about the dress codes. I think probably respecting school property is reasonable. I think you get into a problem when you try to enforce dress codes. Certainly it has created lots of problems in the past.

I remember something that happened to me when I was in Grade 13 in Ontario. In 1967, I decided to grow a beard as a centennial project. I started growing it at the beginning of the year, and the principal told me to go home and shave at noon hour. In the summer I went to summer school and the same thing happened. The principal of summer school sent me home to shave. We were not allowed to have beards in the school. Perhaps in 1967 schools were a little more authoritarian than they are now. I think it would be probably much more difficult to impose a rule such as not allowing beards in school these days.

I personally would have an objection to a dress code, unless of course it is, for example, a private school that wants to have a dress code. I have no objection to a private school doing that.

The next recommendation is: Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children are fed, clothed and sheltered to the best of their abilities and to teach them basic values. I agree that parents have this responsibility. I am not sure how the education system goes about ensuring that they meet this responsibility. Certainly, this has been a very contentious area in the past. For example, when parents and people in the community have said, we need a breakfast program in the school because children are coming to school without having breakfast and they are fainting. They are not learning because they do not have food in their stomachs. Educators and many others have said, let us provide a breakfast program, and that has happened. We have many, many schools in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 with breakfast programs.

But the people who argued against it have said, it is not the school's responsibility, it is not the educator's responsibility to feed children at school. It is the parents' responsibility to feed children at home. I think there is some validity to that argument. It is a very, very difficult balancing act to decide which you are going to do: Insist that the parents exercise their responsibility; but when they

do not, you have a problem at school with kids who have not had breakfast and they do not learn and they are not achieving like they should. Then you have to decide which is better. What are you going to do?

Then the second part of it is to teach them basic values. Well, I think all of us could speak for 40 minutes on what we think are basic values and we would probably get 56 different views, and if you asked the Speaker privately, you would get 57 different views. I do not think it would necessarily break down on party lines. I do not think you would get consensus in the Conservative caucus as to what basic values are, and I do not think you would get consensus in the NDP caucus or the Liberal caucus, although it might be a lot easier in the Liberal caucus to get a consensus from seven people than it would be in larger caucuses.

But I think it would be impossible. You could never get a consensus either amongst political parties, or amongst educators, or amongst school trustees, or even students, as to what basic values are. So I think that is an impossible task to say that parents—well, I guess, if it is parents teaching basic values, yes, I agree parents should teach basic values, but I do not think you will ever get agreement as to what those basic values are.

The last recommendation that is highlighted here is that the government should grant teachers recognition as a profession through a separate act. Now, I think there are problems with every organization coming forward and wanting an act of the Legislature to recognize their profession, so that is something that I would withhold judgment on. Besides which, we have not had a chance to read the report or caucus it yet, so it is probably better that I do not say anything about whether we agree or disagree with that recommendation.

In the story itself, it says that the report says, parents should have access to records and files on their children as well as full partnership in decision making regarding educational programs being considered for their children. Well, I think that having access to records on file is a good idea, but I think it raises a number of problems of confidentiality, for a start, and I would like to read the full recommendation and the rationale for it. Then it says: The parents should be full partners in decision making regarding educational programs.

I think that is a good idea; however, parents already have lots of opportunities and do not exercise them to the extent that they could. For example, I have been on the parent council at Ralph Brown School, and I have been on the parent council at Isaac Newton School. Currently, I attend meetings at Isaac Newton School. I currently attend meetings at Sisler High School, and very, very few parents attend those meetings. I would say that the average attendance at Isaac Newton School parent council is eight or 10 people.

In fact, it used to be much higher when it was the Community Improvement Program Committee and they used to bring in food. They used to bring in pizza. We used to have Vietnamese food; we used to have Ukrainian food. At every meeting, we had a different kind of food, and the attendance was wonderful. It is amazing what happens when you provide food. In fact, when you provide food at our caucus meetings, you get a much better attendance as well, one of the advantages of having a Monday night caucus meeting as opposed to Wednesday mornings. Maybe meeting on Wednesday morning is getting us ready for cabinet. However, I am getting off track. I am also attending meetings at Sisler High School. Sisler High School has, I think, about 1,200 students. At parent council meetings we get maybe six to 12 parents, a pretty pathetic turnout of parents, very disappointing for teachers and the principal. So I think there are already lots of opportunities for parents to be involved as partners.

I think if parents came out in large numbers and if they sat on committees and if they really wanted to get involved, the opportunity is already there, but many parents do not take advantage of that opportunity, and that is disappointing. If they did, I think they could have a much greater influence in the education of their children. I think schools would welcome that. I think most schools are open to that and, in fact, changes are being made in that area.

