



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 29, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, pursuant to a matter of privilege raised in the House last week and to the material tabled by the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) yesterday, I wish to table this information.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

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

Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Mickey Obrodovich, Mike Mychreschuk and Steve Krawchuk requesting that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Manitoba Telephone System

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): 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, thousands of jobs and keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 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) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

* (1335)

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: 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 keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 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) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Guaranteed Annual Income

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 in 1976 Canada signed the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognized the right of everyone to make a living by work which is freely chosen, recognized the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, recognized the right of everyone to enjoy a high standard of physical and mental health, and provided for the widest possible protection and assistance to the family; and

THAT poor children and adults in Canada continue to die at a higher rate and earlier age than people with adequate incomes; and

THAT Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment Act, will create even greater poverty among the poor in Manitoba by eliminating government responsibility to ensure that everyone who lacks adequate food, clothing, housing and health care has these needs met; and

THAT the bill proposes to punish people by cutting them off from social assistance or reducing their benefits if they fail to meet employment expectations; and

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Family Services to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care and that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families.

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 keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 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) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos). 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 keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 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) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Law Amendments Seventh Report

Mr. David Newman (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the Seventh Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Seventh Report.

Your committee met on Monday, October 21, 1996, at 7 p.m., Wednesday, October 23, 1996, at 7 p.m., and on Saturday, October 26, 1996, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

At the October 21, 1996, meeting, your committee agreed, by motion, on a counted vote of 6 Yeas, 3 Nays, to establish a time limit of 10 minutes per presentation, with five minutes for questions and answers.

At the October 23, 1996, meeting, your committee elected Mr. Laurendeau as its Vice-Chairperson.

At the October 26, 1996, meeting, your committee elected Mr. Laurendeau as its Vice-Chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 33—The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire

Betty Green and Betty Ann Watts - Manitoba Association of School Trustees

John Weins and Ben Zaidman - Seven Oaks School Division

Barry Hammond - Choices

Derwyn Davies - Private Citizen

Diane Beresford - Manitoba Teachers' Society

Ben Hanuschak - Private Citizen

Dee Gillies - Coalition Against Standard Testing

Kenneth Emberley - Private Citizen

Candice Stearns - Private Citizen

Written Submission

Edward Lipsett - Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties

Bill 47—The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques.

Betty Green and Betty Ann Watts - Manitoba Association for School Trustees

Howard Friesen - Garden Valley School Division No. 26

Edward Lipsett - Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties

John Weins and Ben Zaidman - Seven Oaks School Division

Barry Hammond - Choices

Derwyn Davies - Private Citizen

Diane Beresford - Manitoba Teachers' Society

Ben Hanuschak - Private Citizen

Dee Gillies - Coalition Against Standard Testing

Kenneth Emberly - Private Citizen

Candice Stearns - Private Citizen

Tom Barker - Private Citizen

Written Submission

Ed Klassen - The Manitoba Association of School Business Officials, Inc.

Your committee has considered:

Bill 33—The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire

and has agreed to report the same, without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 47—The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION::

THAT the proposed section 42.1, as set out in section 8 of the Bill, be amended by adding "collection," before "storage".

MOTION:

THAT the proposed section 42.2, as set out in section 8 of the Bill, be amended by striking out "this section" and substituting "sections 42.3 to 42.6, 58.6 and 58.9".

MOTION:

THAT the proposed heading for Part III.1, as set out in section 10 of the Bill, be amended by striking out "CHILDREN" and substituting "PUPILS".

MOTION:

THAT the proposed section 58.5, as set out in section 10 of the Bill, be amended

(a) in the English version of clause (a), by striking out "parent" and substituting "parents"; and

(b) in clause (b), by striking out "subsection 58.3" and substituting "section 58.3".

MOTION:

THAT the proposed section 58.10, as set out in section 10 of the Bill, be amended by striking out "must" and substituting "is responsible for".

And THAT

(a) in clause (a), "attend" be struck out and "attending" be substituted;

(b) in clause (b), that "comply" be struck out and "complying" be substituted;

(c) in clause (c), that "complete" be struck out and "completing" be substituted;

(d) in clause (d), that "treat" be struck out and "treating" be substituted.

MOTION:

THAT the proposed clause 201(2)(a), as set out in subsection 16(1) of the Bill, be amended by adding "trust company" after "bank".

MOTION:

THAT the title of the French version of the Bill be amended by striking out "PUBLICS" and substituting "PUBLIQUES".

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Public Accounts for 1995-96, Volume 3, Summary Financial Statements.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Dr. Paul Cappon, Director General of the Council of Ministers of Education Canada.

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

Also, seated in the public gallery, we have forty-five Grades 8 and 9 students from Victor Mager School under the direction of Mr. Larry Patrick and Mr. Allen Vilar. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Riel (Mr. Newman).

We also have seated in the public gallery 18 Canadian Law Class students from the Red River Community College under the direction of Mr. Clint Wilmot. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Seven Oaks School Division Parent Group Meeting Request

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I would like to table letters from 2,500 parents addressed to the government of Manitoba dealing with the funding cutbacks to children in education in the Seven Oaks School Division. Parents have been talking about the funding cutbacks and the impact on their children.

One parent, Mrs. Rosanne Joseph, who has three children in the Seven Oaks School Division and has been a volunteer for some nine years and has been involved in working with other parents in gathering these names, is very scared about the future of her children in the public education system because of the accumulation of the funding cutbacks from this government onto her children and onto the future of her children.

She called the Minister of Education in June of 1996, again in July of '96, and has asked for just half an hour with the minister on behalf of the 2,500 parents to discuss what these cutbacks mean to the future of her children and to the children in her community. Regrettably, she has not been able to get a meeting with the Minister of Education.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), would he agree to meet with these parents to talk about the reality of the cutbacks on their kids and education in the Seven Oaks School Division?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I do attempt to meet with parent groups as often as I can, and hopefully, in time, I will be able to meet with this group as well, because I have met with innumerable groups over the length of time that I have been minister.

I indicate to the member something that I think he already knows and that I indicate to the field as well to put it into perspective, that over the length of time that we have been in office, since 1987, funding to public schools in Manitoba has risen overall by \$113 million. I have to indicate that in the years when we did not have the constraints we are currently experiencing from the federal government in terms of reduced transfer payments, this next year of \$220 million of a cut, we were having 8 percent increase to school divisions. Overall that is not a cut. Granted, the last few years, there has been a slight decline.

I indicate overall funding to education when we took office was 17 percent of a \$4-billion budget, is now 18 percent of a \$5-billion budget. Madam Speaker, our commitment is clear to education in Manitoba.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, Mrs. Joseph has been a volunteer in the schools for nine years, and a parent. She

says that she has first-hand experience, and many other parents agree with her, on the deterioration of the education system in the last few years with the cutbacks, the some \$43 million in cutbacks from this government to the public education system. Classroom sizes are going up and up and up, supplies are going down, materials are going down, special needs are being reduced, counsellor programs are being cut in half, and they just want to talk about the front-line schoolroom realities to the Minister of Education.

