



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, September 24, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Alvin Mather, Louise Sliziak and Janice Klemick praying that the Legislature of Manitoba requests that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Rail Line Abandonment

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of William Hart, Reid Shiel, Steve Kushnerek and others requesting the Legislative Assembly to request the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Findlay) and federal Minister of Transport to ensure the communities currently using the Cowan Sub and the Erwood Sub are able to continue shipping their grain to market.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Rail Line Abandonment

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS rail access is vital for the shipment of grain and other farm commodities in rural communities; and

WHEREAS the proclamation of the Canada Transportation Act on July 1, 1996, gives railways the ability to abandon lines throughout Canada with minimum notice; and

WHEREAS on July 2, 1996, Canadian National announced that it plans to abandon four rail lines in Manitoba including the lines from Dauphin to Minitonas and Swan River to Birch River; and

WHEREAS the abandonment of these lines would put the future of grain elevators at Birch River, Bowsman, Ethelbert and Fork River amongst others at great risk; and

WHEREAS the federal government sold CN without any conditions other than the headquarters of CN remain in Montreal; and

WHEREAS the loss of these rail lines will have a major negative effect upon the overall provincial economy; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has not made any plans to cover the costs of upgrading roads in the areas where rail lines are threatened with abandonment; and

WHEREAS the federal government has not committed any money from the Western Grain Transportation Adjustment Fund to upgrading roads in communities where rail lines are being abandoned.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Transportation and the federal Minister of Transport to ensure that the communities currently using the Cowan Sub and the Erwood Sub are able to continue shipping their grain to markets.

Manitoba Telephone System

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The Clerk will read.

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

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

* (1335)

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The Clerk will read.

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

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide

service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

* (1340)

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

An Honourable Member: Read.

Madam Speaker: The Clerk will read.

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

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one

of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). It

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

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THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

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THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Economic Development First Report

Mr. Mike Radcliffe (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Economic Development.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as its First Report.

Your committee met on Friday, September 20, 1996, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the financial statements for Manitoba Mineral Resources Ltd. for the year ending December 31, 1994.

Mr. Jim Clarke provided such information as was requested with respect to the financial statements of Manitoba Mineral Resources Ltd. for the year ending December 31, 1994.

Your committee has considered the financial statements for Manitoba Mineral Resources Ltd. for the year ending December 31, 1994, and has adopted the same as presented.

Mr. Radcliffe: I move, seconded by the honourable member for LaVerendrye (Ben Sveinson) that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report, 1995-96, of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Introduction of Guests

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

public gallery where we have this afternoon 30 visitors from Lions Place Adult Day Club under the direction of Mrs. Danielle Jantzie. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

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

* (1345)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Canadian Wheat Board Government Support

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

Alberta is taking two cases forward that would basically eliminate the single-desk component of the Canadian Wheat Board. This, in our opinion, would have a devastating impact on producers and would have a devastating impact on the community of Winnipeg which has a number of jobs centred in our community and a number of related jobs that work with the Canadian Wheat Board.

I would like to ask the Premier again: Why will he not stand up for Manitoba and why will he not intervene in this very, very important case before the courts as initiated by the Province of Alberta?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the subject of the Canadian Wheat Board, of course, is a complex issue and one that has been the subject of a great deal of debate over many years. That debate is accelerated with changes to the transportation subsidy, the Crow rate and elimination, and other matters that continue to evolve as trading throughout the world broadens and liberalizes, as different opportunities are seen for value-added agriculture here in our province.

The fact of the matter is that the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Goodale, in response to all of this, appointed a so-called blue ribbon panel of experts, people who were to analyze and evaluate all of the various functions of the Canadian Wheat Board and

make recommendations as to what its future should be, because, I guess, most of us recognize that an institution that began in 1931 may not necessarily be structured for the challenges and the opportunities of today.

That panel gave a recommendation for change, modest change but incremental change that would address some of the issues that would give more opportunity for value-added agriculture, of which Manitoba has a huge opportunity to attract that. In the past year alone we have had over a half-billion dollars of investment in value-added agriculture. These kinds of things, of course, can multiply and grow.

We have met with various people in the farm community, we have met with people from the Wheat Board, from the traders and brokers who are associated with the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange, and time and time again we see the opportunities for continued growth, job creation and huge investment in Manitoba.

We believe that the long-term solution is that which is recommended by the Western Grain Marketing Panel, which is for flexibility and some modest and incremental change in the Canadian Wheat Board. That is the position we have taken. We believe it is the best position for Manitoba farmers, and we believe it is the best position for investment, jobs and long-term growth in our economy.

Mr. Doer: The Premier never answered the question. I asked the Premier the question: Why he will not get off the fence and take a position dealing with the initiatives of the Alberta government which would eliminate the single-desk component of the Canadian Wheat Board and would eliminate the Canadian Wheat Board as we know it?

I want to ask the Premier: Why is he allowing Saskatchewan to fight the case on our behalf, why will he not get off the fence? We have got off the fence on other court cases in the past. The Oldman River, for example, we intervened. Why is the Premier choosing not to intervene in this Alberta initiative? Is he too closely aligned with Premier Klein of Alberta? Why will he not intervene on behalf of the single-desk marketing system of the Canadian Wheat Board and stand up for Manitobans, as opposed to being silent about the Alberta initiative?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is sounding a little like Old Man River, stuck in 1931-think, stuck in the past, in reverse. We want to have value-added agriculture investment, job creation and growth in this province.

We are not on the fence, Madam Speaker. We are on the side of change, positive change, change that will make this province a continued leader in value-added agriculture growth, give us new job opportunities, significant new investment and opportunities for a bright future. That is where we stand, not in the past with the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Doer: The Premier wants to go back to the Dirty Thirties, Madam Speaker, when producers could not get fair prices for their products. He wants to go back to the Depression era. That is the philosophy of the Bennett-buggy Tories across the way.

I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact that on page 111 of the Future Report on the Canadian Wheat Board it states: the success of the Canadian Wheat Board is based on a reliable supplier, and this is also anchored in the single-desk concept of the Canadian Wheat Board, why will the Premier not stand for the single-desk concept of marketing for the Canadian Wheat Board, which is in the best interest of producers, which is in the best interests of millers, and in the best interest of the jobs in our community? Why is he sitting on the fence and not getting involved in the court case on behalf of Manitobans, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I cannot believe how out of touch the Leader of the Opposition could be when he compares today's times to the 1930s, when we have record crop production, record levels of payment for those crops, when we are looking in western Canada at \$15-billion crop production in grains. It is unbelievable that he could compare this to the Dirty Thirties. That is how out of touch that person is. It almost seems ridiculous to answer his question when he is so out of touch with what is going on in reality.

The fact of the matter is that this province has immense opportunities to gain from value-added agriculture investment, and that involves flexibility with the Canadian Wheat Board, change that has been recommended by the Western Grain Marketing Panel, the panel of experts that

were contracted to study this, and that is what we believe is best for the future of this province and the future of the farmers in this province, Madam Speaker.

* (1350)

Canadian Wheat Board Government Support

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the position taken by this government to support all the recommendations of the Grain Marketing Panel is causing concern for farmers because they believe implementation of these recommendations will destroy the single-desk component of the Wheat Board.

Can the Premier tell farmers today, tell the farmers of Manitoba if he supports the recommendation that will place feed wheat under an open market system?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I have said that we support the recommendations of the Western Grain Marketing Panel. It was a cross-section of experts, people from all elements of the community who made recommendations, being knowledgeable about the entire agriculture industry and all of its facets. They were not tied to or beholden to a particular group as the New Democrats are with the Farmers' Union, their lifeline of support to the farm community. These are people from across the broad spectrum of all elements of the agriculture industry.

Madam Speaker, we as a province have tens of thousands of jobs that are tied into agriculture. We have them in the production area, we have them in feed; we have them in fertilizer; we have them in agribusiness, the manufacturing of equipment; we have them in the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange. We have them in all elements of the agriculture industry community. That is why we have to be aware of all of the various impacts, and when we have an opportunity to create more investment, tens of millions, hundreds of millions of investment and more jobs, we are going to take that opportunity. That is why we have taken the position that we have with respect to the Wheat Board, that is what the blue ribbon panel, the Western Grain Marketing Panel recommended and that is what the farmers of western Canada and Manitoba, in particular, want.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, since we have no specific answer on that question about the recommendation, can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) tell us if he supports the recommendation to allow farmers to sell a portion of their wheat outside the pool? Specifically, yes or no, do you support that recommendation?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to indicate to all members of the House that just in the last few days the Wheat Board, at the urging I might say of the Manitoba government and the position taken by the Manitoba government about the need for some change, has announced a very important change with respect to value-added that could impact on the future flour milling capacity of this province.

That was a recommendation of the panel that my First Minister just referred to that the Wheat Board has accepted, and we applaud them for that.

The position that my government and the First Minister is eloquently expressing is, carry on with the real world, with the 1990s, and the Wheat Board will be with us.

Ms. Wowchuk: Then will the Premier admit that he is wrong and that we can have value-added jobs, we do not have to destroy the Wheat Board and, in fact, as the minister has said, the Wheat Board and the Canadian market, Millers Association are working together—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing great difficulty hearing the question being posed by the honourable member for Swan River.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the members of this government admit that they are wrong? They do not have to destroy the Wheat Board, but with the Wheat Board working along with the Canadian Millers Association, we can have value-added jobs in this province, and we will, but you do not have to destroy the Wheat Board by destroying the single-desk selling position.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the member does not listen to any of the answers that are given to her. At no time have we said that we want to destroy the Canadian

Wheat Board. All we have said is that the Canadian Wheat Board has to continue to be flexible and change with the times. You cannot expect an institution that was established in 1931 not to have to change with changing times.

We did not have GATT; we did not have NAFTA; we did not have any of those opportunities. We had the Crow rate then; we do not have it today. There are so many massive changes that have taken place. All of these changes require us to have a different perspective and a new perspective. The Canadian Wheat Board's minister recognized that. He appointed a panel, a Western Grain Marketing Panel of experts to review that. They came up with suggestions for modest incremental changes that are supported by the majority of the farmers in western Canada. It is time they got on with the change, Madam Speaker, for the benefit of all Manitobans, both producers and indeed the community at large that will benefit by hundreds of millions of investment and job creation.

* (1355)

Health Sciences Centre Dr. Odim Buy-Out Package

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, we are very concerned about some information that has come to our attention concerning the Health Sciences Centre and Dr. Odim.

Can the Minister of Health confirm whether or not a buy-out package was entered into which resulted in Dr. Odim leaving the province of Manitoba, and if such a buy-out package was entered into and such an arrangement was entered into, will the minister table that arrangement so all the people of Manitoba may have an opportunity to view that?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): No, I cannot, I am sorry, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, considering the controversy that has evolved around this, considering the fact there is an inquest going on, considering the fact that the Health Sciences Centre is \$12 million in debt, can the minister advise the House whether he thinks it is appropriate that a buy-out package may have been

entered into between the Health Sciences Centre and Dr. Odim?

Mr. McCrae: I already said I have no knowledge of it, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, can the minister therefore confirm that neither he, which he said has not, nor any of his officials entered into any discussions with the politically appointed board of the Health Sciences Centre, or others, concerning a possible buy-out package for Dr. Odim and an arrangement that may have been entered into?

Can the minister confirm that no one from his department has knowledge of such a package?

Mr. McCrae: I already told the honourable member I have no knowledge of such a package, so therefore I cannot confirm anything that the honourable member would ask me about a package about which I know nothing.

Gillam, Manitoba Health Concerns—Drinking Water

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, while I am on my feet, I would like to respond—yesterday the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) raised questions respecting the water supply at Gillam.

In May and in August representatives of Manitoba Health visited Gillam and there were satisfactory arrangements made for water supply pending replacement of their water treatment plant up there. In August, however, it was noted that the turbidity levels exceeded the Canadian drinking water guideline and there were advisories provided. There have been no reported cases of morbidity or mortality related to the water supply.

Replacement of the treatment plant has started. Completion is scheduled for summer of '97. The LGD has provided a portable water supply standpipe near the treatment plant where residents have unlimited access. Boiling instructions have been provided for those who choose to use the current water supply to their homes for drinking. There have been no ill effects reported from using the water for bathing. The public health inspector

is working closely with the plant operator and the water is monitored daily for chlorine levels and every two weeks for bacteria levels. In short, our department has been working with the community and I believe things are under control as they move toward the redevelopment of a water treatment plant.

Misericordia General Hospital Emergency Services

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health.

The situation this week at the Misericordia Hospital is exactly as any reasonable person would have predicted. Emergency rooms are full, including operating rooms sometimes, ambulances are turned away, waiting periods in emergency are long. The staff can tell the minister this, the patients can tell the minister and his own hospital statistics tell him that this is an inner-city hospital with an increasing number of patients with exceptionally severe conditions. Only the minister appears to believe that the situation is abnormal or one of peaks and valleys, as he would say.

Would the minister tell us whether he has investigated the situation at the Misericordia, and will he tell us how he plans to ensure that this hospital can continue to serve its community?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Indeed, Madam Speaker, I have been advised that this time of the year, in the cycle of the year, it is a busy time in the emergency rooms of the city of Winnipeg; however, that fact alone speaks more loudly than I alone can speak about the need to integrate emergency services in the city, and I think the honourable member supports the direction being taken for Misericordia General Hospital, certainly, that part dealing with the 24-hour walk-in urgent care aspect of it. So I am pleased if this is true—I think it is—that the honourable member does support that approach. The best way of making sure that we have a system that can be there when we need it is to follow the plans that we, along with all of the people involved in hospital services in Winnipeg, announced on August 20.

* (1400)

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the minister to tell the House how he plans to face the facts of the

Misericordia Hospital, that the patients there present with more serious entrance complaints. They are often elderly patients, and hence the Misericordia Hospital has a very high admission rate. How does the minister plan to face those facts with the fact that he is closing those emergency admission beds?

Mr. McCrae: Again, I am not sure, but I believe the honourable member is supportive of the plans that we have for the city of Winnipeg and I would like her and her colleagues to come out and say so. The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) shakes his head. He has some other plan I guess, Madam Speaker, that is a better plan than the plan put in front of us by all of the professionals and the consumers in the city of Winnipeg with whom we have worked to develop our plan. The honourable member for Kildonan stands alone, but he has a better plan than everybody else and that is encouraging. I would like him to share it with us because he has not shared any wisdom with us yet; we are still waiting for that. I am sure it is in him somewhere and we are going to hear about it sooner or later.

The honourable member for Wolseley asks appropriate questions. The answer to those questions lay in the plans that we have announced and in their careful implementation.

Health Care Facilities Emergency Services—Inner City

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, what I would like to do is to ask the minister to go back to KPMG, his policy consultants on hospitals—if he is not going to listen to patients—and ask them to re-examine the whole issue of emergency services in the inner city since we have seen in the past week overcrowding at both Misericordia and in the Health Sciences emergency services.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I think if we listened to the honourable member and her colleagues all we would ever do is examine and re-examine and never take any action, Madam Speaker. It is necessary to take action so that we can have a health care system that is good for us today and that will be good for us to pass on to future generations. If all we ever do whenever we come up with appropriate solutions to issues in the health system is say, well, we better study it some more because

we do not have the courage to make any decisions—as is being proposed by members in the New Democratic Party—we would lose our health care system, which is not a price I am willing to pay.

Adoption Services Privatization

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Family Services, and I know she will thank me for asking this question.

We have seen this government license out vehicle inspections, move towards privatization of home care, and now this government is moving towards the privatization of family services. According to the department's consultation workbook on pages 24 and 25, the licensing of private practitioners for adoption services, she has gone straight to the question of how to privatize adoptions, by-passing the all-important questions of whether we should privatize adoption.

Can the minister explain why she is even considering putting adoption services in the hands of private practitioners on a fee-for-service basis when this government cannot even guarantee standardized vehicle inspections?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I do thank my honourable friend. It is my first opportunity since the resuming of this session that I have had the opportunity to thank the opposition for a question.

I would encourage members of both opposition parties, as I have encouraged members of the community, to make representation to the panel that will be chaired by my honourable colleague for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) around all of the issues that we will be looking at in major changes to our Child and Family Services Act. I have met with many people throughout the community, those who want to adopt, birth parents who choose to place their children for adoption, and those adoptive parents who believe that our system in Manitoba has to be modernized and brought up to speed with other provinces that have made major changes to their adoption legislation. We are asking the public for input, and the changes that we make will be determined by that input.