For example, the next paragraph says there is also a call for parents to have a role in a school advisory committee that would provide advice to the principal and the school board. Well, I have been nominated by two schools to be on those school advisory committees. I was nominated at Isaac Newton School to attend the St. Johns advisory committee, and I have been to some of their meetings. I was nominated at Sisler High School parent council to be on the Sisler-Rosser advisory

committee and attend their meetings, and I have done that. So some school boards are already moving to implement this recommendation.

In conclusion, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are opposed to the main part of this bill which we believe takes away autonomy from school divisions and local decision making from local school divisions. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Deputy Speaker, I hesitated a minute to rise there to speak to this bill. I did assume that perhaps one of the government members might want to defend what they had put on record. I think we have only had one speaker on this bill so far from the government side and that is very disappointing for a bill which in fact changes the direction of political responsibility in Manitoba. One would have expected that out-of-how many members are there over there?

An Honourable Member: Oh, about 29.

Ms. Friesen: -29 members, that there might be one who might be prepared to stand up and put on record their support for this bill, because it is a very unusual bill, Madam Deputy Speaker. One would have expected to see from the government perhaps half a dozen speakers. Perhaps even every member of that side of the House would have liked to have put their position on record, because in every one of their constituencies they are certainly going to feel the impact of the consequences of this bill, not just in the changes in funding that it implies for school boards, but also in the changes in political direction and responsibility that this government is making in all parts of Manitoba.

* (1610)

Those members across the way who have children in school or grandchildren in school, I would have expected would have been delighted to hear their defence of this bill. One often hears them call from their seat in sometimes not quite polite terms, but on this particular bill they believe that it is what the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) would call a tax. What did you call it, a tax saver's bill? Madam Deputy Speaker, if that is the level of political argument on that side of the House in support of this bill, I think the Tory party has sunk perhaps even a little lower than I had anticipated.

So the lack of political support by the government for this bill I think is very, very disturbing. It is one

that affects every area of Manitoba and the absence of any discussion from the government apart from the minister is I think perhaps somewhat of a disregard for the importance and significance of this House itself.

This particular bill, Madam Deputy Speaker, sets a new direction in Manitoba. It permits or, shall we say, it restrains and constrains local school boards from raising more than a certain amount of money, percentage, in taxes for their local schools, yet one of the hallmarks of prairie Canada, one of the things that we inherited from Ontario in our establishment of school boards and school trustees is in fact the principle of local tax raising for the education of local children. The creation of school boards, very early in the history of every community across western Canada, I think, is an important element of the local democracy that most prairie Canadians would point to with some pride.

But this government has taken local democracy in another direction. It has simply said to local school boards, who for generations now have taken the responsibility for raising school monies and for setting the standards and directing the schools in their area, what this government is doing is essentially reversing that and suggesting and implying that school boards in fact should no longer have that kind of authority, that it is no longer their responsibility to decide upon what the needs of their particular local area are and that it is the needs, Madam Deputy Speaker, of a local area which all those trustees over the generations have been elected to determine and to raise taxes on that behalf. They are very local, very close to the taxpayer and hence directly accountable to the taxpayer.

Who is going to be accountable in this case? The school boards have a direction, another autocratic decision by this particular government, that they will not be able to allow taxes to rise beyond a certain amount no matter what the local needs of that school are, no matter what the parents of that district tell them, no matter what their electors tell them. The limitations upon local autonomy, I think, are sending Manitoba political accountability into a different direction.

I am not sure that when people elected this government, they counted upon this kind of autocratic decision from a central government, but that has happened in so many areas of this government, increasing centralization and

increasingly taking authority and accountability out of the hands of local people.

School trustees, I think, have a very special place in Canadian history and perhaps in Canadian mythology in the sense of icons. I remember visiting the art gallery Prince Edward Island at the Prince of Wales Centre I think about a year ago and seeing for the first time in the original a painting which I had often used in fact in teaching. It is a picture of school trustees. It is a very famous one and I think probably found its way into many textbooks in the 1930s.

It is a picture of a group of parents, male in this case, of course—it is a 19th Century painting—and it is one that shows the school trustees as farmers, as local people and as wrestling with the very basic decisions that are at the heart of a community. The teacher is a young woman, and there is obviously a tension in the painting between the teacher and the school trustees. That tension between teachers and trustees that is represented in that painting is one that we find in Canadian literature, as well, if you know the books of the, I think it was the 1930s, by Martha Ostenso, *As the Geese Fly*. There too—or Wallace Stegner or Sinclair Ross, some of the great writers of prairie Canada—the teacher, the school trustee, the school board certainly always figure as part of the very elemental parts of every town and village across western Canada. It is there in the literature, it is there in our icons of painting, and it is there I think in the experience of anyone who has lived, not just obviously in small towns, but what grew to become the major cities of western Canada as well, a basic element of democracy and accountability that this government has turned on its head.

It has been historically an area for very active politics and an area where many people have been able to become involved as trustees where they have made their contribution to their communities in a very direct way.