Will the Minister of Education agree to meet and talk about the realities of her cutbacks rather than rhetoric here in the Legislature today?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, the member refers to rhetoric and whenever we try to present the reality of the fiscal situation in Canada and the constraints under which we operate, he calls it rhetoric. I would point out with respect, part of my rhetoric today will include the fact that we have to spend close to \$2 million in interest every day on the debt that his party left us when we took office. That money that we are not able to use for education—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That is the reality. The other reality, of course, is that credit ratings are measured in a tenth of a percentage point, and that is \$3 million every time that rating changes. They do not wish to acknowledge that, but we are on the right path to ensure that we are able to sustain the education system that is so necessary for our quality of life that we want for our children and grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I have to say that within the schools right now we have done a number of things, that the members also do not wish to acknowledge, through the Child and Youth Secretariat. He mentioned special needs. We now have \$450,000 coming from the Department of Health to help us hire nurses for schools so that they can keep their education dollars for education and not spin them off into health functions. We have done a number of things like that to help offset some of the problems in the classrooms.

* (1345)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I suggest the Minister of Education read the credit ratings in '88, '89 and also read the Auditor's Report in the '88-89 fiscal year.

But on to the question of the real impact of the government cuts on children. Would the Minister of Education today agree to meet with the parents that represent some 2,500 kids in the Seven Oaks School Division who feel that classroom sizes are going up, that teachers are being reduced, the materials are not adequate, the courses are not addressing the challenges of the future for our children? People and parents feel your cutbacks, Madam Minister, are scary. Will she meet with the parents and prepare the budget funding for Education next year to allow kids to have a future rather than have some despair under this Minister of Education?

Mrs. McIntosh: I thought in my first response that I had indicated that I would be pleased to meet with the parents.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mrs. McIntosh: Okay, I am sorry. If I did not, then I thought I had, and I indicated that hopefully there will be time for me to meet with the parents. As the member knows, when the House is in session and I am in committee—for example, last Friday, when I had to cancel my time with the rally in Brandon, when he was free to go, I was in committee. My schedule is booked usually eight to nine weeks ahead, and I am pleased to meet with these people as I do with many other parent groups. I meet consistently with parent groups. I am pleased to talk with their concerns, help allay their concerns and help them understand what we are facing, where the costs are escalating and what we are doing to address those costs.

Education System Funding Reduction Impact

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, last night in hearings on Bill 72 we heard that there is no longer any home economics in Pine Creek, no industrial arts in their high school. We heard of increased class size across the province, including a class in Evergreen School Division of 50 students of 16-year-olds, 50 students with one teacher. While at Collège Béliveau we

were told that geography texts date from the 1950s and 1960s, when in fact we had not even finished mapping this country, and the budget allows for five new book purchases a year and it will take 15 years to buy new books for the whole class.

Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. I want to know, after she heard all of that, what more is it going to take for her to understand that her cuts are deep, that her cuts have hurt, and they have hurt our public education system and will affect a generation of young Manitobans?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I ask the member again, in light of last night's committee meeting, what will it take for her to understand the need of school boards to be able to contain their escalating costs? What will it take for her to understand the need of taxpayers to be able to have their ability to pay considered? What will it take for her to understand—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, Beauchesne is very clear. The minister's role is to answer questions. If she wishes to ask questions, she will have to wait. Perhaps if she survives the next election, as an opposition member she will get to ask questions at that time, but her job is to answer questions now.

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

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, to complete her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We have done a number of things over and above the fact that we are putting \$113 million more into the system today than we did when we took office, which, I think, is something that bears repeating. We have

acquired money through the Child and Youth Secretariat, from Health, through Family Services, to help with some of the new expenses that school divisions are facing.

We also are working, as a result of the decision on amalgamation of school divisions, with school divisions to help them in joint ventures that are proving to be very cost effective. We have evidence being presented already of school divisions that have gotten together to co-operate in permeating those boundaries on joint purchasing, on common bus routes and examples of savings that they are incurring.

The one cost, of course, they have difficulty with is being debated in committee right now, and that is their ability to decide their largest cost which, of course, is the deciding of wages.

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

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister confirm that last night she heard from teachers across the province who said, and I quote: I have never felt as unappreciated and vilified as in the last two years. And from former Tories who see a government, and I quote, with a vendetta against their profession.

Can she explain why, having heard that—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I believe the question has been put.

* (1350)

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, I can confirm that. I did hear from teachers last night. We heard some 30 presenters, and the majority of those presenters were teachers who said they felt undervalued, they felt underappreciated. They felt the bill that was before them was immoral and threatening. Unfortunately, some of them did not know what was in the bill, but they did know, they had been told—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. McIntosh: They did know because I questioned some of them as to the content of the bill. Some of them

did not know, and some of them quite honestly, quite openly admitted they had not read the bill but they knew because they had been told by their society that it was going to hurt them.

I think we have a very clear task ahead of us to let those teachers know they are valued, they have always been valued, and they must never interpret the critique of a system with an attack on a person or a profession. They have been told that just as they critique systems at their convention, that we are criticizing them, and that is not so.

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

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister confirm perhaps that it is her refusal to listen to concerned parents who may be critical, her refusal to take seriously the reports of teachers who may be critical of her policy, that this is really part of the fundamental problem facing Manitoba education?

Mrs. McIntosh: I have been consulting, and it is widely known. The member does this government and this minister a disservice by the implication she leaves. If she wishes, I can get out my calendar and go through it with her. She may not wish to have that published in terms of the amount of time that I have spent consulting with and meeting with teachers, parents, school trustees, school superintendents. The first thing I did when I came into office the first week was to be with 20 groups of stakeholders to set the stage for open consultation.

Madam Speaker, I very strongly feel that the field has immensely good suggestions that they can make towards me, and they have been doing that. We have been spending time, through the minister's advisory committee on the implementation of educational change, a half-day every month with all the stakeholders. They have assisted me in writing the regulations for the duties of teachers and principals, for school advisory councils, for all of those kinds of things, and they will continue to help me. I do listen, as I did last night, to trustees and teachers.

Health Care System The Pas, Manitoba

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister of Health.

I understand the Minister of Health met with a delegation from The Pas this morning, the chief of OCN, the mayor of the Town of The Pas, the vice-chair of The Pas Health Complex and representatives from Cree Nation Health, including the chief executive officer of The Pas Health Complex, regarding the crisis that this group is trying to deal with in The Pas, this crisis that was developed by this government.