Mr. Kowalski: Is the minister committed to the privatization of adoption services as this workbook implies, or is she willing to do the right thing and reject turning the adopted children of this province into a commodity?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, I think my honourable friend should look to the way adoption has changed in our community and in our society right across the country over the last number of years. People are choosing private adoptions. They are dealing with private adoption agencies, which has become the norm right across the country, and I think it bodes well for both the birth parent who is making that decision for the child and for the families who want to participate in that option. I encourage all Manitobans to provide their input on how we can modernize our legislation to ensure that children do have a permanent, nurturing, loving, safe, secure home.

Mr. Kowalski: My final supplementary is for the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Will the First Minister accept that there are some services such as policing, court services and adoption that should continue to be run by government and that the privatization, for privatization's sake, is not in the best interest of Manitobans?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, I think my honourable friend is living in the past and does not understand the realities of today. As I have indicated before, birth parents and adoptive parents in fact are choosing other methods of adoption rather than the secrecy that was part of adoption in the past. That is a reality today and we have to change our legislation to ensure that we have modernized it in a way that meets the needs of birth parents, adoptive families and the children who need nurturing and loving and secure homes.

Lottery Employees Labour Dispute Minister's Comments

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, fairness and impartiality of government in dealing with its people is what Manitobans expect from their government representatives. Now we have learned that the Minister of Labour has spelled out his real agenda in dealing with workplace disputes.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour to confirm that, during a verbal exchange with lottery workers on Kildonan Drive, the Minister of Labour stated: Every day you are in front of my house I am adding seven days to your strike. Will the minister confirm that he made those comments to the lottery workers who were in front of his house?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): There is a fundamental misunderstanding by the member as to what my role in this labour dispute is. This is a role—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Toews: This is not my strike, Madam Speaker. This is a dispute between the Lotteries Corporation and the MGEU, and there are two reasons. I will start with one as to why there cannot be apparently a settlement of this dispute.

The first is that Mr. Olfert and the leadership of the MGEU do not appear to have any intention of settling this strike. Why else would he be paying each striker \$200 tax free every week, resulting in more than 50 percent of these workers earning more money on strike than they would be at work? How is it possible ever to enter into a collective agreement with that union?

Now Mr. Olfert is contemplating on raising the fees to \$250.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

* (1410)

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, there was a very specific question asked by the member for Transcona. The member ought to know if one cites Beauchesne that you should not provoke debate.

Madam Speaker, the minister has the option of not answering the question, but the minister is not dealing

with the question, he is engaging the debate. I urge you to call—[interjection] If the Premier (Mr. Filmon) would let me finish, perhaps the Premier could get up on the point of order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, I urge you to call the minister to order and to cite Beauchesne's. The minister's provoking a debate by not answering the question does not further the debates or the decorum of this House.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan, I would remind the honourable minister that his answer should be explicitly related to the question asked and should be as brief as possible.

* * *

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

Mr. Reid: Well, then I want to ask a further supplementary to the same minister, Madam Speaker.

Will the minister explain why he repeated his strike extension comments to a large group of lottery workers inside the Legislature yesterday when he said, if you do not get out of my house, this strike will last forever? Will this minister confirm or deny that he made either of the comments that are indicated here or that were made in front of his house?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I can confirm that I did not state that. What I can state and what I can confirm for this House is that there are two reasons why a mediator cannot be appointed at this time in terms of it either being necessary or appropriate.

Firstly, the conciliation process is continuing, and from the point of view of the union it is working. Secondly, from a public perspective—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, perhaps I did not hear the question correctly, but the member for Transcona specifically asked the minister about his comments in the Legislature, not to answer the question about the appointment of a mediator that we asked yesterday and the minister was unable to answer yesterday.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan, I explicitly heard the honourable Minister of Labour this time respond to the question left. Our rules indicate that the honourable minister indeed is entitled to an approximate time limit, and if he wishes to embellish his answer within that time limit, it is allowable.

* * *

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

Minister of Labour Replacement Request

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I want to table copies of correspondence that my office has received today indicating that the minister did indeed make those comments.

I want to ask my question, my final supplementary, to the Premier. Since it appears that the Minister of Labour has, as the employer representative involved in this dispute, violated The Manitoba Labour Relations Act, will the Premier now replace this minister who has obviously shown his biased position in regard to this dispute? Will the Premier take the appropriate action?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Rejecting all of the preamble, the answer is no.

Cabinet Ministers Spousal Travel

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the Finance minister, as head of Treasury Board, is responsible for the General Manual of Administration, the government's procedural bible which was changed in November 1993 to enable ministers' and senior civil

servants' spouses to travel at government expense where the travel is—and I quote from the policy—of high priority relative to the function of the job, the mandate of government and the goals of corporate government.

My question is to the Minister of Finance. At any time since November 1993 has the Minister of Finance, alone or with civil servants, travelled with spouses to any conference or on any government business on commercial aircraft where government paid some or all of the costs of a spouse?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): I just want to be clear. He is asking if I travelled and included costs of either my spouse or any spouse married to any government employee. Is that basically the question that was being asked?

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Crescentwood, to quickly clarify his question.

Mr. Sale: My question is: Did the minister travel with his spouse, and, at any time or in the company of a senior civil servant or other civil servant with that person's spouse? Did any of those combinations of travel occur at government expense since 1993?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, not at government expense. My spouse has travelled with me on occasion, as has a spouse of at least one senior member of the Finance department on an occasion that I am aware of, but those were not at government expense. Those costs would have been paid by me personally in the case of my spouse.

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

Mr. Sale: My supplementary is: Then given the minister's role on Treasury Board, does he feel he can justify to Manitobans why some ministers and senior civil servants should travel with their spouses at public expense when others never seem to need to do so? This at a time when civil servants' wages are being frozen or rolled back and many civil servants have lost their jobs.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, yes, I can justify that because that has been the policy within government for many years not only under our administration but under

a previous administration, and just because I did not have to utilize that in terms of any travelling arrangements that I was a part of on behalf of government, there are instances where the spouses should travel as part of spousal programs or other initiatives that are in the best interest of Manitoba.

* (1420)

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister not recognize the outrage that is felt by Manitobans and expressed in many phone calls and other expressions of concern, whose tax dollars are going to support the lifestyles of the rich and famous, and will he not act to rescind the current vague policy and replace it with a clear and explicit policy regarding spousal travel?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I find it interesting now that the member for Crescentwood is part of the opposition, he is now condemning a policy that existed when members that he sits with was in fact in place and might well have been utilized—I do not know—by some people who sit in his very caucus.

There are instances where it is in the best interest of Manitoba and Manitoba taxpayers—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind all honourable members, only one individual was recognized to speak, the honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I state again, there are instances where it is in the best interest of Manitoba and Manitoba taxpayers for spouses to participate in travel on behalf of the government of Manitoba. That was the policy under previous administrations; that still is the policy today.

Winnipeg Police Services Funding

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. We understand that the mayor of the city of Winnipeg has recently asked the Winnipeg Police Services to come up with a cut of \$1.7 million. Imagine, of all times in this city's history, just when we become known for rapidly increasing gang activity and we now have the highest violent crime rate in all of Canada.

My question for the minister is: Would the minister tell us whether she has reviewed this disturbing matter with a view to determining whether the purpose of the provincial grant of \$2 million for additional policing—which, by the way, was copied on the NDP's promise—will be cancelled out completely or in part by such a cut?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am glad the member has recognized that he now has come on board in support of a position of this government in terms of more police officers on the street. Our grant is conditional. Our grant is conditional that no officers are removed from the complement of the Winnipeg Police Services. In my recent discussion with representatives of the Winnipeg Police Services, that is fully understood.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister also concern herself not just with police officers but with other police services such as victims services, Neighbourhood Watch support, 911 support and do her job, meet with the mayor and the EPC and impress on them that while police services are one part of the solution to our crime problem, this is not the time for police cuts? It is a time for priorities, for public safety, not for New Year's bashes, not for face lifts for Pan Am Games.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, well, I am really pleased to hear the member across the way finally recognizing the importance of police services. We have heard members across the way critical of police services. We have heard members across the way, in a question just the other day, critical as well of the integrity of police services. We have had the member across the way, that party across the way, nonsupportive of police services, in our opinion, for some time. So it is just now finally wonderful for the people of Manitoba and the police officers of Manitoba to see that the other side finally supports the importance of police officers. They are moving off their support for the offender, and they are finally coming over to say police are important.

Pan Am Games Facility Upgrading

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I am hoping the government would agree that the shortfall of \$30 million for the Pan Am Games funding that has resulted from not fully costing the venue and facility

upgrades could have a huge impact on the success of the games, that top-quality facilities are needed to attract top-quality athletes and ensure success of the games.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Radisson, to quickly pose her question.

Ms. Cerilli: I want to ask the Minister for Sport or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), will the Pan Am Games committees for facility venues and constructions be setting the priorities for upgrading in these areas, and will the first priority be for competitive facilities and not as was referred to earlier?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister responsible for Sport): The province has committed \$23.5 million for contribution toward the Pan Am Games to be held in Winnipeg in 1999. The Host Society has the responsibility of ensuring in which venues a sport will take place and that those venues are in fact in top-notch shape ready to receive the athletes.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Radisson, with a very short supplementary question.

Ms. Cerilli: For the same minister: Where will the \$30 million shortfall be drawn from, and will the sports that need this money as early as this year to ensure that their sports qualify in their facility venues, will they be assured that they are going to receive that money on time?

Mr. Ernst: The venues need to be in place for the most part by 1998 so that they can run test events in those venues for the 1999 Pan American Games. I am assured by the members of the Host Society that they are quite capable of running top-notch games in Manitoba within the budget that they have allocated.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Purolator Courier Sort Facility

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, as the member for Sturgeon Creek, it is my

pleasure to address the members of the House this afternoon on a very important announcement for Manitobans. I would like to inform that Purolator Courier announced this morning the construction of a new \$6.6 million state-of-the-art sort facility at Winnipeg International Airport.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province joined Purolator President and Chief Executive Officer Fred Manske to break ground at the new development. The 84,000 square foot ground- and air-sort facility covers 16 acres on the airport land. Construction will be completed in the spring of 1997. Purolator will also be taking over an existing 22,000 square foot building for air operations and maintenance. The new project will require 42 person years of construction. Purolator will inject more than \$1.2 million into the local economy annually through expenses such as airport landing fees and property taxes alone.

The announcement of this new project marks further expansion of Purolator's already significant presence in Winnipeg, combining existing operations and consolidating them into the modern facility. As the Premier said at the groundbreaking this morning, Purolator's decision to build their \$6.6 million airport sort facility is a huge economic boost for Manitoba's transportation and distribution sector which already employs 30,000 Manitobans, the highest per capita level in Canada.

Madam Speaker, this is just another positive move in this province's bid to making Manitoba the trade capital that it is soon and will be. Thank you.

Premier's Comments

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Yesterday the Premier made statements which go to the heart of issues of integrity, accountability and his view of the role of women. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) stated that spouses on trips can help smooth the way for constructive, personal connections that often result in investment because, and I quote: At the end of the day to get a couple of extra people there so that, when you are entertaining, you are not just men in suits that are trying to entertain these people who bring their own spouses to all these events. I mean, it only makes common sense.

Well, Mr. Premier, to many of us your comments not only do not make common sense but are sexist and

denigrating to women. Let me clarify for you, Mr. Premier, what should be obvious to anyone who actually lives in the 1990s. Women are not just helpmates to their male partners, not just along for the ride at public expense, I might add, to smooth the way for males who have spent an arduous day deciding the affairs of nations, not just there to entertain. Women have lives of their own, jobs and professions of their own, in some cases are even leaders, ministers and even premiers. Your assumptions, that only men will take spouses along on these trips, that the only role for spouses, read women, is to help entertain other men and their spouses, that women do not have a role outside the subservient one of angel of the house, are an affront to all women.

I wonder what the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) feels about your comments. He has stated time and time again that his wife's activities on their trips together were not just social but brought economic benefit to Manitoba. Do you suppose the Deputy Premier believes his wife was along to only help smooth the way or entertain? Had the spouses in question been male, which could have been the case since you do have several cabinet ministers who are women, would you have responded in the manner in which you did yesterday? I think not.

Mr. Premier, we are known by our words and deeds. Your devaluation of the role of women and your refusal to tell the people of Manitoba the amount of gift you received from IBM tells us much about you, and none of it is worthy of your position. You owe the people of Manitoba and most particularly the women of Manitoba an apology.

* (1430)

Terry Fox Marathon of Hope

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, April 12, 1980, marked the beginning of Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope. Despite the fact that he himself was diagnosed with bone cancer, he chose to run 5,000 kilometres in the 143 days so as to make Canadians aware of the critical need to raise money for cancer research. He began in Newfoundland and continued on to Thunder Bay where he was forced to stop because he was diagnosed once again with cancer for the second time. However, this time it was lung cancer. Terry wore out 22 shoes on his left foot by running an average of one marathon a day.

He fundraised \$24 million during his run. Even though he died at the age of 22 on June 28, 1981, his memory has been kept alive.

Madam Speaker, this year, Manitoba organizers celebrated the 16th anniversary of the Terry Fox run on Sunday, September 22. This year's event was a huge success. For the first time Manitoba surpassed the \$300,000 mark. Sixty-eight thousand people participated in the 309 events spread throughout the province. Tens of thousands participated across Canada for the annual fundraising event.

Forty-two hundred runs occurred throughout Canada and the world this year, and over the years the run has raised \$168 million. Madam Speaker, it is satisfying to know that amongst our busy schedules and workweeks Canadians of all ages really want to participate and become involved, and especially for those of us who have families that have been involved in this devastating disease. We truly appreciate the support that the research foundation and the Terry Fox Run has received from Manitobans throughout all walks of life, and we thank you for that.

Crescentwood Community Club

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to rise in support and recognition of the volunteers of Crescentwood community centre, who opened their new facility at a very lovely ceremony on Saturday afternoon of last week.

Madam Speaker, this community club had at its annual meeting over 150 residents concerned about the development and involvement in their community, and I think that speaks tremendous volumes about the strength of the Crescentwood community, which I have the privilege of serving part of, along with my colleague the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe).

Madam Speaker, the new facility has on its walls and various places plaques and memorials to many citizens of that community who have contributed over the years to the development of programs which have strengthened our community and made it a safer place, have provided fellowship and fun for children, have built bonds and relationships among families and have made Crescentwood a very good place in which to live.

I think all honourable members would join with me, as they recognize the strength and importance of community clubs in their neighbourhoods, in honouring and recognizing the contribution of the volunteers of Crescentwood Community Club to our city, to our community and to their mutual health and safety. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Minister of Labour's Comments

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to take these couple of minutes to review something that came up during Question Period and something that is very serious. I would suggest and maybe even recommend that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) use his grievance time as an opportunity to be able to expound on the statements that have been alleged.

Quoting from the letter specifically, it reads: Every day you are in front of my house, I am adding seven days to your strike.

Then there was a discussion that took place and it reads as follows—and members can obtain a copy of this. Strikers—it is a verbal exchange—is it true that for every day picketers are in front of your home, you will delay settling the strike for seven days, seven days for every day of picketing?

Answer from the minister: I do not remember saying that. I did not say that.

Another response or question from the minister was: When is Peter Olfert up for re-election? His own answer was: That is when your strike will be over. Peter Olfert has made this a political strike and he is just using strikers—in brackets, you people.

Strikers responded: We just want to go back to work. The minister's response is that: Well, you can go back any time, you can go back now. The striker's response was: And be a scab just like you—to the minister.

The striker's response or question: Do you know how to spell "impartial"? The minister's: Of course. Strikers: Look it up in the dictionary, as you are supposed to be impartial.

The minister: If you do not get out of my house, this strike will last forever.

Madam Speaker, I bring it up because I personally believe these are very strong allegations that are being brought forward and that the minister does have an opportunity to clarify the record because if the allegations are in fact accurate, there is a very strong case to be made that in fact this minister should be taken out of the current position that he is in.

Having said those few words, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity.