I do not know how many members of this House began their political life as school trustees, but certainly I am sure there are a number of them. Right across Canada, in general one would find that, that it is the basic level of political involvement for so many people, particularly for women. In the late '70s and '80s when women did become more active in politics and were offered opportunities in many political parties, both the parties themselves looked to school boards and to local municipalities, but

primarily to school boards, I think for people who had made political contributions.

Similarly, women themselves, finding an opportunity that is close to home about an activity in the area in which they had very close involvement, the education of their children, they found it the most immediate level of political culture. Yet here again we see a government which is now undermining the commitment of those people who not only historically, but in our present day, make enormous sacrifices and are struggling every day with the difficulties that they face with reduced budgets from this government, with the increasing difficulties they are finding in meeting the demands of families as they try to find a future for their children. And they pin their hopes for that future on education.

So the trustees are I think at the forefront, the cutting edge, if you want to use the current jargon, of a community's hopes for its future. Their opportunity to be accountable, their responsibility to those local parents has been undermined with one stroke of this government—a government which, I will repeat, Madam Deputy Speaker, is not prepared to get up and defend this bill.

One minister has spoken on this bill, and to my knowledge no one else has spoken on it—an important bill which reverses the political accountability of Manitobans and which not one of them will get up and speak on.

I have spoken of the role of school trustees and the importance of the task which they undertake, the fact that they do it, in many cases, for no remuneration or for very little remuneration, and that they face the problems in a microcosm that our province is facing generally. To undercut those people and those contributions, I think, is very misguided of this government and certainly something which I think they will come to regret, because when we look at our public schools we are looking at one of the institutions which binds us together.

We are not a country which has a state religion. We are not a country which has many symbols that do bind us together. In fact, one of the symbols which has been said to bind us together in the past has been the monarchy. I was most interested to find the recent report of the minister makes the singing of God Save the Queen optional. O Canada is mandatory, but now God Save the Queen, if this paper is accepted, will be optional.

* (1620)

It is interesting, because I certainly look forward to the comments of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) on this, who often at least seems to me to be a very strong monarchist. It is one of the services that the monarchy has provided, perhaps not in recent weeks, but certainly in a historic framework, that symbol of unity. It is interesting to see yet another symbol of unity perhaps undermined in that particular report. I do not know whether that is the intention of the committee or not or whether the government will particularly accept that account.

It is interesting. I know in my own classes when I ask my students, what is our form of government, first of all they simply do not understand that we are, in fact, a monarchical society. When they finally are shown the Queen on a dollar bill or they are shown the Queen on a coin and accept that there are some principles of monarchical government, they are actually quite astounded by it. So it is not perhaps that that committee is out of step with the times, but it is one of those symbols of unity which will I think likely continue to be eroded.

In those circumstances, Madam Deputy Speaker, the importance of the public schools as a meeting ground, as a place where a common culture is transmitted to the next generation, that role becomes increasingly significant. The pressure upon trustees, particularly in the inner city, I think, where so many new migrants, new Canadians, are centred, the role of the public schools there is increasingly important.

Here we are again. We see a government which is extremely shortsighted and which really has only one solution to anything and that is to cut, to erode local responsibility and to erode the accountability of school trustees. I regret that, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I think this government will come to regret it as well.

Schools are one of the basic investments of any community. I wish that we had some success in persuading this government that education is not a drain on the provincial coffers, but that it is an investment, an investment in the future. The government is all too quick with its slogans, its references and rhetorical flourishes to the argument that education is the key that opens the future.

When it comes down to looking at the record of this government in education, there really is only

one key to understanding their response. That is simply that they regard education and public education in particular as a drain upon the public treasury. That is the way they have treated it.

This bill is simply one more in a long series of cuts and slashes and undermining that the public school system has suffered since this government took office.

Education is the basic investment of any community. It has always been seen as that, whether it was those school trustees who are portrayed in that 19th Century portrait or the ones who are spoken of in the literature of Prairie Canada.

They have always viewed it as the key to, first of all, the maintenance of their own community and the survival of those communities across western Canada and across Manitoba, those who are now particularly facing very severe economic conditions.

The key to the survival of their future is the maintenance of their children in that community, and the key to that in a knowledge-based economy is increasingly going to be the kind of education which they can provide.

So a school trustee now, who faces the year-by-year cuts of this government and then is prevented from raising in a particular year, over a number of years, the amount of money that is required, that a community might agree is required, that a community might want to raise money for and the community might want to see their education system, in spite of what is happening in the halls of the Tory party, a community might want to see that as investment, but in fact they are prevented from doing so by this bill. So the very decisions which trustees have made year after year, generation after generation, are now being turned on their head by this particular government.