Did the minister have any appreciation or understanding at all of the degree of crisis that he has created in The Pas, and if he did, what is he prepared to do, for example, in the area of the \$180,000 shortfall that is being experienced in the obstetrics department?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Indeed, Madam Speaker, I was part of the meeting the honourable member has described. I am sure it is just an oversight on his part, but there were two nurses who were part of that meeting as well who provided some very significant input this morning in the meeting. I guess it could be said that we had a full and extremely frank exchange of views. It was my very strong suggestion to the delegation that they do what they can, and I will do what I can, to improve the communications between the Town of The Pas and the regional health authority for Norman because it is through that sort of helpful approach that I believe we will resolve issues as they arise in the regions and throughout the province of Manitoba. But, as I say again, the input of the nurses who were present was the most useful of all.

Mr. Lathlin: Madam Speaker, in view of the request that the minister had made with the group, that of having to meet with the regional health authority first before he meets with them, if the group meets with the Norman Regional Health Authority, will the minister make a commitment today to travel to The Pas and meet with those people with a view to addressing the various situations that exist in The Pas?

Mr. McCrae: I have met with people in The Pas on several occasions in the past, and I fully expect that I will be doing so in the future, but in the meantime it would be my hope that the delegation that visited in my office this morning would attempt to ensure that their relationship with the regional health authority becomes stronger. If that happens, I think that we will have far more

constructive discussions and actions flowing therefrom in the future.

St. Paul's Care Home Capital Program

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, my final question to the minister has to do with the capital program that he announced two weeks before the last election.

I would like to ask the minister whether he will make good the commitment that he made two weeks before the election, that he would spend capital dollars in The Pas to remedy a crisis situation, a firetrap situation that exists at the St. Paul's care home, Madam Speaker.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I think it was last week the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) gave a good answer to the question raised by the honourable member with respect to the capital program for the Department of Health. I would also offer, Madam Speaker, briefings for the honourable member for The Pas so that he might get a better understanding of what we are trying to achieve in our reform initiatives in Manitoba. I often perceive in his questioning that he has not read much of the documentation that has come out with respect to health reform in Manitoba. The honourable member does not listen to the answers that are given in this House by myself. He might want to read, for example, the proceedings of the Estimates review of last spring and get a general background as to what it is we are trying to do in Manitoba, what it is we are trying to achieve, and then I think that he and I might have a more co-operative working relationship.

* (1355)

Headingley Correctional Institution Temporary Absences

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): To the Minister of Justice: If it was not clear in May, it was certainly clear last night when we were told that inmates released from Headingley following the riot were completely ineligible, did not qualify for temporary absences under the usual criteria, contrary to what this minister told this House not two or three or a dozen but 22 times.

My question for the minister: Is the minister still going to try to maintain now, six months after the riot, her public relations position that there was no increased leniency, that the usual release criteria was applied?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, the member tells me that he relies on certain media outlets for his information. What we will be relying on is the report of former Justice Hughes. This government has asked Justice Hughes to do a very wide-ranging report. Part of the issues that we have asked him to look at is the issue of temporary absences, and that is the report that our government and the people of Manitoba will be paying attention to.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister, who should understand it is up to this House, not just to Mr. Hughes, to answer this question—was and is the minister deliberately not telling the truth or is she just utterly incompetent?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, as I have said, this matter has been referred to Justice Hughes because there has been some controversy, much of it raised by the member from the other side. I can also tell the member, and he does well know this, that there are some criminal charges pending around issues relating to the Headingley riot. Therefore I am not able to speak specifically, and those issues have to be resolved. I can also tell the House that, at all times, the information that I receive from professional correctional officers I believe to be true.

Mr. Mackintosh: Will the minister simply answer this question? Did she deliberately mislead this House, not just two or three, not just a dozen but 22 times?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the honourable member for St. Johns to withdraw the words "deliberately mislead." It has been ruled unparliamentary on several occasions.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: On a point of order, the issue before the public of Manitoba is not whether she misled Manitobans. That issue has been settled, I believe,

Madam Speaker. The question of public interest is, did she deliberately mislead this House? It is a question.

Madam Speaker: The honourable government House leader, on the same point of order.

* (1400)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, Beauchesne's Citation 489 says in part: Since 1958, it has been ruled unparliamentary to use the following expressions—deliberately misled, deliberately mislead are both the expressions used in Beauchesne's Citation 489.

In the context of the question, Madam Speaker, it clearly imputes motives or purports to impute motives, so on two counts it should be ruled out of order.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, indeed, the government House leader is correct in terms of Beauchesne's Citation 488, but we have had a number of incidents in this session where questions have been asked about whether the government is telling the truth or not, statements which, if they were made directly, might be considered unparliamentary.

I do believe the member for St. Johns has every right to ask in this case what exactly the Minister of Justice was doing on those 22 occasions, and I would indicate that it is up to her, I believe, to establish and explain to the people of Manitoba exactly what happened. I believe once again that the member did not directly accuse the minister of deliberately misleading the public. I think it is up to the Minister of Justice to explain her actions to the people of Manitoba—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ashton: If I could complete the point of order without the members opposite showing such great frustration, I would like to once again point out that the member asked the question, and it does not even violate Beauchesne's Citation 487(2) in terms of hypothetical cases. I think that he has every right to ask the Minister of Justice to explain her action.

Madam Speaker: I will take the matter under advisement to review the exact wording and the context within which the words were used. However, I would remind all honourable members to pick and choose their words carefully because the use of certain words causes serious disruption in this House to no one's advantage.

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, of course, again, Justice Hughes will be examining all of the information. The terms of reference, in relation to temporary absence, for former Justice Hughes are whether, in the administration of temporary absences during and after the riot, correctional authorities acted unlawfully, unreasonably or changed the criteria for release to increase eligibility. In addition, Justice Hughes can look at any other matter.

In dealing with that and the other issues that he is examining, I am told that former Justice Hughes has interviewed over 150 witnesses, he has over 6,000 pages of transcript, he has approximately 250 exhibits, and it is his report that we will look forward to in this House. But my concern is the member for St. Johns who continues to use this very tragic issue to advance his own political agenda. I would like to say that in some ways he may also have caused damage to some judicial proceedings.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The member for St. Johns, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, in a search for the truth in this Chamber and in this province, the Minister of Justice has just stood up and imputed unworthy motives to an honourable member. I ask—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns, to quickly state his point of order.

Mr. Mackintosh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I ask that you call the Minister of Justice to order for imputing motives, which is contrary to Beauchesne and long-standing tradition in this House, that you call her to order

as you attempted to call me to order and that we can get to the truth in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker: I will take the matter of the point of order raised by the honourable member for St. Johns under advisement and review Hansard and report back to the Chamber.