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

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli); Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen); Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), for Wednesday, September 25, 1996, 7 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I also have some committee changes.

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs (for Wednesday, September 25, 1996, at 7 p.m.) be amended as follows: the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) for the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck); the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) for the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner); the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe); and the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I thought you might call Grievances, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I did.

Mr. Ernst: Did you? Okay.

In that case, would you call Bills 36, 5, 6, 23, 24, 31, 33.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 36—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second readings, Bill 36 (The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

Is there leave for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas? [agreed] And also standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), who has six minutes remaining.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, as I begin, I would like to make a correction to something I said previously having to do with a number of recipients of social assistance. I wrongly said that there were 31,000 client files. In fact, there are 15,000 on the City of Winnipeg; 26,000, Province of Manitoba, for a total of 41,000. I was under by 10,000. So I correct the record.

In concluding my remarks about the one-tier system, I would have to say that we are not totally opposed to this. In any case, there is nothing we can do about it. This government has a mandate for another two or three years, and they are going to amalgamate the two systems whether we vote against it or not. However, we do have numerous concerns about the implementation and how the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) plans to do it. Of course, we have had a longstanding concern about the rates, because the City of Winnipeg has historically—and even up to the present—paid higher rates in spite of the efforts of the provincial Minister of Family Services to standardize the rates and reduce them,

including the rates for infants which were reduced by 26 percent this year.

* (1440)

The second major part of the bill has to do with obligations regarding employment and many of these obligations are quite draconian. For example, the individual on assistance who is deemed employable—and this minister has deemed thousands more people employable, namely single parents—has an obligation to do 15 job searches. I am not sure whether that is every 15 days or 30 days, but there is this obligation, in fact, quite a large expectation in terms of searching for work.

If an individual is offered work or training or education and turns it down, they can have their benefits reduced by \$50 a month up to six months, \$100 a month for six months or have their benefits terminated entirely, or if someone is working or in education or training, they can have their benefits reduced by a similar amount, \$50 a month up to six months and \$100 after that, or be not eligible for benefits.

One of the sneakier provisions of this bill is that they are asking clients if they want to waive this job expectation and sign away their benefits in advance. So they are asked if they want to do this, and if so, then their benefits are accordingly reduced in advance.

We believe that the vast majority of people on social assistance want to work. The main problem is the lack of jobs, so having this big-stick approach is probably not going to be very successful. We do know that it is forcing more people to rely on alternative sources. Just yesterday I talked to someone who works at Agape Table soup kitchen who told me that the caseload was up considerably in June, July and August, which is not surprising because welfare cuts took effect May 1.

Just by way of example, I had someone contact me just a couple of days ago who has been unemployed since 1995. This person took computer upgrading. This person had been employed as an accountant for various companies for many years. She is very desperate; however, she refuses to apply for social assistance. She did, however, tell me that rather than go to a welfare

office she would go to her garage and start the car. I have a great deal of empathy for people like this, who very clearly told me that she would rather commit suicide than apply for social assistance. That is what the policies of this government are doing. They are forcing people to consider options like committing suicide rather than apply for social assistance, because of their punitive attitudes and policies.

The final section of the bill I would like to comment on in my last two minutes is that of workfare. We have done quite a bit of research on this and studied many examples in other Canadian provinces and in American states. In fact, I am indebted to one of our legislative interns from last year, whose name is Tannis Cheatle, who did her paper for the university on this topic. It was called Workfare in Manitoba, Will it Work?, dated August 1996. The research shows that workfare is very expensive because you have to hire many, many more civil servants in order to put people into jobs. It does not get many people off social assistance, and frequently it subsidizes business and industry who can lay off paid employees and have access to a pool of very cheap labour, and it can be constantly replaced by other people on social assistance.

One argument that we may hear from this government and have probably already heard from the minister is, how can we afford to pay for the increasing costs of social assistance? I would like to just give one example before I conclude, and that is family trusts. We know that the federal government's Department of Finance recently approved \$2 billion in a family trust being moved out of the country and no taxes were paid on it in spite of protests by Revenue Canada. The taxes that were not paid amount to \$500 million to \$700 million. So, if this provincial government and the federal government were serious about going after family trusts and other sources of revenue that they refuse to collect, there would be money for meaningful job creation programs, not the 700 jobs for 41,000 recipients that this government has as its meagre target. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):
Madam Speaker, earlier when I called the bills, I think I transposed two numbers. I should have called 36, 56,

23, 24, 31 and 33, and I believe I transposed 33 and 31.

Madam Speaker: You did call them 31, 33. Is the minister suggesting you wanted 33 then 31?

Mr. Ernst: No, no. It should be—I am sorry—33 first, then 31. Sorry.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable government House leader. Is there further House business?

An Honourable Member: No.

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Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): In regard to this Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, I understand this bill changes the name of The Social Allowances Act to The Employment and Income Assistance Act. This bill also narrows the definition in terms of social assistance in Manitoba.

Superficially, the term “social allowance” is replaced by the term “social assistance,” but the whole act changed the direction and intent of social services in Manitoba. In this act, under the old act, goods and services that may be provided to residents of Manitoba were specifically spelled out, including goods and services essential to their well-being, including food, clothing and shelter, as well as essential surgical, medical, optical and dental treatments in addition to funeral upon death.

With the new act these services are not spelled out individually and are referred to only as services essential to the health and well-being of Manitobans, including an allowance for shelter, essential medical services and a funeral upon death. This might seem superficial but it has important connotations.

This Conservative government has significantly changed the way our society operates. It has dismantled the social welfare system. It has also limited the access to services in health care, threatening to close some hospitals by underfunding health care in general. Public optical and dental services have been eliminated, and Pharmacare rates have been going up. We now pay for services and can in the future expect to pay more in user

fees for such services. As part of the need to define health care services, it should be impossible to leave The Social Allowances Act untouched.

In effect, if they did nothing to this act, people on welfare could demand better service than people who receive no government assistance. Since under the old act what a person was entitled to was clearly spelled out, whereas in the new act it only makes reference to essential services and does not offer a full definition, the reality of this situation though is that government is simply taking services away from the public by attacking the poor, convincing us that they are lazy and do not want to work. The government needs a way to legitimize the reduction of health services to the general public.

If you need the government to pay for these services, you must be lazy, it implies. As part of this scene, the government has introduced employment obligations. This is called workfare in many other provinces or states in North America. In this section the government now has the power to deny or reduce income assistance to any applicant if they refuse employment opportunities by the department. Again, this attack on the poor plays very well in the media and is used to convince the public that the Conservative agenda is getting lazy people off the dole. Such programs have not been that successful in the past.

When this gets to committee, we are sure there will be strong representations made. We look forward to hearing those representations made when it goes to committee. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

Bill 5—The Horticultural Society Repeal Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading on Bill 5. On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), Bill 5, The Horticultural Society Repeal Act (Loi abrogant la Loi sur les associations horticoles), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? No? No. Leave has been denied.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, as the minister indicated in his comments when he introduced this bill, this is a housekeeping bill that has come forward from the Horticultural Society as they reorganized themselves. So what the minister did not put on the record was that the reason that horticultural societies have had to reorganize themselves is that over the past few years the government has reduced their funding and in fact has eliminated the funding to horticultural societies. So there is not any reason for the government to have a bill there when they are not contributing to the societies at all. As a result of that reduction and elimination of funding, the societies have come forward with their own by-laws and their own charter on how they will continue to operate.

* (1450)

It is unfortunate that the government has chosen to take this step to eliminate the funding and in that sense not recognize what the horticultural societies have contributed to this province, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize that the horticultural societies do play a very important role in many communities. I know they play a role in the city in beautifying and encouraging people to beautify their properties. They play a role in educating the public in the value of plants, mostly decorative plants but also shrubbery and in gardens as well and in the rural community they also play an important role.

It is an organization that is dying. In many areas, the number of societies has decreased and, as I say, I think it is disappointing that the government has chosen to single this group out as one that would not need any continuation of funding but, since they have chosen that, it is redundant legislation.

Before I close, Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize a few of the horticultural societies in my constituency. There is one at Benito, at Minitonas and Bowsman and one in the southern part of the riding as well who do a tremendous job. Particularly in the community of Minitonas, you can see that through their work that the properties within the town have been beautified. They have lots within the community that they themselves do all the planting and tending to the flowers. In the fall there is always a fair for displaying the production of members. I want to commend them for

the work and I encourage them to continue on in their effort to educate Manitobans in the value of growing plants and vegetables in our communities. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I too would echo many of the remarks that the member for Swan River has put on the record with respect to the Horticultural Society and, in essence, I understand that this bill has become somewhat redundant, that the bill repeals The Horticultural Society Act.

The Horticultural Society of Manitoba has reorganized and elected its own board of governors and, therefore, there was a need to have this particular piece of legislation brought to our attention. That is, from my understanding, what Bill 5 is about and, as the member for Swan River pointed out, how we have benefited in the past and no doubt we will continue to benefit under the reorganization well into the future. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 5, The Horticultural Society Repeal Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 6—The Veterinary Science Scholarship Fund Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), The Veterinary Science Scholarship Fund Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Fonds des bourses d'études vétérinaires), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No? Leave has been denied.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, this bill, The Veterinary Science Scholarship Fund Amendment Act, is a bill that allows the government the opportunity to increase the amount of funding

that is paid to veterinarian students. It has to be recognized that we do not, in Manitoba, have a veterinarian college, and our students must go to Saskatchewan to get their training. At the present time the government sponsors some 48 students—[interjection] My colleague asks whether they can go to Alberta. I would imagine that they could, but as it is the majority of the students—the sponsorship, as I understand it, is for students in Saskatchewan, and I would imagine if they so choose they could go to other provinces. It is very important that we do support these students because veterinarians play a very important role in the agricultural economy of this province. As we move away from the grain industry and towards more value-added, with the changes that we have had because of the Crow, we will see an increase in livestock production in this province and a varied amount of livestock. It is important that we have the students trained and that we encourage them to come back to this province to practise.

Now, the minister in his comments indicated that this legislation will require that students receiving the public funding will be required to practise in rural Manitoba after graduation. Those practising elsewhere will have to pay back the funds plus interest to government. However, the minister says in his comments that this is part of the legislation. That, in fact, is not part of the legislation. It always has been there. The current regulations of the act require that students pay back any monies received from the government if they do not practise in Manitoba; otherwise, those working in Manitoba are debt free after five years of practice. Therefore, current regulations already have all the components which the minister said were in the new regulations. It appears that the only change, actually, in this bill is the cancelling of the scholarship ceiling, and I think, considering the cost of education, that it is a good move to increase the ceiling as to the amount that can be loaned to students to do their studies in veterinarian.

I do have a concern that there is no minimum level stipulated. Before, there was a top level. Now there is no level, and considering all the cuts that we see by this government to various programs, it has opened the door to the possibility of lowering the amount of funding for students because there is no minimum. Now, I would assume that there are enough members from the government side who recognize the importance of the veterinarian program and would ensure that their

government would not reduce the amount of funding that was made available to veterinarian students, but stranger things have happened and we have seen many things cut by this government. For example, I just spoke about the horticultural societies, and we saw the funding for that eliminated, and now we have an opening here for the government, if they so choose, to eliminate or reduce the amount of funding.

I raise that concern, Madam Speaker, but we support this move by the government to raise the scholarships because we recognize the importance of veterinarians. Members across the way and our members from rural Manitoba will know that it is very hard to get veterinarian services in many communities, just as it is very difficult to get doctors to stay in rural communities. Veterinarians are few and far between, and when you get into a difficult calving season, hours, minutes are of an essence, so this scholarship fund is very important. We need to see it continue, and we need to see the number of veterinarians in rural Manitoba grow.

Some of the changes that the government made over the last few years with regard to veterinarians have not been positive and have not encouraged people to practise in rural Manitoba. So we will be watching the government, and we look forward to any of other comments that people might have on this legislation but certainly one that we support, Madam Speaker.

* (1500)

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading, Bill 6, The Veterinary Science Scholarship Fund Amendment Act.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 23—The GRIP and Related Programs Termination and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, Bill 23, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), The GRIP and

Related Programs Termination and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi abolissant le régime RARB et des régimes connexes et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? No? No, leave has been denied.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, this bill deals with the termination of the GRIP program and also some amendments to The Crop Insurance Act, and certainly with GRIP, the program has ended and all things have wound down with that, so it is a legitimate move to have part of the bill rescinded.

However, Madam Speaker, I want to talk for a few minutes about some of the things that have resulted, about the discussion that we had on GRIP. When the minister made his comments, he talked about what a good program it was and all the work that his government had done. Certainly, when GRIP was brought in, there is no doubt it did bring money that was badly needed into the hands of farmers, but the government has to also recognize that there were problems with that legislation. It did not all run very smoothly.

I want to commend the people at the Crop Insurance offices and the various people who were seconded to do the work on taking the applications and ensuring that it was followed through properly. It was a tremendous amount of work that was done by many people and the government's staff, and I want to recognize those people for the hard work that they have done.

But, certainly, it was a program that was put together very hastily, and there were problems. For example, Madam Speaker, there were problems with the type of coverage that was received in the Red River Valley, and that caused a lot of heartache for many producers who felt that they were not being treated fairly. There were problems in The Pas area where the soil classification—in both cases it was a result of soil classification that created the problem—and work had to be done, and a lot of convincing had to be done of government before there were finally adjustments made.

There were problems with the lentil growers which resulted in a court case, because the government tried to

change the rules in the middle of the game, and, Madam Speaker, we all know that cannot be done. As a result of that change, the government ended up paying a fairly substantial amount of money to lentil growers.

The program was supposed to end a year earlier, but the government chose to extend that program. The reason they chose to extend it was because, if they would have ended the program in that particular year, there would have been a deficit and the government was going into an election year and it certainly would not have gone over very well to have a deficit, so the government extended it a year.

In fact there is a fairly substantial surplus in the GRIP account of some \$63 million to \$65 million, and we are waiting to hear from the government how they are going to distribute those funds. We believe that is money that is dedicated to agriculture and that that money should be returned to the producers and the balance of the money that is government money should go to agriculture research.

We are desperately lagging behind in agriculture research in this province. In fact there is an article that I should have brought up with me from my office, but I forgot, where we are told that there is a real brain drain on agriculture research in Manitoba, and it is all shifting over to Saskatchewan. The government of Saskatchewan is doing a tremendous job of attracting researchers and they are becoming the agriculture research centre of Canada. It is something that Manitoba is losing out on desperately and something I am very disappointed in.

When we hear this government talk about value-added jobs and agriculture diversification, to have those things happen you have to have research. So I would encourage the government to move forward on getting the money back to producers that they have coming from the surplus in the GRIP account and the balance of money that is available, that is, the provincial and federal government's share, that the government put that money into agriculture research. It is something that we desperately need.

The program, as I said, was one that got money into farmers' hands. It was one, but there were problems with it; and, if we ever have to bring a program in like that again, we have to look more closely and plan it out that we do not run into the problems where we have, in cases

where some farmers were actually farming the program and some of the policies that were in there were not sustainable. We were encouraging people to grow crops that there was probably no room for on the market.

So, Madam Speaker, we have to think more carefully before we put a program in. Certainly, as we have said with other programs, if there is need for another program, and we do not expect it with grain prices going up but, in the future, programs should be based on costs of production, on what it costs a producer. We sincerely feel that programs should also be capped to restrict the amount of money to go to one farmer. The government should not have a problem dealing with that, because they have restricted the amounts of money that they will put to so many other things.

I think that we should look at this as well, that we want to sustain family farms and encourage people to stay on the land. What happened with GRIP is that we were getting payments, large operators getting substantial amounts of money and smaller operators not getting nearly the amount of money, and this does not work when what you are really trying to do is sustain the population of a rural community.

The other part of the bill is to deal with amendments to The Crop Insurance Act. One of the first changes is the practice and procedure for the appeal tribunal, and I am very pleased to see this amendment brought forward. I have had constituents who had been before the appeal tribunal of Crop Insurance and found it a very intimidating procedure when Crop Insurance appears there with their lawyers and a big group of people and a farmer comes forward without any support staff. It is a very intimidating situation.