Education is one of those areas where a community can come together and pool their resources as they did in the past to hire teachers, to provide common facilities, eventually to provide curriculums that were common across the province, to provide for inspection and monitoring, to provide the special services for students in special education, or increasingly in Manitoba, to provide the immersion programs, the language programs which I think we are justly proud of and in some cases justly famous for, and which are all being eroded by the lack of commitment to public education of this particular government.

That pooling of community resources is something which is now, which makes, of course, tremendous economic sense. No parent, well, very few parents, should I say, are really able to educate their children on their own up to the Grade 12 level. Certainly home schooling is possible for some parents in some communities up to certain ages, but certainly I personally know very few parents who could educate their children up to the Grade 12 level, at least to their own satisfaction.

So the pooling of resources, I think, is an important one. The creation of curriculum, the creation of levels of advancement in education, the pooling of those community resources which have given us a Department of Education, which have given us local schools, which have given us specialized schools and specialized programs, all of those things make enormous sense, and that is what public investment is about. That is what the public sector is about, but this is a government which is committed to taking away the public sector from Manitobans.

It is not committed to government. It is not committed to the public sector, and the hallmark of this government in the end will be its attack on the public sector, whether it is the attack on public sector wages, whether it is the selling off of Data Services, whether it is the selling off of the Queen's Printer, whether it is the tipping of the balance to private education, the underfunding and the cuts and the diminution of the responsibilities of school trustees. All of these speak consistently to a government which is not interested in the public sector and which in fact wants to take away from the public sector.

I would go on, Madam Deputy Speaker, to defend the importance of the public sector, particularly in a province like Manitoba. The public sector is where we all find equality, not just in schools, but in health care, when we go to the library, when we go to the museum or the gallery in the days when they used to be accessible to people in Manitoba, or the zoo before a charge was in place. The public sector is where people are equal no matter what their income. They go to the same school. They access or have access to the same kind of community and public services. In a country and in a province which is becoming increasingly unequal in wealth and in property, those public services, the equality that they retain for the large number of Manitobans is essential to maintain and support and to speak out in favour of.

* (1630)

I would love to hear the defence of this government on this bill, one speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, for a bill which reverses the trend of generations of Manitoba history and local accountability. One speaker, that is all they think about it. That is the only effort they are going to put into defending this bill.

It is totally inadequate. It bespeaks very much of the attack on the public sector that they have made and continue to make.

An Honourable Member: Let us see the senator get up and defend it.

Ms. Friesen: Well, that is true. We do have a potential senator in our midst, do we not? I thought we had 29 potential senators, do we not? I mean, you are all waiting for the phone, are you not? How many of you are there? [interjection] Thirty. Well, I wonder who I was not counting?

Capping the tax or capping the responsibility, really, which is what they are doing, of school trustees is I think an area that bears a great deal of examination. I would again wish that all of those potential senators on the other side of the House would get up and speak on this bill. It would make most instructive reading, even listening. I would be prepared, I think, to certainly sit and listen to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) defend this bill, or any of the other potential senators.

Put some effort into defending this bill. Put some effort into telling us why you constantly attack the public sector and why you are prepared to reverse the whole political accountability of Manitoba.

It is a large and significant shift. I think one of the areas that many of my colleagues have spoken on is the unfairness with which this can and will be applied. It is unfairly applied, because there have been some school boards, those who have had perhaps better resources than others, those who have managed to be fiscally conservative in the last few years.

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

Those people, because they are starting from a lower base, because they have already made the kind of cuts in education that this government welcomes, that this government wants to see from them. those people, because there is now a

percentage cap on the amount of extra funds that can be raised, are going to be penalized.

So school boards who have already made those drastic cuts, who have already, I think, in their own minds contributed to the decline in the quality of education in Manitoba, who have cut the school trips to the museum, who have cut perhaps the trips, the expedition to the Legislature, who perhaps no longer have physical education as often as they did or should, who perhaps no longer have the kind of specialists in the school that they need and have had in the past, those kinds of school boards, or those school boards who have already made those decisions, are now going to be doubly penalized.

Because they start from the lower base, they are going to be faced with making even more stringent cuts. Again, we will see that the equality of education across Manitoba, something which I think every government should be concerned about and which every government should be working to, will be further eroded.

That should be, I think, of great concern to all Manitoba MLAs. We have a distribution of population and a distribution of wealth in this province which is very unequal. It is one of the primary roles of the provincial government, in fact, to try and balance in so many areas the inequalities which exist in population, the distribution of population, and in the distribution of wealth amongst that population, and to try and find some balance, to try and find the best service that they can for every Manitoban. I think that the unfair way in which this bill will be applied, or has been applied, to school divisions will result in greater inequalities across Manitoba.

I cannot believe that this is something which any government and any MLA in this Chamber would welcome. So that is why it puzzles me, Mr. Acting Speaker, that there is no defence, that there is no explanation, that there is no discussion from all of those potential senators on the other side of this House for this particular bill.