Manitoba Hydro Privatization

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Over the weekend it was reported that Manitoba Hydro is ready; they are ready to compete in a deregulated market.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lamoureux: And we hear "hear, hear" from the other ranks. We applaud the efforts of Manitoba Hydro but, of course, the concern is, what is this government's intentions with Manitoba Hydro. In particular, does it have any intentions of privatizing Manitoba Hydro today or into the future?

Can the Premier indicate to this House today that Manitoba Hydro will not be on the selling block as long as he is Premier of this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, no, we do not have any intention to privatize Manitoba Hydro. The member, though, of course, raises some of the right points in reference to the article, points that were raised by former chairman of Manitoba Hydro, Len Bateman—whom I know is known to members opposite and is often a critic of Manitoba Hydro—but he points out that in a deregulated environment the government would have to look seriously at the alternative circumstances that would prevail because there would be all sorts of pressures and competitive requirements that would be placed upon the utility. So in a very pragmatic sense in our duty of responsibility to the taxpayers of Manitoba, we would have to re-evaluate circumstances if circumstances changed. But, today, I see no reason why we would want to consider that.

Debt-Equity Ratio

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, can the Premier then state whether Manitoba Hydro may

be carrying what the Conservative government believes to be an unacceptably high debt ratio?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I can tell the member opposite that those who do bond rating analyses consider that the debt-equity ratio that Manitoba Hydro is carrying is probably high. Those who are financial market analysts consider that the debt-equity ratio of Manitoba Hydro is probably high. You will get many people who will argue that case, but the fact of the matter is that under public ownership, as they are, where we the taxpayers guarantee their debt, then those circumstances obviously are different than they would be if they were a private sector operator.

Having said all of that, you have to look at what are the real basics of their fiscal framework and are they in a situation where currently they can do their job and do it well. They have the lowest published rates for hydroelectricity in all of North America. It is all a matter of trying to ensure that it continues to be well managed, that you build dams when you have demand for the power, not like the New Democrats did building a dam two years before the power was needed and paying two years of interest on \$1.8 billion of debt. That was foolishness, and everybody who could count knew that, but those are the circumstances and the choices that you make. All of these things require constant good management, constant analysis and—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: I can assure the member for Inkster that we will not do any of the foolish things that were done by the New Democrats when they were in office. We will continue to ensure that it is well managed.

Privatization

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I would ask the Premier today if he is prepared to promise Manitobans that he will not consider privatization of Manitoba Hydro today or into the future, that Manitoba Hydro will remain a Crown corporation owned by all Manitobans as it is today. Will he make that promise today?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, this is a foolish question coming from a Liberal whose

colleagues in Ottawa privatized the CN railway, the biggest privatization ever in the history of the country, and here he is asking for assurances and commitments on privatization.

I would hope that whoever is in government, whether it is federal or provincial, municipal, that they make judgments that are based on the best long-term interests of the province and the people of the province, and that is precisely what we will do.

* (1410)

Headingley Correctional Institution Temporary Absences

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

Donald Rouire is charged with an alleged murder, an alleged murder that took place on a TA from Headingley. On 22 occasions we asked the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) and the Premier whether the criteria had been changed for Mr. Rouire and whether special circumstances were given, dealing with the riot, with his release on TA. The Premier stated on May 21 in this House that the release was made under the existing criteria. In light of the information we have yesterday, the Premier still maintained that Mr. Rouire's release is based on the existing criteria, or was the Premier misled by his Minister of Justice?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, one thing I will attempt to do is, by virtue of my dealing with this question, avoid any possibility that the mere discussion of the circumstances and the individual and his circumstances could prejudice a court case that is currently underway, and so I will not deal at all with any of the specifics of any of the material that the member puts forward. What I will say is that, in the case of any and all of the allegations that are being put forward, whether it be by the CBC or whether it be by the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) or the member for Concordia, I think that I would rather place my faith in the dispassionate, objective and very well-educated judgment of former Justice Ted Hughes and not put my faith in a media outlet that is looking to improve its ratings or in the position that is put forward by members

opposite wanting to somehow develop a political constituency for themselves on the misery of others.

Mr. Doer: I have met with members of the family of the victim, so I do not need any lectures from this Premier about the TA and the circumstances of the TA and the answers we received in this Legislature by this Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), reaffirmed by this Premier on May 21.

My question simply was, did the Minister of Justice mislead this Premier after she had informed the House on 22 occasions that the criteria had not been changed? In light of the fact that the government has access to the files, was Mr. Rouire a minimum risk or was he classified a higher risk, contrary to the criteria of TAs in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I will repeat that I will take my judgment and my analysis of the circumstances of all of the things that have been raised and discussed in this House with respect to all of the temporary absences, all of the decisions and judgments that were made by Corrections and Justice in the aftermath of the Headingley riot, I will take my analysis, my judgment and my conclusions based on the advice of retired Justice Ted Hughes, not on any political cheap shots from the member opposite.

Minister of Justice Removal Request

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): In light of the fact that the Minister of Justice last May and the Premier today has access to the file, in light of the fact that he did not refute the fact that Mr. Rouire was not a minimum risk as articulated by the Minister of Justice in the past, and on 22 occasions the Minister of Justice said in this House that the criteria had been met, how can this Premier keep a Minister of Justice that releases somebody without the proper criteria, as alleged in the media? Either the media is wrong or the Minister of Justice is incompetent and should be removed. Why does the Premier not do the right thing here today?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I have neither confirmed nor denied, accepted nor rejected any of the detail that he has put forward with respect to a case that is currently before the courts—[interjection]

An Honourable Member: That is Choices.

Mr. Filmon: That is the junior Choices over there, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I see that we have the junior leagues that are developing for the members opposite, and they have equal competence and capability to the members who sit opposite as they bring them into the Chamber.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: A point of order, Madam Speaker, the rules clearly state the issue of debating. I asked a very serious question about a very serious matter about his Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey). The Premier should address himself to the question and not give commentary to whatever he sees around him. Answer the questions.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. It is regrettable there was a disturbance in the Chamber that was pretty hard to ignore, but I would remind the honourable First Minister to reply to the question asked.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I would be just as embarrassed as the Leader of the Opposition by the junior New Democrats.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I recognize that emotions are running high, but it would be much appreciated if the members on both sides of the House would cease and desist when the Speaker is on her feet attempting to maintain order.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, you just told the Premier to answer the questions. He rose immediately and

immediately defied your ruling. I would suggest you call him to order, and if he refuses to obey, perhaps, you should show him that he still is not the dictator of this province and he has to follow the rules of this House.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, I would remind the honourable member for Thompson to pick and choose his words carefully.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I believe I heard the honourable member for Thompson—even though he stood on a point of order, parliamentary language refers to all statements made by all members at all times in the Chamber. I believe I heard the member for Thompson call the Premier (Mr. Filmon) something very unparliamentary. Now, if that is not the case, I will review Hansard, and I will report back.