The changes will now allow appeals to be orally, by telephone. The act states that the evidence may be given in any manner the tribunal considers appropriate. As I say, Madam Speaker, I think that this will be a much more friendly environment for those people who are appealing their case before the Crop Insurance tribunal, and I think that is a welcome change. It is a change that has been suggested by producers when the Crop Insurance Review panel was doing their hearings and it is one that I am sure will make the whole process much more friendly to the producers.

But there are many other changes since The Crop Insurance Act has been opened up that the government could deal with, and they have not. There are concerns with coverage that farmers are now able to get on hay. It is a real difficult year for cattle producers who are depending on native hay. There is no coverage for it right now, and there are many producers in the province who are suffering because of that. So there are weaknesses within The Crop Insurance Act that have to be dealt with.

Another weakness within The Crop Insurance Act is the coverage compensation for big game. This has caused serious problems in many of the constituencies in the Parkland Region for myself, for the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). I am sure the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach), Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), all members have had constituents who have suffered because of big game damage. It is an issue that has not been resolved and one that we would hope that this government, a recommendation that they would consider to deal with.

But basically, Madam Speaker, the move by the government to open up the way Crop Insurance people hear their appeals is a good move. We support that and we look forward to working and encouraging the government to address many of the other concerns that are now on the minds of farmers with respect to the way that crop insurance works.

There are, as I said, the issues of the cattle producers at the present time, both with native hay that they are unable to get insurance on and also the big game damage that is there. With respect to the GRIP program, that part is something that has to happen because the program is nonexistent anymore. But we have to understand too that with the removal of the GRIP it has also repealed the parts that include the Tame Hay Program, the forage establishment program. We would want to see government bring forward replacement programs for that.

* (1510)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): This bill brings to an end the five-year GRIP program that was administered under the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation. At the end of this five-year program, which provided close to approximately \$800 million worth of benefits to farmers nationally, there will be a surplus of approximately

somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$65 million. This money will be distributed among farmers, provincial and federal governments, and something which we should be at least monitoring, watching in terms of what is actually happening with these dollars and possibly even get some sort of a report from the current minister in terms of what he is anticipating.

It is interesting to note that the minister was—or I should say, Madam Speaker, although there are no specific numbers, it would appear there are a number of outstanding claims under this program. The meat of the legislation deals primarily with the setting up of an appeal board with the power to settle all outstanding claims. I do not necessarily have the specific numbers, but to watch for potential disenchanted farmers and concerns that they might have, and no doubt the ministry's office will be aware of some of the complaints that have come out, and how the minister has dealt with those complaints is also another concern that we would have with this legislation being brought forward and being passed to committee at this time. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading, Bill 23, The GRIP and Related Programs Termination and Consequential Amendments Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 24—The Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), Bill 24, The Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du crédit agricole), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No, leave has been denied.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment

Act, to our understanding and from the information that we have been given from government, is essentially a housekeeping bill. When the government brought in the regulation for the loan diversification, the language did not fit with The Agricultural Credit Corporation Act, and this legislation will rectify that situation. The bill allows for flexibility and latitude in terms of drafting legislation.

There are several definition revisions under Section 2. Under farming, the definition has been changed from livestock raising to stock keeping and the raising or keeping of livestock. Now, the definition, Madam Speaker, of livestock has been changed to include animals or birds designated for livestock in the regulation. This change has been made to accommodate bison ranching, boar ranching and, of course, elk ranching that this government is proposing to bring forward.

Madam Speaker, the changes in Section 26 suggest that the guaranteed loan is no longer in a form prescribed by regulation but rather in a form that is acceptable to the corporation. This change was made to take the application form out of the regulation, this form change. If the form changed for whatever reason, they would have to change the regulation which is cumbersome.

That part of it is not a problem, but, certainly, Madam Speaker, the move by the government to allow for various types of animals to be considered livestock in this province is one of the main reasons for this.

The government has moved forward, as you know, with another piece of legislation which will allow wild animals to now be considered livestock, and they are preparing with this legislation under the loan diversification program to allow producers to borrow money and then buy the elk which they have captured from the wild, elk that they have captured without legislation or the powers to do so. That has caused us concern, and it is a concern that we have raised with this government previously, that they have carried forward actions without having legislation and are now preparing to allow—and they could in fact, under the loans diversification program, lend money for the purchase of elk and other game animals which have not been designated to now be raised in this province.

Madam Speaker, there is also a section of the act that has been added to the legislation in order to protect

boards of directors from liability. According to what we can understand, liability is a very hot topic, and they had to move to cover this in the legislation. Certainly, I can understand why the board members would want to have these changes made. It is a big responsibility for a board to make decisions on loaning these kinds of money that are there, and certainly the protection should be there. The board members who make these decisions should be free of being sued, personally being sued, and that is not something that we would object to.

As I say, Madam Speaker, this appears to be basically housekeeping. We have talked to people within the department, at the credit corporation, and this is what they tell us. This is basically to bring the legislation in line with and cover off things that have been put forward through the new loans diversification program. We have concerns with the areas that will now be expanded and covered off as livestock.

We will wait for the presentations and hear what people have to say at committee, but basically that the expansion of the designation is the one area that we have concerns with. With the other parts of the bill, we are prepared to let that bill go to committee and hear what they have to say. But generally I guess in his comments, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) said that this bill would open up the lending to corporate farms; but, when we talked to the department on this, this did not seem to be the case. Certainly, I do not think that it is the intent of the Agricultural Credit Corporation to start lending money to large corporate farms. I believe the mandate of the corporation is to lend money to family operations. I would hope that the minister would look at distributing the funds of that corporation to a larger number of people. [interjection]

The member says that many family farms are corporate farms, and that is true. There are family farms that have moved to become corporate farms to protect themselves and involve their families in it, but my concern is farms that are integrated into very large businesses, capturing the money that I believe should be available to the family farm operations.

With those few comments, we are prepared to let this bill go and have it go to committee.

* (1520)

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): The Agriculture critic, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), is not available at the moment, so I want to make sure that we have some comments on the record in regard to this bill.

This bill broadens the scope and authority of the Agricultural Credit Corporation. Specifically, the definition of farming has been broadened. The Agricultural Credit Corporation will now include livestock such as wild boars—and I am not talking about the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), of course, to honourable members—elk and bison. Such changes are needed. Agriculture has changed a lot since the minister was first elected, as long back as that was. It is ironic that these changes are coming at a time, given the high grain prices, when more farmers are reverting to traditional prairie crop—wheat. If we say anything about this part of the bill, maybe we should say that it was needed five years ago when prices were not what they are today.

The bill also allows the corporation to become more heavily involved in value-added forms of agriculture by allowing it to set its own regulations under this act. We assume that the main focus, the main impetus, is the hog production. Under the current legislation, the corporation has some difficulty in supporting produce that may be funded by nonfarmers. Under this legislation, the change makes it easier for other nonagricultural entities to become partners in things like feedlots and such. Given the destruction of the Manitoba hog marketing board, this legislation comes as no surprise.

In essence, this bill makes corporate farming in Manitoba easier, allowing corporate access to what was traditionally the source of family farm credit. This is probably not a good idea. If corporate farming is to come to Manitoba, it should stand on its own legs financially. The Agricultural Credit Corporation should be given the mandate that allows it to protect and help family farms, not nontraditional nonagricultural corporations.

We give limited support to this bill, but we would like to see an amendment that puts a priority on family farms as opposed to nonagricultural corporations that want to look at vertical integration that could lead to the destruction of the family farms. With those few words, I will look forward to this going to committee. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 24, The Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 33—The Education Administration Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, Bill 33 (The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

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

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, this is the first opportunity we have had to debate several government education bills. There are a number of bills dealing with education this session, Bill 47, Bill 32, Bill 12, Bill 72, Bill 48, and they cover a wide range of issues in post-secondary education, in workplace education as well as in the K to 12 area. There are some common themes, and I want to spend a few minutes setting this bill in the context of the themes which I see in all of these education bills.

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

Firstly, I think each of them enhances the minister's powers at the expense of public debate. On occasion, it sets out, the bills set out to enhance even more centralizing power, and that is the power of the cabinet in Education and of Treasury Board.

Each of these puts into regulation matters which have been publicly dealt with before in Legislatures or in public debate, and so what is happening is that areas that I think are important for public debate are being dealt with by ministerial dictate, which our experience has been, has been rarely consultative. We look back at Bills 5 and 6, for example, of the previous session, there were

a number of people who wanted to be consulted in the setting of those regulations. I do not believe that they were all satisfied by the kinds of consultation that the minister had. In any case, regulations, apparently by this government, are never offered to the general public; they simply appear relatively quietly, relatively secretly, without input from the general public.

So overall in these education bills I think we regret some of that move that the minister is choosing to take. There are also, I think, threads of ideology which connect these bills not surprisingly: a thread of authoritarianism, a thread of centralization, which has been common to so many educational changes brought in by governments of a similar ideological cast to this one, whether in New Zealand, or in Britain, or in Alberta. Beneath that push, that thrust to centralization lies, I believe, a deep distrust in the good will of ordinary people to govern themselves locally. In the case of this particular government, there is a confrontational, divisive approach to their task that ill serves Manitobans.

The bills are linked in other ways. I think we will see, first of all, that in the hands of this government one of their aims is in fact to diminish the role and professionalism of teachers. Bill 72, in particular, is the culmination of several years of what, in popular parlance, is called "teacher bashing." It is an unpleasant phrase, but perhaps the one which is most popularly understood. The Tories, in fact, the government has engaged for several years in deliberate undermining and direct attacks upon the teaching profession.

I have spoken to many teachers who, in their own way, have asked me, why is this? Why is the government doing it? Well, I think there are a number of answers; there really probably is not any one single answer. It is possibly an attempt to displace, or perhaps I should say misplace, blame for the impact of the government cuts to public schools. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you had cut \$47 million from the public schools of Manitoba—if you, proverbially, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not in person—if one had presided over a system which had lost 570 teachers at a time when the numbers of school children are not declining, if you had presided over the increase in class size, which has begun to be very apparent to parents and teachers, particularly in the last two years, I think one might be looking for someone else to blame. So I think that is part of it.

I think we should perhaps also ask the question, is it, as this government claims, that teachers are complacent? Is it the role of this government to put them on their mettle? I am sure that there are many members on the government side who would argue that. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know of any teacher who ever argues perfection. It is not in the nature of the business. There is always room for improvement. No one ever walks away from a classroom and says to himself or herself, ah, yes, in my class of 33 thirteen-year-olds today, I held their rapt attention. I taught them to remember something that will stay with them the rest of their life. I taught them, in their 33 different ways, to deepen their understanding of this particular subject, and I am confident that in their 33 different ways, in spite of the physical disabilities of some and the emotional or behavioural handicaps of others, I have brought them another step forward in their desire for continuous learning. Perhaps I have given 33 of them some of the tools they will need for that lifelong journey. No teacher anywhere in the world ever sees that kind of perfection. If the Tories think that it is only their government that is going to put them on their mettle, I think they do not understand the very nature of teaching.

It is in the nature of both teachers and teaching to be self-critical, to be continuously evaluating their daily and yearly performance, to be searching for more effective methods and for more appropriate approaches to particular subjects and to particular students. Every teacher everywhere acknowledges that there is always room for improvement. It is what professional development is all about. It is what advanced degrees are all about. It is what summer institutes are all about.

If the government had offered some support for professional development or for advanced degrees or for additional summer institutes, we might concede that improvement was their real goal, but the very opposite is the case. This is the government which deliberately instructed school boards to take away professional development, to meet the requirements for the reduced workweek commonly referred to as Filmon Fridays.

* (1530)

We cannot put any store, any faith in this government's interest in professional development or in the improving of educational quality through that means, and, yet, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, the government argues that teachers need to improve quality, so we have to raise, I think, at least one eyebrow at that reason for their attack upon teachers.

In addition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government must be aware that every survey in Manitoba, whether it is done by the teachers or whether it is done by others, has shown public support for teachers and for the quality of education in local schools. There is an old adage that both Canadians and Americans value very much the school that they know, and they are only far more uncertain about the ones they do not know.

Well, what other purposes might the government have had? Is it, as many teachers have said to me, simple vindictiveness, Tory vindictiveness? There is certainly a strain of that belief amongst many teachers, but I find that difficult to believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Surely no government of Manitoba, surely not that nice member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), would formulate policy on the basis of such a narrowly construed argument or such partisan ways. It cannot be that. We must rule that out, and I say that to teachers who speak to me. Surely vindictiveness is not the ruling force in a government of Manitoba.

I think what we should consider, however, is that there is something very fundamental being put in place in education by this government. The government, in its clumsy and inarticulate way, wants to reduce the role of professionals in the education system. I believe that they see this as part of their larger plan to reduce the role of the state, to broaden their attack on the public sector. It is expressed in stark terms sometimes. The previous minister, Mr. Manness, used to put the question, whose child is this, arguing for a return, in effect, to the early 19th Century and the relationship between trustees, parents and teachers that existed then.

I think on the part of both earlier ministers and the present minister that this is, in fact, a misreading of Manitobans. Manitobans as a whole are far better educated than they were in the early 19th Century or at the turn of the century, and I think what you would find in education, as in health, that there is a desire for more information by more and more segments of the population, a desire to be well informed in order to make informed decisions about wellness or about our own

education and particularly that of our children, but I do not sense, except on the part of some of the more extremes of the Tory party, a desire to dismiss or undermine the teaching profession.

Parents want to be seen as partners, and I attended the conference with parents that the minister held in Portage earlier this year. Parents want to be working with teachers, not against them. They want to be able to share the knowledge and experience of teachers. They especially want to be able to trust in the dispassionate and compassionate judgment of teachers. They do not want to see the wedge that is being driven between parents and teachers that this government is pushing. They want to share it; they want to be able to trust teachers, and they want to be working with them.

What we need and what this government does not seem to be aware of is that co-operation and interdependence are the values which are going to move the education system forward. If you fundamentally want to see a successful education system, you have to ensure that parents and teachers and students and, indeed, government, whether it is school board or whether it is the provincial government, are pulling in the same direction. That is not what we are seeing from this divisive government. Put more simply, if I can put it very simply for the members of the government, it is difficult, if not impossible, to reform education without the trust, without the co-operation of teachers, and the government, I would say, is in danger of losing both. Nor can this be dismissed, I think, just as rhetoric.

Last week in the House I drew to the minister's attention a recent report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation in Europe, the OECD. This report underlined with statistics the fact that—and it actually draws new evidence from its own members in western Europe—the most successful education systems were in countries where governments actively supported their teachers. It does not take the provision, the proverbial brain surgeon or rocket scientist to argue this, but it is useful to learn of solid new evidence, although, as I have often said in this Legislature, one of the most surprising and disappointing aspects of this government is its dismissive attitude towards research and evidence. I suppose it is because theirs is indeed a moral crusade. It does not depend upon evidence. It depends, in fact, upon demons and saviours, not, as the Minister of Justice

(Mrs. Vodrey) put it the other day, on statistics. She, another Minister of Education in the past, was trying to account for the disparity between an 8 percent growth in robbery in Canada and a 66 percent growth in Manitoba in 1996. She chose to dismiss the very clear Canada-based evidence, and it is a common response of many Tory ministers in a tight corner. It is, fundamentally, because theirs is a moral crusade.

So I do not hold out any hope that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) will be interested in OECD reports, but we do expect her to recognize that most Manitobans understand the nature of the teacher's task, respect its complexity, and see it as one part of the broader task with parents and the government to educate all our children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 33, in this particular case, will enable the minister to take a more direct role in classroom assessment. Not content with the exams worth 50 percent, the minister now wishes to clearly establish a centralized role for her department in every other aspect of assessment. Now some may argue, and they may be right, that the residual powers of the minister always meant that such authority rested at the centre. But what Bill 33 does is to signal a greater interest in classroom measurement on the part of this particular government. In so doing, they are deliberately moving into an area which the teaching profession in its widest sense, and I speak here to include superintendents and principals, where the profession believed it had a significant role to play, not an exclusive role, but a significant role. I know that many school boards and school councils will also argue for a role for teachers in this, and there are good reasons to suggest that in a province as diverse as this local conditions and desires should be recognized.

Those school boards and school councils are, again, being by-passed by this minister and by this bill. It is another of the centralizing agencies that they will be creating. It will be the minister who will determine how much that test, that essay, that project, that quiz will be worth, and whether it can be reported in numbers, letters, sentences or by portfolio or individually or jointly with a student or in family-based presentations.

The Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) for Manitoba will decide this for every classroom across the province, but to do this the minister will require the co-

operation of all classroom teachers and school councils, and it is doubtful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government and this minister has the full confidence of either.

There is, in my view also, a part of the government's attempt to deskill another profession. If the nature of assessment practices is to be limited and directed by a political party, because that is what this is and it will be so in the hands of this minister, then what is left for the teacher? To teach what the minister deems appropriate at the time and the exact minute determined by the minister, because that is another section of this bill, to teach larger and more diverse classes with a more limited range of tools for measuring progress and most of them in the hands of others?

It sounds to me like the immediate narrowing of a job description in a unilateral manner. It is an unusual step, but it fits with the proposals of the minister for the Render-Dyck hearings on the reduction of salaries and the reduction of academic qualifications. The government's determination in this bill is to sit with its stopwatch in Winnipeg and determine in a rigid manner the minutes that will be devoted to each subject, and it is a particularly curious proposal. Where is the role for flexible or local decision making in this? Surely the government recognizes the damage it did last year and the year before at the junior high school level with its centralized rigidity. Its impact has been to reduce curriculum options for many school divisions, and many are left wondering whether, in fact, this narrowing of curriculum options is indeed the government's real agenda.

Finally, surely if a government had confidence in the effectiveness of its system-wide testing at four grade levels, then it would not be necessary to set more than careful general guidelines for the time to be spent on each subject. The proof would be in the testing. Again, this proposal for more rigidly, centrally timed classes is intended to leave less room or indeed no room for the professional judgment of teachers or of local decision makers, in particular, school councils or indeed of the elected school boards and their councils.

* (1540)

Well, what other common threads are in these Education bills? Mr. Deputy Speaker, one striking

similarity is the way in which the government has chosen to use the language of decentralization, while instituting far more extreme and centralized forms of government than Manitobans have seen before. In the case of this bill, the minister in introducing it speaks of and I quote her, commitment to providing greater decision making for schools and enabling schools and their communities to make decisions that are considered best for the learning requirements of their students; yet her bill, Bill 33, bypasses school boards. Rather than encouraging school boards to report to their citizens, as those citizens require, it will be the minister who will tell school boards how, what, when and where they will report to their citizens. There is not even any lip service in the bill to working with school boards to develop such plans. There is no school trustee advisory committee on this. There is no teacher advisory committee on this. There is merely an out-of-the-blue bill which directs school boards on how they must relate to their own electors.

As is so often the case with the centralizing tactics of this government, we can only speculate on how this government would respond to similar directions from Ottawa. We can only speculate, too, on what a minister could have meant in her introduction to this bill when she spoke of it as, quote, improving the partnership of those working together in education. This bill is, in fact, another attempt to supersede the hundreds of school trustees of this province, or as one of my favourite commentators from the Hanover School Division wrote, the Tory trustee-proofing of education.

We on this side of the House are dismayed, though not surprised, by the dissonance between government's rhetoric and its action, between its attempt to disguise centralization as decentralization. In the context of one bill, perhaps it is not too disturbing, but when a government continually talks of reform when it really means cut, or protection when it means deregulation, or of enhancement when it means privatization, or of decentralization when it means expanded ministerial powers, then there is a serious cause for concern.

Good government must mean what it says and say what it means. Otherwise it cannot and should not be trusted. It is, unfortunately, what many people believe about these Tories, and once having fallen into such a low place in public esteem, it is often a difficult place to get out of. It is a genuine pity, I think, that the government is not being

straightforward on this and other education bills, because this bill does have the germ of at least two good ideas.

I think the minister, in requiring the greater dissemination of public information about schools, is on the right track. We should make more widely known the achievements of our schools and our students, and in this process helping citizens understand the goals and achievements of our education system, there can be many hands on deck. The trustees elected by local residents know some of the information needs of local citizens.

Teachers, daily in touch with parents and students, can help bridge the information gaps in other ways. School advisory councils, linking teachers, parents, citizens and students, would have useful, co-operative perspectives on what could be offered to the public.

Superintendents, in touch with educational practice nationally and internationally, would be aware of how other jurisdictions have handled this issue, as indeed would those few consultants and specialists still employed in the minister's own department, and have something to bring to bear on this.

There is an important task to be done in Manitoba, and there are many Manitobans who would want to be part of it, but I doubt if that is what the minister has in mind. I hope to be pleasantly surprised, but given the source of these proposals and the minister's own experience and the underlying purpose of Tory educational reform, I am somewhat pessimistic.

Similar proposals in Tory jurisdictions here have a common purpose with those elsewhere. In London, in Auckland the purpose has been twofold, to increase the central authority while giving the appearance of decentralization and, secondly, to tailor such public information to narrow, measurable exam results and to use them deliberately to create a market-based system of education, where schools compete with each other for customers and with each other for grants from both public and private sources.

Similarly, in Alberta the creation of a market-based education system is underway. The Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) recently required all schools to report only their test scores in each grade level, resulting in pages of league standings in papers across Alberta.

What concerns me is that this is similar to the approach that we have seen in other Conservative jurisdictions, and we have always said, as New Democrats, that the market has a place, but the marketplace in education and health is misplaced, that social goods are distributed and should be distributed in other ways other than on the basis of the free market. It would do the government, I think, a world of good to contemplate that and to look at the direction that they are taking both health care and education in Manitoba.

We do not want to see incomplete information generated by this bill. Parents should be entitled to see test scores in the context of all school achievement, and many school boards are already in the process of preparing balanced and informative information packages for their citizens.

The North York school board, for example, was written about in the *Globe and Mail*. They have a series of very interesting—and I sent for them from the North York school board. I looked at them and distributed them to a number of Manitobans. They prepare school profiles. Similarly, Winnipeg 1; some of the rural boards are beginning this practice. The North York ones provide a profile of the catchment area of the school. They provide information on the socioeconomic conditions of the school's catchment area, the languages that are present in the school, the class size, the teacher qualifications and specializations. It indicates test scores and it compares them, where possible, to Canadian ones or to international ones. It also provides information about achievements of both individuals and of classes and of schools in drama, in music, in physical education and in technology. Effective school profiles convey a sense of both school and community, and they are based upon the recognition that good schools are more than the sum of their exam statistics.

I hope that the minister will permit parent and citizens to have this fuller, wider view of schools and education, but again I am pessimistic. The language of the minister's introduction gives me the sense that really what she is talking about is school-based and, in some cases, aggregate student test scores. I think Manitobans deserve more. The models are very clearly there in other jurisdictions. Some Manitoba divisions have already begun to develop these, and I think the minister has the opportunity to build upon this.

I say I am pessimistic because, of course, this is the government and this is the minister who is prepared to see Manitoba students graduate without a high school history course in national history. This is the minister who has presided over the loss of home economics, of an industrial arts and in basic French. It would be an unusual departure if such a minister were to offer directives to school boards to report on the specific results on the broad and sometimes intangible achievements of a school community. If we were to see those kinds of reports for the last few years in Manitoba, we would certainly see an increase in class size, a loss of funding, a loss of funding for special needs students. We would see a decrease in the number of teachers, and we would see in many schools a 20 per cent increase in class size. We would see narrower curriculum offerings for a number of schools. That sense of a broadly-based education, particularly at the junior high level, is something that would be very clearly shown to Manitobans school by school.

So my sense is that the minister is not in fact going to look for that kind of broad reporting that Manitobans deserve. She will be looking for a narrowly based test score ranking of schools. I hope I am not correct in this. I hope indeed that the minister would take a much broader perspective. Of course, we do not know what she will do, because the minister will not discuss what exactly she is going to require school boards to report. This bill only enhances her central power to require school boards to obey her orders. Everything else, the crucial decisions about school profiles or exam results, method of reporting, will be done privately, secretly through regulations. There may be consultations—I hope there are—but it will be with a chosen few, as is the case with so much of this government's consultation.

* (1550)

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a common thread through so many of these government's bills. Decisions and power are being taken away, in this case from elected school boards, and put into the hands of the minister. Although accountability may be a buzzword for the '90s, it seems to have little meaning for the Tory government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the second useful idea in this bill is contained in a section which allows the minister to release information relating to pupil achievement and the

effectiveness of programs in public or private schools. I am glad to see the minister recognize that this is important. I have drawn to this minister's attention and to other ministers' attentions the kind of reporting that is done on a yearly basis, thoroughly, accurately and in a broad base, by the Saskatchewan government, the Saskatchewan indicators report.

I have talked about Alberta's planning system, the rolling budgets, but there is no interest on the part of this government in managing or being accountable for education in that way, although I will say in Estimates this last year the minister did say that the government was interested in the Saskatchewan indicators program. So I think there is a chink there, and I do urge all members in fact to look at the kind of publicly accountable material which comes from the government of Saskatchewan. It is a credit, I think, and I am sure it, too, can be improved upon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this bill leads to that level of provincial reporting and accountability, then I think Manitobans may have a means to hold the government accountable for its cuts to education funding or for its reductions of options in curriculum in junior and senior high school. So I am glad the minister listened to our suggestions. I am anticipating that this bill may be a first step in that direction, and I would be pleased to applaud it if the first step became a second step, but Manitoba has a long way to go in reporting on information about education to its citizens.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on this bill, to draw attention of honourable members to the increased centralization, to the shift from public legislation to regulation by ministerial fiat, to our concerns that reporting to citizens be broad and comprehensive and to our repeated call for provincial indicators and accountability that should begin with the minister. I regret considerably the gulf that the minister has created, deliberately so, I believe, between her government and teachers. We regret the potential for devaluing the place of teacher's skills and profession, and we look forward to a time when that co-operation and trust can be returned to Manitoba.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, too, would just like to put a few brief comments on the record in regard to Bill 33. The

purpose of the bill, as far as I understand it, is basically to give the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh) the authority to write regulations and promote accountability.

Listening to the honourable member opposite's comments in regard to accountability, my first question would be to you: What is wrong with asking people to be accountable to a system that is out there before them? It certainly has been brought to my attention, by several of the teachers that I represent, that there is a concern with the suggestion that we are putting forth a curriculum, and they said, well, the way it goes is, I will teach strictly to the curriculum, with nothing outside of those parameters. I would suggest that if there is room outside of that time frame to teach everything outside of the curriculum, that they so wish to, they should be, but we still have to set guidelines for people to follow a system of education or any other type of process. I think, whenever you are trying to introduce responsibilities to people, there is going to be conflict, and there is always going to be the fear that that is not the way we used to do it.

When you are faced with that, teachers, of all people, are probably the most resilient and most able to compromise and to adjust, and I think that suggesting that they cannot and will not is probably presumptuous on the honourable member's position in the sense, I think, that after looking at what is being presented to them, they are going to see that they certainly can work within the guidelines that are presented to them.

One of the things that it touches—I listened to the honourable member opposite. She talks about accountability, and I sit here day in and day out and listen to the honourable member ask questions of the minister. I think probably in good faith that the minister is responsible, and I say to you, she is responsible; therefore, she is accepting the responsibilities. This act, or this bill, is just to give her that authority and also that responsibility that comes with it.

The bottom line is that anything that happens in the education system ends up back on the minister's doorstep, so why not give that person the authority and the ability to deal with some of those situations as they occur?

I think also, you know, we are always talking about the rights of teachers and the rights of school boards and the

rights of students, and I agree 100 percent. I think that this will do it. It is certainly going to ensure that our schools are responsive to the communities that they represent. I think that there is no better example of situations where teachers and education have changed and have adjusted to satisfy the needs of the communities that they are serving, and I think that will continue to happen. I think that it will continue to happen in a more direct manner in today's world, simply because that is the direction of the world that is going right now. We must be responsive to the situations that are happening today and deal with those issues as they occur.

I think we also have to set up some long-range planning, but the ability to be flexible is certainly more prevalent in today's world than ever before. It is changing so dramatically and so quickly, and I suggest to you that for us to get a starting point and an ending point, we certainly have to introduce some qualifications of where we are and where we are going. I think that the testing that is proceeding in Manitoba right now is going to give us that ability to judge.

One of the points I would like to take issue with the member opposite is, we talk about teacher accountability. I accept that, and I would suggest that we have the finest, probably, teachers in Canada. The one question I will put forward, and perhaps someone opposite can enlighten me, I have talked to teachers in regard to this issue, and one of the concerns that they are presenting to me is the fact that they have not been evaluated in the last ten years. When you do not have evaluation, how do you know if you are doing the proper job? How do you know if you are satisfying the needs of the community?

We hear of teachers who are teaching outside of the curriculum. I think that is okay if that is the direction that community wants, but I do think, when we set up guidelines, the guidelines must be followed, and I certainly think that this bill is going to address that particular situation. I think goals must be set and achievement levels must be obtained, and I think that everybody in the situation, right from the students to the teachers to the parents to the trustees to government, must be aware of what these goals are and the direction that we are going.

I think the member opposite is probably spewing a lot of fear in the hearts of the educators who are working so

diligently on our behalf, and I think that is perhaps unnecessary that they should be put in that uncomfortable position, because really what we are doing is not asking for one specific group to conform. What we are asking for is a system to be accountable to the people who use it. I think the people of Manitoba deserve that, and I support the minister in bringing this bill forward. Certainly it is consistent with the education policies throughout Canada, where the minister has this kind of authority and, again, I suggest to you, is accountable for it.

So I do not see any problem supporting this bill, and I just want to put those few comments on the record. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I would like to put a few comments on the record in regard to our caucus's concerns about Bill 33, The Education Administration Amendment Act. This Bill 33 follows the fine tradition of Tory education bills by giving the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) more power. One section is added to give the minister the authority to set instruction time, authorize programs and materials for use in public and private schools. The addition of a new clause also allows the minister to release information relating to pupil achievement and effectiveness of programs in public and private schools.

* (1600)

This act also gives the minister power to make regulations pertaining to methods of assessment, effectiveness, information that school boards are required to give to the minister, matters which must be included in the annual school plan, and matters which must be included in the Auditor's supplementary report.

In short, this bill allows the ministers tremendous powers over the Education curriculum. These amendments match what the minister has been doing by putting in place province-wide exams. The general idea is that parents will be able to evaluate which school has better exam results. With that comes the expectation that you are going to have some schools better than others. Rather than putting resources into identifying that, why are we not looking at ways to improve all schools so all schools are good instead of trying to delineate which schools are better than others?

Certainly parents that worry about which school their children go to will use that to evaluate schools in the area. This is not a bad thing from parents' perspective, but it kind of skewers the idea of public education. As I said, in the public's mind, we are going to have good schools and bad schools. Who will want to send their children to bad schools?

In regard to province-wide exams, over and over again the question is asked: How will this improve the quality of education in Manitoba? How will my child learn more because she is tested? By releasing information about pupil or school results, the minister is simply playing one group against the other, diverting attention away from the real issue of her government's underfunding of public education. So I look forward to the committee stage where I am sure there will be strong representation made from a number of groups about this bill. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Bill 31—The Livestock Industry Diversification and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), Bill 31, The Livestock Industry Diversification and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur la diversification de l'industrie du bétail et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

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

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad to be able to rise today in the House to voice my opposition and my concerns with Bill 31, The Livestock Industry Diversification Act. I, first of all, want to make sure that everybody is clear, reading through the Tory party gobbledygook kind of title to this bill. It is a fancy way of describing elk ranching and the ability of farmers to ranch a wild animal that is prevalent in our part of the world. So I will be referring to this bill as the elk ranching bill throughout the comments that I make over the next little while.

At second reading, it is my understanding that we are to give very deep, very sober consideration to the bills that were passed to us from first reading. This is something that I sincerely hope the opposition, of course, and the opposition to the opposition, which is the government, also does take very seriously.

This is something that I think needs to be considered a lot more than what it has been so far. In saying that, I want to point out, first of all, that we are half way down the road already to elk ranching. Without ever coming to the Legislature, without ever having any of the 57 MLAs have a lick of a word at all in this whole debate, the province has undertaken to go out into the wilds and lasso and capture about 117 elk out of the Swan Valley and out of the federal park at Riding Mountain.