I have met, Mr. Acting Speaker, with some of these school boards, and in particular the school board representing part of Springfield, the Transcona school board, and I know that the MLA, my colleague from Transcona, has spoken at length on this, and I do recommend his speech to many members in this House because it is a speech which details quite clearly the difficulties that particular

division is going to face. They are one of the divisions which might indeed be faced with having to return money to their electors at a time when their electors and they themselves know that education needs every penny that it can get.

What a peculiar and what a terrible situation to place those school trustees in, they who are accountable to those local electors, they who are accountable to parents who have children with special needs in their schools. They are accountable to the parents and the families with children in bilingual education, whether it is French, or in the case of Transcona also a very significant Ukrainian immersion program that is run.

This is a school division which has made great headway and has put a great deal of attention for a long period of time now into special needs education. In fact, they are one of the school divisions which has blazed a trail in that area. And that is expensive. Children need extra attention. There are often adjustments which need to be made to buildings. There is a question of the time and of the provision of teacher aides, of changes that might need to be made to curriculum, and a greater need of conferences on the part of teachers to ensure that the needs of both the class and the child themselves are being met.

To put a school division and to put those school trustees in a position where they cannot be accountable to the parents of those children seems to me, again, a very, very unfortunate and a reversal of everything that we thought educational responsibility stood for in Manitoba.

I emphasize again, no speeches from the other side of the House, no members prepared to stand up and defend it. One would expect at least the member opposite, the Minister of Agriculture, the MLA for Springfield (Mr. Findlay), in whose riding part of the Transcona School Division falls, would at least be prepared to get up and to say what the implications of this are for his own constituency. I think that would be one of the basic responsibilities of an MLA and I think we are all eagerly awaiting—I will not say that he is not going to do it. All I can say is that I have not heard it so far. I look forward to a speech from the member for Springfield on this particular bill.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think, if we are to look at the overall argument behind this bill, I would say that what it is doing is limiting the ability of trustees,

parents and teachers to meet the needs of their own children. It is, in that sense, another tip in the balance against public education.

What we have seen from this government is a whole series of cuts to public education. Whether we are looking at the post-secondary level or the community colleges, the cuts that we have seen there over the last three years are cuts to public education, education which is the most easily accessible in financial terms to Manitoba's young people.

We have also seen cuts to public education at the provision of monies for people on student social allowance; one of the most, I think, still appalling and unbelievable cuts that I have seen from this particular government, to take students who were in school, wanted to be in school, were making a commitment to finish their high school education in a province which, by the minister's own admission, has a dropout rate of 27 percent, these were the students who were in school, who wanted to complete their education, and they have essentially been shown the door.

There was no golden key for them to open the doors to economic and educational opportunity. What they got was a key which locked the doors to them for educational opportunity, the very people who had made the effort and were struggling to complete their education, in some cases against a great deal of odds.

To take that particular group, those 1,200 or 1,300 people and to essentially throw them onto welfare or onto the street, because on welfare they will not have the opportunity to go to school, I think, is one of the most appalling decisions that even this particular government has made.

So tipping the balance against public education and in favour of private education, that is where this government is leading. Their one activity, their one innovation in education overall, other than cut, other than that one tool that they have got in their tool kit, their only innovation, has been to the Workforce 2000 program.

* (1640)

Whereas I have said before, Mr. Acting Speaker, there may indeed be training merit in some of those aspects of the Workforce 2000 program, it is, nonetheless, a private training program which is not open to all, which creates no new jobs and which is not accountable to any particular elected body

except very indirectly, and we will see what kind of questions the minister is prepared to answer on that when we get to Estimates.

But it is certainly not one where we have any sense of who is being selected within these companies for training, whether it is management or whether it is labour, how many women are being selected by management for these particular training programs. All of this may, indeed, in certain companies, be dealt with very equitably. That is quite possible. But we do not know because it is private.

The only new investment of this government in education has been the investment of those public monies, essentially, into a privatized educational product.

An Honourable Member: And I take it you are not in favour of it?

Ms. Friesen: Well, if the senator had been listening, the senator would have said, as I have said many times, there may indeed be training merit in Workforce 2000. I have said that many times. The issue is that it is private—privately chosen, privately selected, no accountability. So I think those are points that he might want to take into account.

What we are seeing, of course, and the case that I am making, is that not only is this government tipping the balance against public education, but it is tipping the other side of the scales in favour of private education, and Workforce 2000 is one example of that. Similarly, of course, people have spoken on many occasions on the increase and the continued increase in funding and the expectations of funding for private schools in Manitoba.

Although I noticed that the minister's new report, which he may or may not accept, does want to use the term "independent schools." I think probably "private schools" is a much more accurate term that we should be looking at. Independent schools, one would assume, were schools which were independent of government money, and that clearly is not the case in Manitoba. What we have are schools which are going to increasingly depend upon public funds for education which is privately controlled and privately selected.