Mr. Ashton: I chose my words very carefully, and I will state them again. I said, the Premier is still not the dictator of this province. That is not unparliamentary. I think it is a statement of fact, and I would state very clearly that I chose my every single word very carefully because the kind of disdain we have seen from the Premier again today, in this case for your ruling, Madam Speaker, the reason I rose on the point of order, I think should concern all Manitobans. He is not the dictator of this province. He is one MLA out of 57 and, I believe, should follow the rules of this House.

* (1420)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I think clearly the use of the word "dictator" in whatever context the member for Thompson tries to disguise it is still an unparliamentary word and ought to be withdrawn.

If memory serves me correctly, you have ruled that word out of order on at least one previous occasion in this House. Clearly, the use of that kind of terminology—I understand the members opposite are sensitive when the Premier made certain references with respect to the demonstration that occurred in the gallery. If you would like to rule junior New Democrats out of order, we will support that ruling.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson and given the words of the honourable government House leader, I will review the Hansard transcript and report back to the Chamber. But there is no need for name-calling in this Chamber regardless of who says it or when it is said. If the honourable members would afford the Speaker the luxury of doing her job and giving me an opportunity to rule, regardless of who says what, it would be much appreciated.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Now, where were we? The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

Mr. Filmon: Yes, Madam Speaker, as I say, I have neither accepted nor rejected, neither affirmed nor denied the comments that have been made by the member opposite with respect to the temporary absence with respect to a case that is before the courts. What I will say again is that I will await the report and recommendations of former Justice Ted Hughes. I believe that is the best solution to any of the issues that are raised by members opposite.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Prospectus

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Tonight, public hearings will begin on the bill to sell the Manitoba Telephone System. Incredibly, we are being asked, the people of Manitoba, to present tonight and as legislators to make a decision on the future of MTS with only two documents having been tabled by the government, a seven-page report from three investment bankers and a heavily censored document from the Crown Corporations Council.

My question to the Premier is, will he now confirm that we in fact have found that the prospectus for the sale will not be issued until two days after the bill is voted on, on November 7? Will we not even have the opportunity to find out what the prospectus will say before we have to decide on the future of MTS?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, my understanding is that it would be highly improper for us to be putting out a prospectus that is based on a legislative decision that is yet to happen. We cannot be seen to be promoting the sale of—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: We are going through a process, a process that requires us to abide by all sorts of regulations, including Securities Commission regulations, certainly the rules of this House and all of our legislative processes, and we are attempting to do it in the order in which it must be done in order to abide by all of the laws under which we are governed.

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

Mr. Ashton: I am wondering if the Premier can then explain why on the one hand it is okay for the government to spend \$400,000 promoting the sale, but, on the other hand, we the people of Manitoba are not going to have full and complete information about the sale.

How are we as legislators, let alone the people of Manitoba, supposed to decide on the future of MTS when the official information will not be made available until after the last vote in this Legislature, November 7?

Mr. Filmon: There are two stages to this process: One is a decision as to whether or not the Manitoba Telephone System is better off under public or private ownership given the current stresses and challenges it faces in terms of the tremendously rapidly changing technology. The second is whether or not, having decided that private ownership is the best solution, that private ownership is a broadly held offering of shares, ownership by one private entity, a major corporation, many options that might be there in a private-ownership scenario.

The first part of the debate obviously is that debate as to whether or not the telephone system is better off in private ownership, and that is precisely what we are going through today.

Firefighter Protection Safety Protocols

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Transcona, for one very short question.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): My question is for the Minister of Labour, who is also responsible for the Workers Compensation Board.

Since 1988, we have been trying in this House on seven successive attempts through a private member's bill to reintroduce protection for firefighters, to recognize the fact that firefighters are, in the performance of their duties, daily susceptible to communicable diseases from people that they may come in contact with. In 1988, Justice Lyon struck down the regulation that would provide that protection for firefighters.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour why—as this Minister of Labour who says that he is developing a protocol that will protect firefighters—he has refused to take into his confidence in the development of this protocol the very firefighters whose lives are at risk as a result of his inaction.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister charged with the administration of The Workers Compensation Act): Madam Speaker, I may not have understood the question correctly or the member is confusing two issues: one which relates to the Workers Compensation Board and the other which relates to a first responder protocol. I will respond to the Workers Compensation issue.

I have told the firefighters in that respect that I regard their work very, very highly, but that I, unlike NDP ministers, would not improperly interfere with the jurisdiction of an independent board, the Workers Compensation Board. I am prepared to listen to the Workers Compensation Board through the representation that worker advisors on that board have, but by interfering improperly in the operations of the board, it will lead us into the situation where, when they left office, it was a quarter billion dollars in the hole. I am prepared to listen, but I am not prepared to do the kinds of foolish things that they did.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Dr. Leo Kristjanson

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I would like today to pay tribute to a Gimli resident, Dr. Leo Kristjanson, who was

honoured last Friday, October 25, for the important role that he played in the development of one of Canada's premier research and development centres at the University of Saskatchewan. More specifically, he was honoured for his contribution to the establishment of the \$90-million Innovation Place, an 80-acre research park on the university campus. Dr. Kristjanson has done more than most Canadians to advance the causes of agriculture and rural development of science and higher education. He has held the positions of both president and vice-president of the University of Saskatchewan in the 1970s and '80s, and he was the driving force behind new initiatives that put the university and scientific resources at the service of citizens in rural areas. Innovation Place has become one of Canada's prime centres for research and development in biotechnology. New varieties of plants and new products to aid farmers and consumers throughout the world are developed at this research site.

* (1430)

Dr. Kristjanson began heavy lobbying for this development in the late '70s when he held the position of vice-president of the University of Saskatchewan. For Dr. Kristjanson, the most notable benefit of this project is how it will benefit the people of the community. Despite the fact that he was forced to retire from his administrative work at the University of Saskatchewan due to being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, it is wonderful to see how much of a leadership role Dr. Kristjanson has taken within his community. I would like to applaud Dr. Kristjanson's efforts and the initiatives he has taken in the area of research and development at the University of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Firefighter Protection

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, prior to 1988, professional firefighting forces of this province had protection under The Workers Compensation Act of Manitoba that would provide protection for those firefighters for diseases that they may encounter as a result of the performance of their duties, and we are talking about diseases of the internal organs: the heart, the lungs and the brain.

In 1988, Justice Lyon struck down the regulation under The Workers Compensation Act that would have

continued to provide that protection for firefighters. Since that time, members of the New Democratic Party have introduced seven private members' bills to this Chamber to reinstate that protection for firefighters, even though the former Minister of Labour refused to endorse that protection for firefighters in this province.