First of all, I consider that very undemocratic. We are now into a situation where we are debating a bill put forward to the House that is already halfway to being implemented because we already have the elk captured and sitting in the Natural Resources minister's constituency in Grunthal, Manitoba.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us be clear that we are dealing with elk ranching and that we are dealing with a plan that is already halfway implemented. I do not know why this government thinks that it can play God on any issue that comes its way, this one being no exception and this one quite probably being the most blatant example of this government and its arrogance and its superiority complex that it shows in the area of natural resources.

This is an area of Natural Resources because the elk still is, despite this government's best efforts, a wild animal in our province. Livestock diversification tells me that we are not just going to diversify into elk, that we are going to diversify into other animals, which has been the case in other jurisdictions that has allowed this kind of legislation to come through to fruition. I wonder if this government has plans to expand from elk to bear, from elk and bear to moose, to deer, whatever other animal this government decides that it can make a little bit of money off of. This is a case of this government playing God.

The things that I want members across the House from me to consider is the amount of pain that they put these elk through when they are so-called velvetized. Number one, the methods by which the elk antlers are removed are

two, as far as my contacts have told me. Number one, in some cases, the elk can be anesthetized—[interjection] That is a good one, anesthetized. I thank all honourable members for helping me to pronounce that word—and what they do is freeze the animal and, insofar as that is concerned, cut down on the amount of pain that the elk is put through. I want to point out that I said cut down on the amount of pain, not eliminate the amount of pain. Now, that is going to cost a little bit of money to do this.

In other jurisdictions that I have contacted, another method is used where they simply run an electric current through the body of the elk, not freezing the elk as in the first method but actually just stunning the animal long enough for it to hold still to have its elk antlers sawed off. Elk antlers at the velvet stage are full of nerve endings and are very much an alive part of the elk as much as its ears, its nose and its tail. When you simply run an electric current through the animal, it does not reduce the pain one iota, and that is what we have to think about to begin with. Is this government going to be the government that enacts legislation that allows that kind of pain to be inflicted upon a wild animal? Is this government going to be the one that does that? That is part of the consideration that I think this government has to think of very carefully before it goes ahead with elk ranching. Indeed, one of the members across mentions the word "Saskatchewan," where elk ranching is part of life in that province, and that is indeed where I get the information that the majority of the velvetized antlers are cut off using the electric current method, the painful method that involves sticking an electric prod down the throat of an elk and then cutting off the elk antlers at the velvet stage. That is something that I think this government has got to take more seriously than what it has thought about and something that we need to discuss as we go through the discussions on Bill 31.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another aspect of this whole concept of elk ranching that I think needs to be given a lot more consideration than it has been so far is the area of poaching. I have consulted a wide variety of people who, No. 1, are involved in elk ranching, and I have consulted with a number of hunters who have expressed their opposition to this Bill 31. I have consulted with people within the Department of Natural Resources, all of which tell me that they are worried that now that the government is okaying something that is previously spelled out as illegal, i.e., the sale of antlers and elk

product in the black market, that their worry is that they will not be able to have a handle on the amount of poaching that goes on in our wilds as it is.

* (1610)

Indeed, what they are telling me is that the Department of Natural Resources has cut back so far on its resources to patrol and implement the law and execute the law and catch poachers that the department even now is in no condition, no state of which to protect our elk. What they ask is, how are we going to do this now that the government says it is okay to go out and sell antlers into the black market?

I want to take a minute to consider why we are doing this in the first place. What possible goal could justify the capturing and ranching of a wild animal and the pain that we put it through? What possible objective could justify that kind of action? What grand and noble goal could the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) possibly have in mind to put our wild animals through that kind of torture?

The official reason that the Department of Agriculture comes up with is that we are providing medicine for people in the Orient. On the surface that seems like quite a noble and grand objective. In reality that is just nonsense. They are not selling it as medicine. It is being sold as an aphrodisiac. It is being sold in the Orient so that people in that part of the world can enhance their love lives. That is what this government is up to and I challenge anybody on the other side of the House to grind up a velvetized elk antler, take it to their own Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and tell him it is a medicine and tell him to fund it through medicare. He will turn you down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have had example after example after example in my own riding of people whose drugs have been delisted under the Pharmacare system, drugs that we in Canada, our own government says help with people who suffer from certain illnesses. This government does not think those are medicines.

Why would it think that an aphrodisiac ground out of an elk antler going to the Orient somehow becomes a medicine? How can they actually think that we are helping people in the Orient with these kinds of drugs?

Do they not think to wonder why animals such as the panda bear are put onto extinction lists or endangered lists? Why is it something that is considered on the verge of extinction? It is the same kind of reasoning as this government is using as an excuse to have its own friends benefit at the price of our wild elk.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would suggest to you that this phoney-baloney excuse of providing medicine for Oriental people is nothing but a sham and that the real reason that this government is going into elk ranching is to set up some of their own friends with elk ranches throughout Manitoba.

All you have to do is look over the people who have already got themselves set up for elk ranching. Take a look at who is getting off the mark to get ready. That leads me to ask, how are these 117 or so elk at Grunthal going to be dispersed from here? That is going to be the next problem that this government has to deal with. Now, are they going to put this up for an auction? Are they going to auction off these elk to the highest bidder so that a whole bunch of politicians and others who have a lot of money can step forward and buy elk? Tell me how that is going to help the normal farmer out there in my riding. Tell me how it is going to help any of the aboriginal bands in our province who may be interested in going into elk ranching. It is not going to help them, because the people who already have money are going to buy the elk.

So if the government decides they do not want to get into that mess, what do they do next? They have to figure out where those elk are going.

An Honourable Member: Never fear, Enns is here.

Mr. Struthers: That is probably what we are afraid of.

The other area that this government has to consider and has been very tentative in considering to this point is the whole question of disease. We have had cases over and over and over throughout western Canada and throughout the States where elk which have been ranched have had to be destroyed because of a variety of diseases. In the States we have had cases where elk, total herds have been destroyed because they have contracted tuberculosis or brucellosis. Even in Manitoba we have had problems with blue tongue in the elk, and in Saskatchewan as well.

We like to talk about, or the government at least likes to talk about the plan in Saskatchewan. They say how well it is working. Well, in Saskatchewan itself they had a herd completely destroyed because it contracted tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis can be spread from elk to elk. Tuberculosis can be spread from elk to cattle. In Alberta they have done a study that says tuberculosis can be spread from elk to human. Is this the stuff that we want to be part of? Is this what this government is asking us to okay in this Legislature?

What does the farm community have to say about this? I would wonder if the Agriculture minister (Mr. Enns) has done any work at all in consulting with the cattle ranchers in this country, the farmers, who have been telling me at least that they are very concerned with this government's direction when it comes to elk ranching, because they have no faith, No. 1, in this government's word when it assures them there is not going to be problems but, more importantly, from a scientific point of view, there is no test that can absolutely 100 percent say whether or not we are bringing diseased elk into this province.

There is no test that says so, and this government can talk all it likes about all the tests available, but there is not one yet today that is 100 percent accurate. I think you can actually ask the government members across the way, and they would have to agree with me on that. There is no test that would give 100 percent accuracy, and anything less than that is just simply not true.

Possibly the most controversial part of the whole consideration on diseases concerning elk has to deal with what is referred to as the shrinking, the wasting away disease that is prevalent in elk, a form, the elk version of what Britain has been putting up with in the area of mad cow disease.

Now, in Regina, they do have a case noted. It is fact. It is not some fairy tale. It is not some myth. It is something that this government needs to deal with, a case in Regina of elk contracting this disease and dying. The scary part about this is that we do not know, when we import an elk that has the elk version of mad cow disease, if we are actually importing that into the province or not because the only way you determine this elk version of mad cow disease is through an autopsy.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) knows that as well. We do not know it until after the animal has died so that we can perform an autopsy. We do not know how many elk along the way it has affected, or indeed we do not know how many cattle along the way it has infected. We have no way of knowing that until we do an autopsy, till we cut the animal open, and we take a look at the animal's brain. Then we know if we have cases in the province of wasting-away disease, and that is a fact. That is no fairy tale.

* (1620)

That is something this government has to think about. That is something this government has to try to prevent if it goes ahead with its plan, which I sincerely hope it does not, but I do not see any discussion up to this point from this government or any evidence from this government that would shoot down what I have said so far. Everything that I have said so far has been factual and has not been disputed by this government. Clearly, this government cannot deal with the facts when it comes to elk ranching, and it has to deal with this issue only through having 31 members in the Legislature who will be willing to stand and push this legislation through.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members across the way talk about the elk industry. They talk about the economic diversification benefits of elk. How can this government talk about the benefits of elk in dollar figures when at the same time it is this government who lures these elk out of Riding Mountain National Park, a federal national park, lures them out of the park and captures them in a pen at McCreary? How can this government at the same time lure elk out of the Duck Mountain Provincial Park, much to the chagrin of local farmers, much to the opposition of local farmers? Indeed, this government had to shut down its plans to get more elk out of the Duck Mountains because too many farmers were opposed to the original plan and to the capture of these elk.

Just consider for a minute these local farmers in the Duck Mountain area. One of the other reasons that this government is going ahead with its plan, it says, is because there is an elk depredation problem, that they have to do this because there are too many elk in the area, and it is causing too much damage for local farmers. This government, for one, is not willing to compensate those farmers at a fair rate. Number two, this government

is not willing to sit down and listen to the recommendations of its own elk management board in that area. What is the government scared of? That board never once said it was in favour of elk ranching, never once proposed that as an alternative to the problems. That board told this government four different things that it should be doing other than elk ranching. Why would this government not listen to the elk management board in that area? Why do they not listen to that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the one thing that I also want to point out is the hypocrisy of this government and the hypocrisy of this government's Agriculture minister who back in the mid-'80s accepted an award, I believe, from the Canadian wilderness people, the federation who said that the then-critic for, I believe, Agriculture is the man of the year. We like this guy so much because he is opposed to elk ranching. He is in there, he is fighting because the elk are going to bring disease, and the elk are going to be poached and all those kinds of reasons. They said, he is a great man. We are going to give him an award because he stands against elk ranching.

I wonder if the minister goes home every night and shines up that plaque on top of the—

Point of Order

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe it is a legitimate point of order when a deliberate misrepresentation of the fact is presented to this Chamber, and in this instance the question of my receiving an award from the Canadian Wildlife Federation. It is quite true; I received that award. I am very proud of it. I invite the honourable members to come and look at it on my office wall sometime. I received that award because the government I was associated with, the department I was privileged to lead, the Department of Natural Resources did a number of things pertinent to wildlife conservation that the Canadian Wildlife Federation were prepared to acknowledge, such as introducing barbless hooks in fishing in the province of Manitoba, the first jurisdiction to use it, such as expanding the use of steel shot in various high-density hunting programs.

I never presented myself, and I have never expressed a position—I challenge anybody to read Hansard. I have put many words on Hansard. I have never stood up in this

House, in this Chamber, or in public anywhere, speaking in opposition to elk ranching.

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

* * *

Mr. Struthers: As has been the case throughout the few moments I have spoken here, I have stuck to the facts. Again, in regard to the reward that was received by then the critic, the member for Lakeside, I stick to that fact as well, that that was in recognition of his fight to uphold the dignity of one of Manitoba's finest wild creatures, and now we look at a government who is determined to put these creatures into captivity. I will say right now, so that when my grandchildren look through Hansard years down the road, they will say, at least somebody in that Legislature had enough sense just to predict—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please, the honourable Minister of Education, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if the member would care to table the facts that he says he has regarding the Minister of Agriculture's position on elk ranching prior to his receiving the award.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Struthers: Just before I was interrupted there, I was going to make the prediction that just like with the buffalo—

Point of Order

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): On a point of order, I am sure the member for Dauphin would agree that it would only be the honourable thing to table the information he has.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Environment did not have a point of order. A point of

order should be raised when there is a breach of the rules, not just to break into somebody's speech at this time.

Point of Order

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I notice that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) talked about tabling information. I wonder if the minister is intending to table today the information she promised yesterday on employment development.

Mrs. McIntosh: The information that the member requested that I said I would table is now ready and will be tabled tomorrow as promised. I challenge the member opposite to do the same thing and table, as I have said I will. I challenge him to be as honourable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. All honourable members do not have a point of order today. We are going a little far here, but time has expired.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have five minutes remaining.

It is now time for private members' hour.

* (1630)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PRIVATE BILLS

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), Bill 300 (The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi Modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège biblique Catherine Booth de l'Armée du Salut), standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

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

Bill 200—The Health Services Amendment Act

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

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

Bill 201—The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act

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

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

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Second reading, public bills, Bill 202, The Home Care Protection and Consequential Amendments Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [interjection] It is not standing? Sorry, just one second. Is this bill going to be proceeded with? I am sorry, that was wrong on my part. So this bill is not being proceeded with at this time.

Bill 203, is that bill being proceeded with at this time? No? Bill 205? Yes?

Bill 205—The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), that The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la thylose parasitaire de l'orme, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Friesen: The purpose of this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a simple one. It is intended to increase the

amount of a fine that a judge may levy for offences or for the breaking of the provincial Dutch Elm Disease Act, and it increases it from \$1,000 to a possibility of \$10,000. It gives the judges the greater latitude in the setting of fines for offences against The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act. It does not require fines of that amount. It simply gives them greater latitude.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

The origins of this bill, Madam Speaker, are twofold. One is that in two recent cases over the past two years, judges have made note in their comments after particular trials that the fines that they were able to impose were relatively small, so I had taken note of that. In my own constituency we did have a particular outbreak of Dutch elm disease at the bottom of Ethelbert Street, and, again, it seemed I think to people in the constituency that the fines or the penalties in The Dutch Elm Disease Act were not ones that were necessarily being taken seriously by everyone. So this proposal is to increase the latitude for judges in their levying of fines.

Madam Speaker, the Dutch elm disease issue in Manitoba is one that has been with us, I think, since the 1970s. Dutch elm disease itself is caused by a fungus, a fungal disease that is transmitted between the elms by beetles. It first appeared or at least was first noted in Manitoba in 1975. Since 1975, about 35 percent of the trees across Manitoba have been lost to Dutch elm disease, although I think it is difficult, particularly in rural areas, to estimate the exact, the precise amount of the loss.

But, certainly, they have been lost, and we do know that in other jurisdictions that that disease has travelled very quickly, and there are some very stark and very unpleasant pictures of cities in the United States and the eastern parts of Canada where Dutch elm disease when it was not checked, monitored, and where people allowed the disease to catch hold, that very quickly the entire stock of elms of communities can be simply decimated, so, Madam Speaker, I think that this issue is an important one for both rural and urban Manitoba and particularly the city of Winnipeg.

Now, I know that the government itself is looking at and, indeed, has draft versions of another Dutch elm disease act. It is not one that I have seen; it is not one

that I have heard the precise elements of, but I do know that they are working on it. I hope that we will be able to see it soon. What I mean to say by this is that this particular change that I am proposing here, I am well aware that this is not the entire nature of the revamping and improvement of The Dutch Elm Disease Act that is required. So what I am doing here is drawing the government's attention, the attention of the House, to one element of that and one element that some of my constituents in particular believe could be dealt with very quickly. It may take several more years for the revamping of the act by the government, and we would like to see some changes that can be brought in quite quickly ahead of that.

So I recommend this bill to the government in that context. It is not one that necessarily rules out changes that they might want to make, but it is one which does address a need that both constituents and, I gather, some judges see as preferable.

The Dutch Elm Disease Act has been raised in this Legislature before. In 1992, when the present Minister of Agriculture was the Minister of Environment, we had a number of relatively genteel exchanges across the floor of this House on his decision to reduce the funding for Dutch elm, and the end of that was that the minister did increase the funding or restore, I should say, the funding for Dutch elm disease, and this is to the city of Winnipeg in particular. I think that was a good move. It was a sensible one, we appreciated it. I think it was the right thing to do.

There are other areas where I think there has also been a useful role played by the government. The government has given some money to research on Dutch elm disease fungus. It is research that is being done in Toronto, and the government has provided small amounts of support. I think that is a step in the right direction, and it is particularly something that I would suggest to any Minister of the Environment, that they pursue a national program of Dutch elm disease research. It is something which applies particularly in western Canada. It might be something that might go on as an item at a western ministers' meeting because it is something where pooled resources, pooled research, I think, would play a valuable role. Certainly, cities to the west of us, communities in rural Saskatchewan and Alberta are certainly likely to be threatened as well.