Again, Mr. Acting Speaker, this is not a criticism of the kind of education which goes on in those schools. We have very little way of knowing about the level of education that does go on in those schools. Some of them, I am sure, are—what would

I say? I think the basic point is that really that we do not know that they are private. They are run by private boards. They hire their teachers privately, and they follow, to a large extent, the provincial curriculum. That, I think, is another area where private schools do in fact depend upon the public system for the provision of curriculum, in many cases, for the training of teachers. They are trained by the public expense in Manitoba, and the curriculum, of course, is developed at the public expense as well.

But they are, first and foremost, private schools, and they do want to remain that way. I do not think there is any doubt about that. The importance of private schooling is of course in the selection of the students and in the nature of the ambience of the school, whether it be religious or whether it be of a different kind. These are indeed private schools and want to remain so.

So I am surprised at the report that the minister has received, recommending that change from "private" to "independent." I am not sure that it really will be an accurate description of the kind of schools which are being increasingly funded by this government.

They are, I think, being funded, Mr. Acting Speaker, at the expense of the public schools, and that is what concerns me most, because the main concern, it seems to me, of every government in Manitoba should be the maintenance of high-quality public education in Manitoba. The private schools have the option of increasing their fees; that is their choice. They are private schools. They do charge fees, and they are able to be selective in whom they accept into their schools. That is the way in which they want to remain.

But, Mr. Acting Speaker, school boards are now being prevented from having that same opportunity, and so the balance is again being tipped in favour of the private schools who can continue to raise fees from parents, not all of whom are wealthy—I quite accept that. In some schools, they are; in some schools, they are not. But the option to raise fees and hence to have exclusion and selection on a different basis than perhaps some of them have been accustomed to is an option which is open to them. And the option of expanding their facilities, of improving their facilities, of hiring more teachers, of having a better ratio than is there in the public schools, all of that is contributing to yet another tipping of the balance in favour of private schools.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there does come a point when the government will have done that so often and to such an extent that in fact private schools will be more and more attractive to a larger section of the population, and that may indeed be the way in which this government wants to go. That is a political decision and it is the one they are making. I personally believe that this is an abdication of responsibility by government. Only government speaks for the public schools, and they should do so loudly and strongly.

I believe we have had a good public education system in Manitoba. I have always maintained—my two sons both went through the public schools of Manitoba. I think that their education was far better than mine, but what I am very saddened to see is that the kind of opportunities that my sons had—one of them is still in school—in terms of language development, of curriculum, of extra activities, of very, very dedicated teachers which they have had throughout their high school and elementary school careers—I am saddened to see that students coming into the public school system now will see not nearly as much of the kinds of advantages that they have had. They will not see the kinds of teachers perhaps that my sons had the opportunity to hear.

* (1650)

They are going to have teachers who are not going to have professional development days, for example. This government thinks so little of education that it is prepared to say to teachers, no professional development days, when every expert, it seems to me, that I have read recently, says that the one thing we must be doing is training and retraining our teachers. They are under such enormous pressures these days that you simply cannot expect, and should not—we would not want to expect teachers who graduated 10 or 15 years ago to be in the classroom without any kind of extra training, and teachers do not want it either.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

So I think the kind of teachers that this government is going to lead us to are teachers who are facing larger classes and who are under pressure, who are undervalued by this government, and it will be in the end a different kind of public education system than we have seen over—

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

Is it the will of the House to call it five o'clock?
[agreed]

The hour being 5 p.m.—wait a minute here. We were doing which one? As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), and also will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). Is that right? That is all agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS
PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS
Res. 18—Angela Chalmers

Mr. Bob Rose (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Portage (Mr. Pallister), that

WHEREAS Angela Chalmers of Brandon, Manitoba won a bronze medal for her performance in the 3,000 metre race at Barcelona Summer Olympics; and

WHEREAS it is important to recognize the commitment and hard work it takes to achieve such a feat; and

WHEREAS Angela Chalmers has been competing since she attended Neelin High School in Brandon, and continues to train in Victoria with her coach Wynn Gmitroski, who is from Winnipeg, in preparation for the 1994 Commonwealth Games that will take place in Victoria.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba congratulate Angela Chalmers on her victory in Barcelona; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba also send best wishes to Ms. Chalmers in her training for the upcoming Commonwealth Games.

Motion presented.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure for me today to propose this resolution in the House. I am hopeful that for perhaps a change in our normal pattern that we can all agree in the House this afternoon to pass this resolution sending on our congratulations to Ms. Chalmers.

We need to be aware, I think, that to reach the Olympics is indeed a feat in itself when you consider that there are almost 3 million registered competitive athletes in Canada alone, 15,000 of those in the high performance category.

Of course out of that to represent Canada and then compete with the best from around the world it certainly is a dream and a hope of many aspiring athletes to attain this Olympic pinnacle. Angela Chalmers has done that, demonstrating the characteristics of the consummate athlete, thoughtful in her decisions and free from the pressures to win at any cost.