Since that time, we are advised that the current Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), as he advised firefighters yesterday, is developing a protocol that would put in place protection for firefighters to be notified when they come in contact with infectious diseases and that the firefighters would be given the information to allow themselves to take the necessary precautions to not infect others, including their family members. What the minister is doing here is, I believe, delaying, since we already have a communicable disease protocol in the province of Ontario which could quite readily be adopted for the province of Manitoba and would have put in place the necessary protection for firefighters. In addition, the Minister of Labour should look at reinstating the protection for firefighters under the heart, lung and internal organs provisions under the private member's bill which we have tabled before this Chamber.

So we hope that the Minister of Labour will take the necessary steps to provide that protection for firefighters whom everyone in our community, in all of our communities, relies on so heavily and for which there is little protection for those professional people in our province today.

Economic Growth

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and relay the glowing report that the city of Winnipeg received in a recent article. It states that historically Winnipeg has been defined in several ways: trading post, grain capital, transportation centre. Today, the city remains an important regional trading centre. Despite some reductions in the importance of the railways, Winnipeg is still an important centre of transportation, thanks mainly to the growing trucking industry and the promise of an expanded role for the Winnipeg International Airport.

The grain business headquartered here remains a mainstay of the provincial economy bolstered by diversification into crops such as canola and the

expansion of the livestock industry. Over the last century, this city has developed the most diversified economy. In addition to its traditional strengths, this city is now the largest aerospace centre in western Canada, the largest maker of software and computer equipment in the West and the largest centre for health research in manufacturing activities outside Ontario and Quebec.

Winnipeg has a window on every important industry on the continent and the development that provides the community with a chance for steady economic growth and opportunities for young people to pursue almost every line of work imaginable. Confirmation of Winnipeg's potential of its ability to adapt to new technology and shifting trade patterns is visible everywhere.

I would encourage all Manitobans to take the time to review the Free Press publication devoted to telling the story of how Winnipeggers are meeting the challenges of the 1990s. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Today, there are more than 130 people registered to speak in committee on Bill 67, the privatization of MTS. At least a quarter of those people are from outside Winnipeg. In the past week alone, we have received resolutions from the Town of Grandview, the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet and the Rural Municipality of Brokenhead urging this government not to sell MTS without public consultation and further urging this government to hold committee hearings on Bill 67 throughout Manitoba.

Since the sparsely populated areas of rural and northern Manitoba can expect to suffer most under the proposed privatization of MTS, it is only fair that the citizens of rural and northern Manitoba be given the opportunity to have easier access to the legislative committee hearings on Bill 67. The government should cancel immediately the \$400,000 advertising campaign promoting the sale of MTS and dedicate some of that money to holding committee hearings in northern and rural Manitoba.

MTS has already requested increasing residential rates of telephone subscribers living in northern and rural Manitoba by as much as 80 percent by 1998. Such huge increases will inevitably mean that some people in Manitoba will not be able to afford telephone service, all

of this on top of MTS job cuts in northern and rural Manitoba.

In view of the fact that the committee on Bill 67 is swamped with submissions, the government should hold two or three committee meetings in rural and northern Manitoba. Many of the members on this side of the House have criss-crossed this province and have attended numerous meetings at which ordinary Manitobans discussed the future of MTS. In fact, there will be such a meeting this Saturday in Flin Flon. Why can this government not be equally accommodating to the people of Manitoba? This government should make some effort to listen to the voices of all of its citizens, not just the Winnipeg citizens.

Once again, I strongly urge the government to hold two or three legislative committee hearings on Bill 67 in rural and northern Manitoba.

Firefighter Protection

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, as no doubt other MLAs have had opportunity—I had an opportunity this morning to meet with a couple of members from the fire department—in expressing the concerns, as the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) alluded to, I think there are a couple of things that should be noted. First and foremost, the infectious disease being passed on through emergency response teams such as firefighters is something which should be addressed and can be addressed virtually immediately. I look to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) because they had indicated that they did pass on some correspondence.

Ultimately, I believe that as we look, whether it is across Canada or even down south, that these protocols are in fact being implemented, it is only a question of time before it is done in the province of Manitoba, no doubt. I think that there is a sense of urgency and that the Minister of Health in particular should act as quickly as possible to ensure that the communication and the protocol is done in such a fashion in which the future safety concerns when dealing with this particular issue can be addressed as quickly as possible, knowing full well, of course, that there is no reason why it cannot be dealt with in the next 30 days.

The other issue of workers compensation, which is something I was very sympathetic to and had indicated that I was prepared to do additional research into it, I know there have been amendments in the past, private members' bills in the past dealing with issues with respect to firemen—particularly with workers' compensation and infectious disease—from both parties, the New Democrats and the Liberals. But the workers compensation is something which has been in the air for a number of years, and again we would ask the minister responsible for Workers Compensation to make some sort of a decision on it or at least to do some consulting within the fire departments, because it is an issue that does need to be addressed and should be addressed in as quick a fashion as possible and, as I have indicated, is something which I believe we have supported in the past and are very sympathetic towards today. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Committee Changes

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

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

I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, this is for October 29, tonight at 6:30 p.m., be amended as follows: the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck); and the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

And, I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows, and this for October 29 at 6:30 p.m.: the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik); the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer); the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render); and the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), seconded by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the—

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you call report stage for Bills 12, 36, 49, 52 and 53.

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Just a minute. That the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for this evening, October 29, 6:30 p.m., be amended as follows: the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck); and the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

I am going to request the co-operation of all members in this House to let me read the committee changes for the benefit of the table officers—with these committees happening in such short order on such short notice—so that they can ensure that the appropriate people are listed and the required paperwork is indeed done in preparation for a meeting that follows in about three hours.

I would appreciate it if the members not then call that we dispense with the reading of the notice. Quite often it is very difficult for the table officers to hear at the table, given the other noise in the Chamber.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources for Tuesday, this evening, October 29 at 6:30 p.m., be amended as follows: the honourable member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik); the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer); the honourable member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render); and the honourable member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). [agreed]

Madam Speaker: I thank all honourable members for their co-operation.

REPORT STAGE

Bill 12—The Barbers Repeal and Hairdressers Repeal Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 12, The Barbers Repeal and Hairdressers Repeal Act (Loi abrogeant la Loi sur les coiffeurs et la Loi sur les coiffeurs pour dames), reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 36—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 49—The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 49, The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant les offices régionaux de la santé et apportant des modifications corrélatives), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 52—The York Factory First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): On behalf of the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 52, The York Factory First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act (Loi sur l'accord de mise en oeuvre de la première nation de York Factory relatif à la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 53—The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): On behalf of the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 53, The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act (Loi sur l'accord de mise en oeuvre de la première nation de Nelson House relatif à la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* (1450)

House Business

Mr. Ernst: I believe there might be a will of the House to waive private members' hour today.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to waive private members' hour. [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, I would like to advise the House that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will sit tomorrow evening at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 30, to consider Bills 72, 32 and 48.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet Wednesday, October 30, 6:30 p.m. to consider Bills 72, 32 and 48.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, I would like to advise the House that the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet at 9 a.m. on Thursday, October 31, to continue consideration of Bill 67.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will sit at 9 a.m. on Thursday, October 31, to continue to consider Bill 67.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet again on Thursday, October 31, at 6:30 p.m., to continue consideration of Bill 67.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet Thursday, October 31, 6:30 p.m. to continue to consider Bill 67.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will also meet at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 31, to consider Bills 32, 48 and 72.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. May I please ask the honourable government House leader to repeat those bill numbers? I had difficulty hearing him.