So I again commend the government for that small step and suggest that they take the sensible approach and look for some co-operation in research areas in this. Dutch elm disease at the moment can only be contained. It cannot be, so far, prevented, so that the whole effort of community and of government has to be oriented towards its containment. So far in Winnipeg, I think various jurisdictions working together, and with a particularly skilled and enthusiastic group of citizens, have managed to contain the loss to so far manageable proportions, although we were very concerned about the outbreak at the bottom of Ethelbert Street close to the river.

Madam Speaker, I think when people come to Winnipeg and to the river parts of the province, they are very well aware of the value of those elms. You turn off Portage Avenue, for example, it is 90 degrees on Portage Avenue, you turn off onto Home Street or Arlington, to any of those heavily wooded streets in Wolseley, you feel almost immediately a dropping of 10 degrees in the temperature. Similarly other parts of the province of Manitoba, I think the elms have proved to be a very important part, not just of the esthetic aspects of cities and communities, but in a sense as the lungs of the community is one way in which they describe their importance to the overall health of the community, as well as to the cooling in some of the hot summers, cooling effect that they have in some of our hot summers.

The City of Winnipeg in particular, I think, should be complimented for the foresight that it had at the turn of the century in beginning that planting program. Those people who planted and paid for those elms knew that they would never live to see the kind of magnificent vistas that we enjoy. They planned for the long term. They planned for the next generation. They knew that they were not the ones who were going to reap the rewards. It was, I think, an important aspect of the kind of society that we had in Winnipeg at the turn of the century. To those city fathers and mothers who provided those elms, I think, a commendation goes, but also to the present coalitions of citizens which have emerged. I am thinking particularly in the city of Winnipeg to the Coalition to Save the Elms which joins people across the city in different parts—north, south, east and west—where the elms have an important role to play and has brought them together in a variety of volunteer groups to work both hands-on and in research and in communication to try and bring this issue to the attention of citizens and to

enable people to play a much greater individual and collective role in their preservation.

* (1640)

We have, for example, in my community the Elm Guard. Each citizen takes a certain portion of the community, three or four blocks, sometimes just a block, and they agree—and I have about four blocks myself—and we walk those blocks during the early parts of the summer. We take a training session every year, and I must admit every year I maybe get a little closer to recognizing what Dutch elm disease is. It is not an easy disease to spot as an amateur, and certainly is something that over the years you do begin to build up some expertise. While I certainly do not claim to have the range of expertise that we find, for example, amongst many of the people in our community, but citizens on foot, citizens with little note pads examining every tree, taking an interest in them, and ensuring that if there is any sign of weakness, if there is any sign of wilting, that the city forester and the city workers are notified quickly. They do act quickly, and it is that sense of citizen participation, knowledge, a responsible city government which responds quickly, which is enabling us in the constituency of Wolseley at least and in other parts of the city as well to begin some containment.

I want to mention some of the names of the people who have been involved, to give great credit to people like Roger Geeves, to earlier city councillors like Sandy Hyman, for example, who also took a special interest in this program, to people like Alana Daly [phonetic], and many others who have participated, very intensively, in the Elm Guard Program over the years. City foresters like Mike Allen and his assistant, Phil Pines, also take the time every year to take us out on a tour, to show us slides, and to refresh our memories on the inspection of each of the trees in our constituency. So it is a co-operative effort, and I think it is important to recognize that it is not just the provincial government.

Even though this is a bill which aims to change some of the provincial legislation, the legislative framework is only part of it. Research at a national or regional level is another important part. The revamping of the bill entirely may be another step that we should all be looking at, but the citizen participation and the role of the City of Winnipeg, I think, have also been significant. So, in

putting this bill before the House, Madam Speaker, I want to pay tribute to all those people who have enabled the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba to, so far, retain some control and some containment over a disease which, I think, would be disastrous for the economy and for the health of our Manitoba society.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about this particular piece of legislation. I think that the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) is attempting to deal with an issue which many Winnipeggers in particular—but Dutch elm disease is not just within the city of Winnipeg; it is virtually throughout the province, or at least in many parts of the province.

The Dutch elm disease is, indeed, a very serious problem, and I know in the past, you know, I can recall a number of years ago where the government—

An Honourable Member: We were hoping for that kind of broader vision, Kevin.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, I am talking about a broader vision, for the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey). He has got to be a little more patient and listen in terms of what it is I am talking about.

I can recall a number of years back when the Dutch elm disease came to the surface, and the government—now I believe this would have been, oh, late or, no, mid-summer, let us say around summertime, just before a provincial election in 1990, when the government came up with a Dutch elm tree program in which they came up with some grant dollars—

An Honourable Member: I remember that.

Mr. Lamoureux: See the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) recalls that. Was that your—

An Honourable Member: I was the Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Lamoureux: He was the Minister of Natural Resources at the time, and you know something, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources, current Minister of Agriculture, had a wonderful idea. The idea was, we want to be able to address this particular

problem head on, and came up with a few dollars. I cannot recall the exact amount of dollars, but it was a number of dollars that were made available in order to assist in trying to prevent this disease from spreading, just prior to an election.

An Honourable Member: Seven hundred and fifty thousand.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister says, \$750,000. Well, whatever the amount of dollars actually was, there was a need to come up with a program because these are trees that are throughout the city, but there are certain areas in which there is such a very high concentration. You drive down some of those boulevards and you see very impressive trees, and they add so much to the city of Winnipeg.

In essence, what the bill is suggesting, of course, is that to have a fine of \$1,000 is not really anything of any significance in terms of protecting these beautiful trees. So the suggestion is to increase it up to somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$10,000.

Madam Speaker, knowing and having been through the riding of Wolseley, you get a better appreciation of just how splendid these trees can be, because the riding of Wolseley is littered with these trees—and littered in a positive sense, I must say. So I can see where the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) is coming up with this particular piece of legislation, and it is something in which, of course, we would not oppose. But, you know, what it does raise is a point, for me, in the sense that here we have a member that has a fairly legitimate piece of legislation or proposing a private member's piece of legislation, and it will be interesting to see to what degree the government is going to give this piece of legislation attention. I think that it warrants the attention from all sides of this House, and, ultimately, it would even be nice to see this legislation go before committee and pass and even, ultimately, receive Royal Assent. What I see is an individual that is attempting to rectify or to assist in ensuring that we are going to have our elm trees into the future to protect as much as possible the beautification, if you like, of our wonderful city of Winnipeg.

Madam Speaker, I believe even the elm is one of the reasons why in the back we had some problem with our water fountain. You know, maybe the Minister of

Government Services (Mr. Pallister) might even comment on that. I know during the summer—[interjection] Hopefully, when the minister—and I know he is eagerly trying to resolve that particular problem. But we do not see some of our trees being lost in the back of the building because, indeed, these are very important trees. Hopefully this high-tech water fountain is not going to see the end of these beautiful trees, and it is something that is really important. I know the Minister of Government Services is studying it very heavily, I am sure invests a great deal of time and resources. I know labour-wise the water fountain has been receiving a lot of attention. Mind you, recently I have been seeing the water fountain working, and that is encouraging. The real challenge for this government is going to be, is the water fountain going to be working come next summer or leading into the spring? That is when it is going to be really interesting to see.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, I am somewhat getting off topic here. The member does bring forward a good piece of legislation. I would go back to what the dean of the Chamber has said about legislation, Private Members' Business, and he articulated in the past as to how important it is to allow debate and to encourage members from all sides to participate in the debate, and if in fact there are some good ideas to allow a particular bill to pass. I believe that the current Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) was correct in his assessment back then and would suggest to him that if in fact he reviewed a number of the private members' bills—and to a certain degree even some of the resolutions—there is a need to see some sort of a vote on some of this stuff, and it would be nice to see this particular Bill 205 ultimately receive a vote and, as to say, go through the Chamber.

I have to plug at this time also, Madam Speaker, because we are talking about the importance of private members' bills—and I know the dean is listening to what I am saying—is that there is another private member's bill on the five fundamental principles of health that also, I believe, merit approval from this particular Chamber. At least allow us the opportunity to be able to have the vote.

* (1650)

An Honourable Member: Absolutely.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Agriculture is absolutely with me, he says, on that, and hopefully he

will lobby inside his caucus because that is a very important bill for our caucus, and we would definitely like to see much more debate on that particular piece.

Madam Speaker, you know, I always admired the current Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer) and the minister—well, at the time, he was not the minister. You recall a while back he gave, I believe it would have been, close to about a 30-minute speech on the pine tree, on the spruce, pine. We had a piece of legislation that came in the House, and it was a fairly impressive bill. It recognized a very important tree in the province of Manitoba, much like Bill 205 acknowledges a very important tree, that being the Dutch elm disease. Well, the minister today, the Minister of Housing, talked about this particular tree for somewhere around 30 minutes in the House, fairly pleased to see that he was so knowledgeable about this particular tree.

Well, I am not as knowledgeable or as able-minded as the member for Housing on that particular tree, but one of the things I do recognize is that in Winnipeg we have trees of all varieties, and these trees do a lot for the city and, ultimately, for the province. So it is important for governments, whether it is at the provincial level or it is at the civic level, to be able to do what they can to be able to ensure that there is future growth. I know, in my own area, that the City of Winnipeg does play a fairly active role in planting trees. There are different programs that are out there. You know, I guess it would have been about a year ago, I met with some members from the local scout troop, and they were actually planting trees. It was all in hopes to increase the number of trees in the province of Manitoba. I believe it was one million or whether it was within the government and working in co-operation with different organizations that they were trying to achieve a very significant number of trees being planted in some sort of a time frame.

Well, Madam Speaker, it is encouraging to see so many people that want to get involved in making sure that the scenery of Winnipeg, and even outside of Winnipeg, is enhanced, and one of the best ways—[interjection] Some of the members say, even outside, as if maybe I should have put more emphasis on rural Manitoba, and I would never, never underestimate the importance of the trees in rural Manitoba. I have spent a great deal of time, I can assure all members in the Chamber, in rural Manitoba

over the summer for a very noble cause, I must admit, and I have seen many, many trees in rural Manitoba—

An Honourable Member: Beating the bushes back.

Mr. Lamoureux: The member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) says, beating the bush. You know there is a lot of—yes, I guess, we could say we were beating the bush. Anyway, I am getting a bit somewhat off topic here.

Obviously, trees are important, both rural and in the city of Winnipeg, but I was actually talking about what was happening in the riding which I represent, where we actually have trees that are being planted where the city enters into agreements, in some cases, with developers so that when a new division is coming into being—and hopefully we will see more trees being brought in. Having said that, Madam Speaker, we see more of a proactive approach at planting trees, and I think that is encouraging because, in the long term, it is important that we develop, as a community, not only in terms of people and jobs, but also there is a very strong environmental aspect to trees that has to be respected. The planting and further enhancement of trees within the city of Winnipeg is very important to a great deal of citizens that live in the city of Winnipeg, so—[interjection] What did he say? [interjection] Elk enjoy trees? Elk farming is a completely different topic, and I will not venture into elk farming. We will have another opportunity to talk about elk farming.

Madam Speaker, I know that there are some that were wanting to get on into possibly debating resolutions, and I do not really want to take too much time up on this particular piece of legislation. But do you know something? I do believe that what the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) is attempting to get across by introducing this piece of legislation is indeed admirable, and I do believe, ultimately, that instead of, as usual, the government standing up and concluding debate and then, like our health bill, never really being debated upon, that in fact the government will allow for this particular piece of legislation to go to committee.

After all, under these new rules that we have, there was one shortcoming in the sense that the Private Members' Business was really never addressed. Hopefully, as a gesture of good will from the government, it would be

encouraging to see the government acknowledge that there is more meaning to private members' hours than just listening to individuals stand up and throw comments, in the sense that we will also allow for resolutions and bills to be able to pass. That is something that is important. It also provides all members, not only on the opposition side but also on the government side, to feel optimistic in the sense that if they do introduce a bill, there is a chance that that particular bill will pass. We do not give enough legitimate attention to the process of private members' hour.

Anything that can be done to further enhance private members' hour should be done. A good way to be able to demonstrate that sense of good will would be for the government to acknowledge Bill 205 as a positive contribution, a very positive one from the member for Wolseley, and that that bill should in fact pass through to committee stage.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, I believe that we are prepared to allow the bill to pass into committee stage. Thank you.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Firstly, I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Wolseley for raising a very important issue in this Legislature, the issue of Dutch elm disease and the impact it is having on our urban forest. [interjection]

Well, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) referred to an earlier incarnation of myself, and I might say that that issue has long been in front of bodies politic in the City of Winnipeg and in the Legislature of Manitoba and indeed, I suppose, even to some members of Parliament, that Dutch elm disease is beginning to significantly erode our urban forest, that Dutch elm disease is slowly taking its toll. While the opportunity to control and contain that disease, Madam Speaker, is significant in cost, at least it has done that. It has, in fact, accomplished the fact that we are able to control it much more than actually most other cities have ever been able to do.

* (1700)

I can tell you that my aunt, for instance, lives in Rochester, New York, upstate New York, right across the lake from Toronto. Madam Speaker, when I was a kid visiting my aunt in Rochester, New York, the street that

she lived on, Merchants Road, was lined with beautiful big elm trees. I returned there, oh, maybe 20 years ago, and it was absolutely denuded. There was not one tree left, and that occurred right across the northern United States, right up to Minneapolis, and then, of course, the disease came down through the watershed to Manitoba.

It is actually very, very sad to see. I can remember as a kid playing amongst those beautiful elm trees in the summertime in upstate New York, and those are all gone. Every single one of those trees, beautiful trees, hundreds of years old, is gone. Yet you can go to England, for instance, Madam Speaker, and see 300- and 400-year-old elm trees that are magnificent trees and something that I hope ultimately we will be able to have here in Manitoba. Obviously, none of us here are going to see that—[interjection] We are not likely to see 300-year-old trees here. There may well be 300-year-old trees in a couple of hundred years time; we just will not be here to see them.

But the fact of the matter is that I hope for future generations, for this city and this province, that those trees are there and that we have to do what we can to ensure their preservation. Madam Speaker, when you see Winnipeg in the summertime from the air—I mean, most people who see it for the first time really do not believe what they are seeing—when they fly over Winnipeg in the summertime, coming into the airport here, and take a look at the kind of tree canopy that we have in this city, it is unbelievable. I do not know how many people have commented to me about the fact that we have this beautiful tree canopy, that we have this wonderful urban forest, one that is the envy of a great many cities, I can tell you.

The preservation, of course, as the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has indicated, is predicated on several things, and I must say when she referred to earlier city councillors, she mentioned Sandy Hyman. She did not mention me, because the initiative with respect to—and I am not looking to toot my own horn or having myself patted on the back. I honestly and very sincerely believe in this issue, and I listened very carefully to what the words of the honourable member for Wolseley were with respect to this issue because I think it is extremely important.

During the late 1970s, when I was a member of the City of Winnipeg Council, we took a number of

initiatives to try and deal with this very important problem—the disease, first of all, and the fact that sanitation, pruning, getting rid of the dead branches which these horrid little beasts inhabit, that carry the Dutch elm disease, the elm bark beetle. Madam Speaker, to get rid of those immediately is the most important thing you can do in terms of containment.

Subsequently, Madam Speaker, we also have to look at the unfortunate part, that we are going to lose some of these wonderful elm trees, and we have to look at replacement stock. Now, until we find a cure or something that will prevent Dutch elm disease from attacking the mature tree population, it is not very sound practice, I do not think, to look at developing new nursery stock of elm trees. We have to look for something that is a little bit different. The City of Winnipeg started putting away money back in the late '70s with respect to creating mature tree stock, so that when a tree does die and has to be removed, we are at least not going to put something an inch in diameter up there that anybody with a hockey stick can knock over or bikes can ride over, whatever, and it becomes severely damaged. We have to be able to replace those trees with something of significant size so that they will survive in a fairly harsh environment for a tree, I might add, when you look at automobiles and trucks and snow clearing and salt and all of the things that occur on our street system where these trees are planted. So we had to create something of a new tree stock, and significant amounts of money were put away at that time. I am not sure whether they are still doing that or not, but there were at least a number of nurseries started where these trees could mature over time, so that we did have some replacement stock.