When we strive to provide a quality sports experience, quality coaching and fair play for our athletes and enshrine these characteristics into the Canadian sports system that is athlete-oriented and respected, we can look to Angela Chalmers as being a front runner and a role model.

Angela Chalmers is a role model in many respects. Historically the participation of women in athletics in Canada is not all that great, and as the young females become older they become less interested in sports so encouragements for females in athletics is necessary. This has been recognized by our government in Manitoba and greater participation by women and equal opportunity is being encouraged by a provincial sports policy at the provincial as well as the federal level.

The presence of a positive role model like Angela Chalmers and what she has achieved through hard work and training and dedication to her sport and by breaking down some of these male stereotype sports barriers provide young female athletes with encouragement and confidence and someone they can look up to and someone who can make a dream become a reality.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there are very few indigenous Canadian youth who reach national or international sports prominence. Angela Chalmers is one. The indigenous approach to sports closely parallels the original Olympic ideal of blending sport and culture. Sport in the indigenous community is based on a pragmatic approach where traditional aspects of sport are closely integrated with other features of social life.

Sport is of a fundamental importance to the social fabric and sense of survival of indigenous people. This perhaps explains the success, or at least partially explains the success, of Angela Chalmers in the Olympics. It is, however, of secondary importance, I think, to the role that athletes play as role models in the community. Elite athletes are important examples for native youth, and as a

native, Angela Chalmers is an important example to the indigenous community.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, publicly, we do not recognize high-performance athletes as much as we should, perhaps because we are oriented to team sports and professional athletes who appear nightly on television and are covered extensively in our sports pages in the newspapers. Unfortunately, we do not always continue to recognize our high-performance athletes in the public and through the media. Athletes, with few exceptions, are relatively unknown. Public interest rises, of course, before major world events like the Olympics but drops rapidly afterwards.

We do take pride in Angela Chalmers and in her accomplishments at the Olympics in Barcelona last summer. We extend to her our very best wishes in preparing for the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this resolution in no small way provides Angela Chalmers with some well-warranted recognition that she certainly deserves. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure to be able to say a few brief words with regard to the resolution that the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) has presented with respect to Angela Chalmers of Brandon who, as mentioned, not only reached the Olympics in Barcelona and reached a goal in itself just to participate in such a high-profile athletic competition. From all the Canadian athletes young and old, men and women who work countless hours in achieving their goals, whether it be to win a specific medal but, most importantly, just to participate.

I feel that the accomplishment that this young woman has in fact achieved, Mr. Speaker, speaks for itself with the dedication and the hard work that she put in to be able to compete at this level representing Canada in an event that alone is tremendously grueling. Angela has, as the honourable member has mentioned, become a positive role model for the community of Manitoba within the community of Brandon and Canadians. Angela's hard work, Angela's dedication should be and is a role model for all future young men and women who want to achieve something in the athletic field, whether it be Olympic games, whether it be regional championships, in whatever capacity. Angela has displayed a dedication that I feel we should take with pride. She has shown the

communities, she has shown the people, she has shown young women that the opportunity is there if indeed you want it bad enough.

We congratulate her on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, also knowing that she and others can strive and achieve and show that it does not matter what age, what nationality or whatever you are, you are trying to achieve something to represent your country, and she has done that.

It is a proud moment for all of us, a proud moment for her and her family and a proud moment that Angela has achieved what she has and, within the aboriginal community, I think that the sign for the future is there for all young people in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I know how hard it is to work and to achieve what Angela has done. We have all done it in certain categories and in certain situations, for certain participations, for certain competitions. To be in Barcelona was a tremendous feat in itself. To participate was a greater achievement. To win a medal in your event within this competition perhaps is the highest achievement that any one individual can achieve.

I know that we here on this side take pride in Angela's achievements. We take pride in the hard work that she and her coach have put through, the time and the effort, the support the family has put in for Angela's participation. We hope, Mr. Speaker, and we certainly do support this resolution and support the honourable member and Angela.

* (1700)

I would like to on behalf of our caucus and members on this side say, congratulations, and we wish her well, a tremendous achievement. We wish her well in her training. We wish her well in her preparation for the 1994 Commonwealth Games. I do hope that this one situation is an indication to all the young people who want to achieve something like Angela has done, not only for themselves, for the communities, for their province, for their country.

So, Mr. Speaker, we wish Angela the very, very best. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I have a friend by the name of Baracat El Sala (phonetic). Baracat is the 3,000 metre champion from the Los Angeles Olympics 1984. Baracat, when he won that medal, became a national hero and is to this day treated with great respect in Oman, because they recognized what it meant for their country. It meant that they too had someone of Olympic calibre

from their part of the world, someone who could compete successfully. To be an Olympic champion does not simply mean that you are good at this. It means that you are among the best in the entire world.