Mr. Ernst: The Public Utilities and Natural Resources committee will meet at 6:30 p.m. on October 31 to consider Bill 67. The Standing Committee on Law Amendments will also meet at 6:30 p.m. on (Thursday) October 31 to consider Bills 32, 48 and 72.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet Thursday, October 31, 6:30 p.m. to consider Bills 32, 48 and 72.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, if necessary, the Public Utilities and Natural Resources committee will meet at 9 a.m. on Friday, November 1, to continue consideration of Bill 67.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will sit at 9 a.m., Friday, November 1, if necessary, to continue to consider Bill 67.

Mr. Ernst: Also, at 9 a.m. on Friday, November 1, Madam Speaker, the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will sit, if necessary, to continue consideration of Bills 32, 48 and 72.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet at 9 a.m., Friday, November 1, to continue to consider Bills 32, 48 and 72, if necessary.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, the intention for both Friday sittings of the committee would be to sit until 3 p.m.

Madam Speaker: The Standing on Public Utilities and Natural Resources and the Standing Committee on Law Amendments scheduled for Friday, November 1, will sit until 3 p.m.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, would you call for second reading, Bill 75, and then call the balance of the bills as listed in the Order Paper for debate on second readings as they are listed.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 75—The Commodity Futures Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst), Bill 75, The Commodity Futures Act (Loi sur les contrats à terme), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to put a few words on the record today regarding Bill 75, and I will be the last speaker on this bill.

It is, I think, worthy of some note that this is an example of, I guess, some of the many bills that we deal with in the Legislature, where all three parties in this Chamber are in agreement with the bill. In fact, it has been the agreement of the three parties that has brought

this bill along in this session to this point where it would not have been possible otherwise.

Now, as the minister pointed out in his presentation on the bill, in 1978 Manitoba was one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to adopt legislation governing trading in commodities futures. The legislation was limited and it excluded the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange and, also, the trading was somewhat limited to future contracts on grains, which were governed by the Federal Grain Futures Act.

Since 1978, the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange has expanded and evolved into several new areas beyond the scope of the old legislation. These include options in a number of existing contracts, as well as new futures contracts on commodities such as feed peas.

The exchange needs new legislative framework to keep pace with growth and movement into new areas. Other jurisdictions have adopted such legislation and the Manitoba Securities Commission will have regulatory control. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, the regulations will be split between the commission and the exchange. The exchange will continue to have the primary responsibility for regulating its members. The Securities Commission will approve internal rules and regulations of exchange and act as an appeal body from the disciplinary in other decisions that are made. The companion bills to this piece of legislation were the Commodity Exchange bill and the Winnipeg Stock Exchange.

Madam Speaker, one of the major reasons for this bill is to establish Manitoba as a hub of activity, and if the government or if we are not able to in the province establish Manitoba as a hub of activity in this area of endeavour, we will surely lose out to other jurisdictions, other areas such as Chicago, other centres. We cannot afford to sit still and allow other jurisdictions to win out over us. The economy in Manitoba badly needs a boost and it is our belief that the economy will be helped by having a vibrant commodities exchange operating in the province, and because of that belief we believe that this is necessary.

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

Now, this bill also deals with the rules of conduct of the business, and there were some very important issues in the rules that are very important here. It is very important that the disclosure of risks and other information regarding the commodities, futures, contracts and options be made available. We have to look at the solvency question. We have to ensure that customers maintain sufficient margin. We have to provide clients with trade confirmations and monthly statements containing prescribed information and accounts have to be segregated and properly accounted for. So these are normal requirements of exchanges, but we have seen in other jurisdictions examples where exchanges have not operated properly. I believe the Vancouver Stock Exchange is an example of one that has a reputation of activities that one does not want to see happen in our jurisdiction.

In terms of investigation and enforcement, the commission will be granted broad investigation powers, and they will be able to issue investigation orders that enable the investigator to order the production of documents and compel testimony under oath. They will be able to freeze money or other property. These requirements are necessary under the act, and like I said, it is important that this exchange develop along the correct lines and be an enhancement to the province of Manitoba and not be in anyway a negative aspect in the province.

So, with these comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would suggest we move the bill to committee.

* (1500)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 75. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

As previously announced, the Public Utilities and Natural Resources committee and the Law Amendments committee will be meeting on Friday, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Thank you.

Committee Change

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for this evening at 6:30 p.m., (be amended as follows): the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey).

Motion agreed to.

Bill 4—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), Bill 4, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba), standing in the name of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos).

Stand? No? Leave has been denied.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have put up all the speakers we will be on this bill, and we are looking forward to going into committee to let the public have their say.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading, Bill 4. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 17—The Government Essential Services Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), Bill 17, The Government Essential Services Act (Loi sur les services gouvernementaux essentiels), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

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

Bill 41—The Fisheries Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), Bill 41, The Fisheries Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche), standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

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

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise for a short period of time to put a few comments, two or three concerns that we have with this bill, 41, amending the way we fish in this province. The first thing that—[interjection] Yes, it has been quite fishy here for about a week, I would suggest to the members across the way.

The basis of this bill is a reaction, I suppose, to the offloading or the transfer of powers and decision making in the area of fishing from the federal government to the provincial scene. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if decentralizing of decision-making authority from the feds downward to people at the local level was the intent of this bill, I would be much happier. However, what this bill eventually means is that there will be more control in the area of decision making in fishing rested in the hands in the office of the Minister of Natural Resources. That, I am quite nervous about, given what has occurred over the last several months in the area of fishing and some of the questionable decisions that have been made by officials in this government, I think, just proves to highlight the concern that I will outline here this afternoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is quite a recurring theme with this government that power has been shifted from those of the very many who do have a lot of say in their own lives to the hands of whichever minister we happen to be talking about across the way. We have seen a shift of control from local levels concentrated in the offices of the ministers and their very closest of allies and very closest of deputy ministers and ADMs. There is no difference in this Natural Resources ministry than any of the other ministries that are looking at shifting control from those at the ground level to those in the minister's office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that kind of a movement worries me very much, because along with the shifting of control comes a shifting of benefits. Now, as we know, as it is my belief as well and the belief of the official opposition here in Manitoba, that if you allow everyday people, who are out there fishing, taking part in this form of providing an occupation, if you allow those folks the ability to have a say over their industry, you are going to have those people reaping the benefits of the decisions that are made in the area of fishing. What we see happening with this bill though is a shift from those people to the very few who are making decisions in this area. That is the first problem that I have with Bill 41, the shift of control to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger).