The other issue, of course, related to the fact that we have to do something about the disease itself. We have to create the kind of research environment that—and Lord knows there are many, many things that affect the human race on this planet, including its environment, that need research, and Lord knows we have lots of human diseases that need a lot of money for research. Madam Speaker, but at least for the soul, research into the Dutch elm disease, I think, is something that ought to be pursued, and we have in fact created that opportunity.

The former Minister of Natural Resources was extremely helpful and confident. We did have a little glitch there at one time with respect to the funding, but it

got resolved. The fact of the matter is that spending of money with respect to research for Dutch elm disease and the continuing funding for the sanitation program for the containment phase are two things that I strongly support. I do not think there is probably a member in this House that does not support that issue. I mean, this is a very motherhood type of issue, but, nonetheless, I think extremely important for the benefit of our city and for the beauty of our city and for something that really surprises an awful lot of folks who visit here for the first time particularly. Those who return and return, of course, continue to admire the urban forest that we enjoy.

I was raised on a street, Moorgate Street as a matter of fact, in Deer Lodge, just west of the Deer Lodge Hospital, and I saw young elm trees planted on our boulevard. As a matter of fact it was my father who planted them, these two spindly little saplings. Today those spindly little saplings, Madam Speaker, are probably 60 or 70 feet high and are, I would say, a foot and a half or so in diameter, beautiful trees. Those trees, of course, go right down the street from Portage Avenue right north to the airport, so that it is not just those forefathers from the early 1900s who planted them in the Wolseley area or the River Heights area or the Crescentwood area, but in fact they were continuing to be planted right through the 1940s and early 1950s. So that those trees today that are 50 years old, shall we say, are very significant and very beautiful trees, providing the same kind of shade canopy over that street that I grew up on—not quite nearly as big as the ones in the older parts of the city, but, nonetheless, equally as beautiful.

So I say, I commend the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for bringing this issue forward, because it is important that we all stop for a moment from time to time and recognize the kind of wonderful urban forest that we do have, particularly, the elm trees and the fact that they are endangered. We cannot simply ignore them. We have to, and I would suggest to my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), that we need to pursue further protection where we can to ensure that the elm trees, not just the publicly owned elm trees on the boulevards of our city, Madam Speaker, but also the thousands and thousands of privately owned elm trees on private property throughout the city.

In many cases because of the nature of the tree, the fact that it is 60, 70, 80 feet high and a very large tree, makes

it almost impossible for the individual to look after, to be able to take the necessary action in the containment phase, if nothing else. Certainly if there is a treatment becomes available that is going to be as significantly expensive as the current treatments that are questionable as to whether they are really adequate, then we have to maybe look at a situation of assistance to those people. While the tree is resident on their property and they in fact own it, the fact of the matter is, those trees really form part of the public milieu even though they are on private property.

I think some assistance with respect to the containment problems and the work that is necessary in that case, or in the future, if the research that is being done does develop some assistance, then we will have to look at that as well, but for the preservation of those trees in our province and in our city, in particular, I can tell you—I do not know how much time I have left, Madam Speaker, but I have a family resident on a farm just outside of Carman, Manitoba, in the great constituency of Morris, and that farm has an 80-acre woodlot on it in which the house and other buildings are situated. There are several hundred mature elm trees on that piece of property, along with some mature maple and some mature ash, and we are talking trees that are 100 years old or more. Those trees are also in danger, as they are elsewhere in the province, because of the fact that the Dutch elm disease does not restrict itself to any one particular area, but it is, as a matter of fact, spreading.

* (1710)

Here in the city of Winnipeg, we are fortunate in that the city forester and the City of Winnipeg have been able to put significant resources, along with the resources provided through the provincial government, toward the containment of Dutch elm disease. That is not always available in rural Manitoba, and, unfortunately, there are wonderful stands of these trees that are going to be in significant danger as the disease spreads.

So, Madam Speaker, I say the issue is an important one that we all have to address, one we all have to really think about from time to time, because without that interest by the public of Manitoba, you know, despite the initiatives of some groups that the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) did mention earlier, without the commitment of the entire community, we are going to lose that wonderful

natural resource. I could not help but note that the member for Wolseley said that it was 10 degrees cooler in Wolseley under the elm trees, and I said, I hoped that only occurred in the summertime and not in January, because I would not want to inflict additional drops in temperature on anyone, in particular.

So, Madam Speaker, I think, over time, we need to advance to ensure that we have protection for our urban forest, our elm trees, and that we look forward to other ways and means of ensuring their survival and continued growth for the benefit of future generations. Thank you.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to put a few brief comments in support of the spirit of this bill that the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has brought forward and allow the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), who I believe wants to make some comments as well, to do so, but I think that certainly, from a personal perspective, having grown up in rural Manitoba and grown up on a farm—

An Honourable Member: Did you ever grow up?

Mr. Pallister: I did; I grew up, as opposed to some. But, in any case, I would like to share just a little personal background with the members of the House in terms of my affinity for the beautiful elm tree. It is a statuesque tree, and it is one that I have a great deal of love for.

On our farm, my father, in the yardsite where I was born and raised, along with my brother and sister, he planted over 1,500 elm trees the year that my dad and my mom married. They planted them as a shelter belt around the farmyard, and I have great memories, as a young boy, of playing in under those elms and running down the rows and playing the various imaginary games that young boys play, and young girls play, on the farms as they grow up.

I can remember, as the member alluded to, the joy of coming in out of a hot summer day and getting in under that umbrella of shelter on the farm, that was a satisfying thing. Also the shelter belt, of course, provided many other forms of life, the opportunity to grow up in proximity to the farmyard. So we were visited frequently by the beautiful songbirds that find their homes and raise

their families in those trees, and the other animal life which sometimes on the farm is pleasant and sometimes not so pleasant. I can recall a number of occasions. My mother with chagrin resenting the presence of racoons around her garden towards the end of the summer as they tended to know just precisely when things would ripen and be ready to be harvested. They would beat Mom by a day or two a lot of the time. So it was not always an upside having elms that close, I suppose, but for the most part it was something that we as young children growing up on the farm really appreciated.

I guess the significance with which I hold the elm is mixed joy and sadness, because it just so happens that the year that my dad passed away was the year that the elm tree shelter belt had to be knocked down. It was just getting too ridden with Dutch elm, and it was beginning to spread, as you know happens in these shelter belts, and without the precautions that we have taken in many urban settings to try to prevent the spread of this disease, which is really a sad and horrible disease because it lessens the presence in our province of one of the most beautiful trees that we do have, we had to push that shelter belt down that year. It was not much fun taking away what had been a labour of love for my dad, certainly, and what had been a real good asset to our farmyard for many years as well.

Something else that I think we should not lose sight of is the economic benefits that are provided, not just to farm residences or to farms themselves from the shelter belt use but also in the urban setting from a landscape perspective. I do not have the literature today in the House to share with members, but I do recall reading literature which put the value of landscape of one single mature elm tree on a yard in the area of, I believe, \$3,000 or \$4,000. There is considerable value to be affixed to a tree of that size on a landscape. But someone who is doing a bit of landscaping now at our home, I really look forward to the day some 30 years hence when there will be some mature trees on our yard.

Further to that, I guess, I want to also say that in terms of the shelter belt use there is a line that says the best time to plant a tree is 30 years ago; second best time is today. We took that approach when I was involved with a community group in Portage in terms of pursuing shelter-belt programs between the city of Portage la Prairie and the city of Winnipeg. I think for anyone who

travels the Trans-Canada Highway on a regular basis, they know that particular piece of highway is one of the most dangerous, frankly, in the wintertime and one of the least accessible areas of our Trans-Canada Highway, I am told by truckers, that we have. What we have needed, of course, was for 30 years ago people had the wisdom to plant trees. Failing that, what we have worked on today, and of course this government, and I know members opposite support this initiative too, have worked on planting hundreds of miles of shelter belt just in the last two or three years in that area.

Of course, it is not enough to just throw down a shelter belt along a highway and think that is going to stop every travesty of the nature that is part of living in Manitoba. It does not work that way. You have to plant a grid of shelter belts, and that is exactly what is going on on both the north and south sides of the Trans-Canada Highway through that strip, hundreds of miles of shelter belts going up. But I think it is fair to observe that the elm tree is, of course, not one that we are using for shelter belts these days for a number of good practical reasons. I believe the predominant tree of choice that we have been using in the new shelter belt plantings that have taken place along the Trans-Canada, principally between the White Horse area around St. Francois Xavier and towards the Oakville area, is principally green ash.

Green ash is one that is favoured these days because, although it is a hardy tree, as the elm we used to think was, it does not tend to compete so much with surface crops and for surface moisture, and it also has a quality of being able—if it is planted at appropriate intervals, it has the ability to allow snow to not congregate under it. Some farmers rue the day that they planted coniferous trees for shelter belts because what happened was, of course, they created mountains of snow on their property and in the spring ended up with differential seeding and cultivation practices as a consequence of that. What the green ash does is it allows the snow to congregate but over a dispersed area, a wider area.

* (1720)

It is also interesting to know, and I learned about the process of dealing with projects of this nature, such as the shelter belt thing, that there is always a reason to put off planting a tree. There is always a reason to put off doing a project, I suppose, that should have been done years

ago. First of all, you are attacked because, well, it should have been done before, should it not, but the problem here was that there were all kinds of reasons potentially that we would have problems with getting shelter belts put up.

Arguments were put forward that sound kind of ridiculous in restating them, but there are people who believe that it was better not to have shoppers be able to get away from Portage, and we had that argument made at the Chamber of Commerce by some business people who thought that it was better to have people, I guess, captive in your own communities, the kind of the attitude some of the members opposite take when we talk about trade deals and things like that, I think. Keep them captive here and they are bound to shop at home. Well, the argument is not really a solid one, but it was made.

Other people made the argument that we should not plant too many trees too close to the highway because what it would do is it would cause the highway to have to get snow shovelled off it more often, because naturally the trees would stop the snow on the highway. With the right kinds of design, that does not have to happen, but that was a concern and a honest concern that had to be dealt with in the undertaking of that project as well.

Another concern that was raised by some was that because the land, of course, is privately held, and the farmers and families who own the land have to co-operate in the planting of these trees, that they might not want to. Well, what we found out when that was raised was that no one had asked them, and when we asked the owners of the land in that region, over 80 percent of them said, absolutely, they would support it, and they also offered to assist whether it be in planting or the ongoing maintenance of the trees. Now, that is critical, of course, because as we know, a shelter belt can be wiped out in no time at all by the indiscriminate practices of farmers or of crop dusters, and these are concerns as well. When you put so much time, effort and money into creating a shelter belt, you want to preserve that shelter belt for the purposes it was intended.

That being said, I just want to share that perspective with you and say that I recognize the elm tree is something that has suffered in numbers in our province; I know that all members of this House place great value in it. In the last two or three years, I have engaged in a

personal project that has given me a great deal of enjoyment. In going out to the farm where I was raised, I have carved out now about four miles of hiking and cross-country ski trails through the bush. A lot of it is virgin bush. It is hard work, but it is enjoyable. But one of the hardest things is dealing with a dead tree which is in your path when you are trying to clear a walk. I try to avoid those whenever possible. The problem, of course, with the elm, is that chopping down a dead tree is much more dangerous than chopping down a live one, frankly, and as the former Minister of Health will attest, I believe, I think he had a run-in with a tree some years ago—very, very dangerous.

In particular with these trails, I had noticed that, when you are chopping the trees down, you have to be careful, in particular if the tree has already been felled. We had to-mado-force winds go through our area a couple of years ago, and it took down a number of trees, in kind of no particular pattern, one over top of the other. When you cut through one, you have to be very careful that it is not holding down one underneath; this is something that I learned first hand. I was fortunate because the tree that I cut was only holding down a cranberry bush, so I took a face full of cranberries, as opposed to something larger or sharper. I was very lucky.

This brings us to the issue of disposal of the elm trees. When you have a dead elm tree, I understand there are a number of procedures that should be followed. I only understand some of the basic ones, but I do believe it is essential that any member of the public follow these rules and regulations when they are dealing with the disposal of a dead elm tree. I understand that in terms of moving the tree that you can transfer the disease with it if you chop an elm tree up for firewood, which I do not know why anyone would do that.

An Honourable Member: Why not?

Mr. Pallister: Well, my experience with firewood is that there are certain types of wood that burn rather well, but it has been said of the elm tree that it burns—and I do not want the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) to take this personally—but I understand it burns colder than a witch's heart, you know, the elm. It does not produce a lot of heat and it is not much good as opposed to other kinds. Oak, for example, oak tree, ash are better, most fireplace enthusiasts tell me, for firewood. [interjection]

Well, there you have it. So the disposal, the transfer, the timing and the de-barking that is necessary to ensure that this wood is not going to be perpetuating problems and causing more elm trees to be lost, this is very important, and I guess I just want to make sure that we all encourage those who are dealing with the diseased trees to do so with a maximum degree of care possible.

With that, I appreciate the time of the House, and I will give the other members the opportunity to put some comments on the record. Thank you.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, I would thank the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for bringing forward this motion. In my community, I must say that we have a large number of trees. I see that I have not a lot of time this evening, but I am sure I can carry this on again when this matter is again before the House.

In my community, we have a large number of elms, as I know the member is aware. I still remember when I was growing up we had the elm trees in our yard. They were our climbing trees. They were the place we played and, as of today, I know the trees are no longer there at my old homestead in St. Norbert. They have all disappeared. We planted new trees back 15 years ago to replace them, but the elms are not there.

Back when I was on City Council, the Dutch elm disease problem came up a number of times and, specifically, I had concerns because we were losing a large number of our trees along the riverbank. In the riverbank bottom forest that we had—it was known as Sherwood Forest at the time—there was a developer who was going to develop it. We were able to, as City Council, buy the land and turn it into a natural park so that it will be there for the future generations.

Madam Speaker, it is interesting when you go through that river-bottom forest to see not only the elm trees, but the big cottonwoods that are 150 years old that are starting—

An Honourable Member: That is close to your age.

Mr. Laurendeau: That is right; it is getting very close to my age, but they are starting to suffer. It is interesting, we had the Green Team who was working along the

riverbank this year, and the Green Team had an opportunity to experience what Dutch elm was about and also what the beaver population was doing to the trees along the river. The beavers were chewing up a good number of trees and, in some cases, 70- and 80-year-old trees. The Green Team was able to go and put wires and protect a large number of these trees, and I would like to commend them for the work that they had done in my community.

As we move down to the northern portion of my community, along the dike and along the river ways, we have again by our community club all the trees. As we move into Fort Richmond, we have Kings Park, Madam Speaker, which is a very large component within the city and I think that has been protected over the years. I think it is important to say if we had not taken the steps as government to put the dollars we did into preserving those trees, they would not be there today.

One of the problems though, Madam Speaker, is access to some of the private lands where some of these trees are, and today under the rules we do not have access to some of those properties, and every time there is a flood, every time the water comes up, those trees come along and in a natural course take and infect other trees further down throughout the city, all the way down to Selkirk. The disease has flowed from the United States all the way through, all the way from Iowa, and it has killed all the trees along the riverbanks. We are lucky that here in Manitoba we have been attempting to preserve them. If you go to the East, there are no more elm trees. They are gone.

An Honourable Member: Same with Minneapolis-St. Paul. They are all gone.

Mr. Laurendeau: That is right. They are all gone to the South as well, and it is important that we put in place regulations and legislation that will protect those trees for future generations.

So, Madam Speaker, the penalty clause that the member is bringing forward is more in the transportation and storage of the wood. It is an important area, but we also have to look at what we are doing with some of the hard products. At this time, again, there was a green team out in the St. Boniface area that was chopping up the elm trees and actually splitting them into boards. You might have seen some of the sawmill that they have established. The bug itself or the disease is not in the hardwood. It is just under the bark on the surface of the tree, so once they have peeled it back and burned the bark and cleaned it off, the wood itself is still good. So I think it is important that we look at other areas of saving some of that hardwood. Some of that hardwood can be used for a number of other construction projects throughout different communities.

As we move ahead, Madam Speaker, it is important that we find a means of saving them for future generations. I must commend the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). We have a beautiful treeline in this city. I have flown into many cities, and there is no city more beautiful than Winnipeg when you come in and you have all the trees. People think it is a very well-forested area.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. Norbert will have 11 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, September 24, 1996

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