So I have absolutely no difficulty standing up on behalf of my caucus to say that I share in the feelings I believe of every member in this Chamber, that Angela deserves the respect and the support and the admiration of all of us.

A thought crossed my mind as I was reading the resolution and listening to the remarks of the member for Ste. Rose. This is a question I would like to propose to the government. Have we offered Angela an Order of the Buffalo Hunt? I do not know whether we have.

It seems that we proffer these things quickly and easily to people in other areas, why not to someone from our province who has achieved so much on behalf of all of us? The thousands of hours of training, the commitment and the sacrifice, the letting go of so many other things that a young woman might like to be involved in in order to achieve this does a credit to all of us. Perhaps, while I support the resolution of the member for Ste. Rose, and I congratulate him for bringing it forward—

An Honourable Member: Turtle Mountain.

Mr. Alcock: The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), I am sorry—Rose from Turtle Mountain, not Rose from Ste. Rose.

Nonetheless, I think that we might want to consider this one a second time. Maybe the member wants to go into his caucus and suggest that we provide the same kind of honour to this young lady that we have to other members who have achieved so much on behalf of Manitoba.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty in making the support for this resolution unanimous. I hope we can see it pass today. Thank you.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not want to prolong debate, and I would like to see this resolution passed. I would like to add a few comments on this resolution.

I join with my colleagues the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) and the mover of this motion, as well as the previous speaker from the Liberals who have added their support to Angela Chalmers and the achievements she has had up to this point in time.

I want to just say that I have the pleasure of knowing one of her former coaches who coached her at Brandon for a number of years. Mr. Ron Moffat (phonetic), his name is. Ron has told me some of the things about Angela as a young person, just starting out in her running and the kind of ability she displayed at that time. Of course, you never can be sure whether you are coaching a future Olympic athlete or not when they are at a young age, but certainly he recognized, and everyone around recognized, the unique talents of Angela Chalmers.

The important thing is the dedication and the willingness to sacrifice to get to that goal. That does not just come very easily at all. It takes encouragement, because there are many times when it really hurts. Your body hurts from the training. You are injured in some way, and you have to work your way through it. You have to get up and go out and train. You have to do that every day. There is just no way that you can get around it if you are going to be a champion. It takes very strong mental discipline, as well as the encouragement of people around you, athletes that you work with to give you encouragement, your coach, your family.

I know the coach that I talked about did his part in ensuring that Angela was able to continue in a dedicated way with the kind of training that she began so that she could one day be a champion. He talked about picking her up every day and taking her to the track to ensure that she was there, that kind of thing.

Everyone needs that kind of support in their lives. We hope one thing we can learn from this is that we do lend assistance and encouragement to young people that may want to start down this very difficult road and one day be a world champion, whether it be our own children or whether it be other young people we know. They do need that support, and they cannot do it on their own.

Having said that, I do not take away from the tremendous achievements of Angela Chalmers as an individual, because she is the one that did it, ultimately. When you are running a race, ultimately it is you against the world at that point. No one else is going to do it for you. So therein lies the tremendous character and dedication to duty and to accomplishment, in the actual race.

I want to add my support to Angela Chalmers and wish her well in her future competitions and endeavours. The road can still be very rocky.

There are many things that can go wrong. So she needs our support and our well wishes, that is for certain, in the years ahead. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the resolution? [agreed]

Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?
[agreed]

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 28, 1993

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Reading and Receiving Petitions

Student Social Allowances Program
Friesen 2220

Ministerial Statements

Builder Bonds Series 1
Manness 2220
Doer 2220
Alcock 2221

Oral Questions

Education System Reform
Doer; Vodrey 2222

Emergency Room Physicians
Chomiak; Orchard 2223

Reduced Workweek
Edwards; Manness 2224

Education System Reform
Plohman; Vodrey 2225

Workplace Safety and Health
Cerilli; Praznik 2226

Department of Education and Training
Gray; Manness 2227

Reduced Workweek
Gray; Manness 2227

No-Fault Auto Insurance
L. Evans; Cummings 2228

Autopac
L. Evans; Cummings 2228

ACCESS Programs
Friesen; Vodrey 2229

Women's Advisory Council
Barrett; Mitchelson 2229

Children's Dental Program
C. Evans; Orchard 2230

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Second Readings

Bill 26, Expropriation Amendment Act
McCrae 2230

Bill 27, Environment Amendment Act (2)
Cummings 2231

Bill 28, Manitoba Intercultural Council
Repeal Act
Mitchelson 2232

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 16, Public Schools Amendment Act
Storie 2236
Martindale 2242
Friesen 2250

Private Members' Business

Proposed Resolutions

Res. 18, Angela Chalmers
Rose 2257
C. Evans 2258
Alcock 2258
Plohman 2259