The second concern that I raise today that I think this government has to think very deeply on is an issue involving the constitutional right of aboriginal people to make a living while fishing in this province. This government has not been particularly open to discussing aboriginal rights in the area of fishing. As a matter of fact, this government has moved against the rights of aboriginal people to provide a living for themselves and their families in different parts of this province on all of the lakes that we commercially fish in Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to suggest that this government should slow down on this part of their Bill 41, should take a good, hard look at the implications that Bill 41 has in the area of allowing aboriginal fishers the right to provide themselves with food on their table through fishing, which is a grand old occupation in this province, predating the arrival of Europeans in western Canada and Manitoba, in particular.

What we have seen in the area of aboriginal fishing is a very unfair, very biased approach by this government, an approach which has led to separate rules for people who fish on the north side of Lake Winnipeg as opposed to the fewer people who live and fish on the south side of Winnipeg. It is absolutely imperative that this government or any government in the province treat all its people fairly, and when you have fishermen from all over Lake Winnipeg being treated under different rules by this minister and by this government, then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would submit to you that as public officials we need to take a look at that situation and do whatever it takes to correct it.

As it stands now, people can make presentation to the minister and try to convince the minister that there is a problem and that it should be corrected.

* (1510)

There are certain processes available to people who do have legitimate grievances in the area of fishing. My worry is that when you concentrate even more power with one minister that that minister has all the more power to continue the unfair rules that discriminate right now against the fishermen on the north end of Lake Winnipeg and unfairly give the advantage to the fewer fishermen in the south end of Lake Winnipeg. That is a situation that this side of the House does not, would not tolerate.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to point out the problems that have occurred recently in the marketing of fish. One of my concerns is that Bill 41 enhances the minister's powers in terms of marketing fish for export.

Now, clearly we have seen over the last couple of weeks, in questions brought forth by myself and my colleague from Crescentwood, that no one can give permission to export fish circumventing the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, including the Minister of Natural Resources. No one can do that.

Is this Bill 41 designed to make legal what has been going on in this government already? If that is the case, they are too late with Bill 41, because the horses are already out of the barn, it has already been done. So I want to make sure that we have put enough thought into the concerns that I have raised here today, including that of powers of the minister to market fish.

With those words, I would conclude my remarks, and look forward to hearing the remarks of my colleague from the Interlake on this issue. Thank you.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): I, too, would like to make a few comments on Bill 41, the bill that the Minister of Natural Resources of this government has introduced, The Fisheries Amendment Act.

As my colleague from Dauphin had mentioned certain criteria and certain concerns that he has with Bill 41, I too am concerned and would like to perhaps just make some comments on the commercial fishing industry that

we do have in Manitoba. That commercial fishing industry is very important to our province and to our many, many commercial fisherman right throughout on Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba, and there are changes that are needed every so often with respect to the fishing industry. As we all know, in many industries things change, people's concerns are raised when it comes to sustainability of the fishing industry.

But looking over this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I do not see and what I would have liked to have seen further to the comments that the minister made in Hansard with respect to Bill 41 and some of his explanations, what I would like to have seen and has been the trend in the past with many ministers when presenting bills, there is no real explanation as to why this amendment was brought in. I believe no real consultation and who the consultation was with we do not know because, when requesting the minister and his office to sit down and collaborate with us and discuss it, the minister refused. The minister refused to provide us any spreadsheets for this bill. The minister refused to provide any information. Information was very, very hard to get on this amendment. We had to, of course, talk to the people that we know in the industry and find out more about it, and it was very difficult.

I think it would have been made a lot easier if the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) had been able to sit down with the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) and myself and discuss the bill clause by clause and the reasons for the changes, and why the problems, where the minister thought that there were problems in this bill or in commercial fishing as a whole. If he wants to put in a bill I would think that he would have the courtesy to be able to discuss an important bill.

Any changes to an act are important, and the fishing industry is that important that it would have been good for us to have more consultations with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger). Obviously, we are wearing the wrong colour suits, because the minister only seems to want to discuss issues in fishing and listen to those whose concerns come to him are in blue suits and not in any other colour.

That same issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, occurred when the previous minister, the Minister of Agriculture, was the Minister responsible for Natural Resources. It

seemed that the changes or the discussions were only with the specific group of people, but having said that I also have to say that last year when the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) was approached by the group of northern fisherman to discuss some changes, discuss boundary changes, discuss quota changes, the minister listened.

The minister, I must say, did listen to that group of people, and I believe the minister was more than willing to go along with what the group requested, but something happened in between, and I have down in my office, brought some of it up, a stack on file of correspondence back and forth to this minister and his department making certain requests, wanting to join the minister's department as far as consulting properly, discussing properly with his staff and himself, senior staff what was needed, what they would like to see, and I think this minister wanted to go along and do that. I would think, from what I heard, that this minister did want to. Why did he not? That is what I am afraid whenever there is, as for Bill 41, the minister is getting powers all of a sudden. The minister is now implementing powers for himself to make decisions for himself on certain parts of the fishing industry, but is he listening to the groups? Is he listening to the northern fishermen? Is he listening to the fishermen on Lake Winnipeg? He may be, but not all of them. He is listening to a few who want and have an agenda of their own, and I worry.

I worry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the fishing industry in the Interlake constituency, Gimli constituency, along Lake Manitoba, is very, very important to our economic development and benefit—and the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) will agree with me on this—very important.

I want to say that the concerns of a lot of the fishermen are not being addressed by this minister. I would say that the fishermen, who have talked to me many times at meetings that I have been with them, wonder why this minister, who seems to want to do something, does not do it, does not come through in the clutch. He sends a nice little letter back saying, well, that is a good idea, but we want more and further consultation. With whom? If there was further consultation with the fishermen, then perhaps they would go along with it, but he is not consulting with the fishermen. He brings them in, he hears what they have to say, and then tells them that their

ideas may or may not be so good, but we will have to consult further.

In Bill 41, and it is ironic and sometimes amazing that some cabinet members and government members on the opposite side, in reading through some of all the other bills, since 1990, there always have to be some powers of the minister, emphatic powers of a minister. It lays out the different powers that he has. What is the intent of these powers? We do not know that; we do not know that by just going through the bill and discussing the bill. People are wondering and people are worried. They are worried, very worried that powers in this minister's hands when it comes to the fishing industry could, in fact, be very scary, but if this minister had at least consulted with the fishermen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill does deal primarily with some of the regulatory powers when it comes to marketing and licensing, but licensing too—who knows better than the fishermen and the associations that they are part of and represent as what is the way to go for the fishing industry in Manitoba? Who better? Now, I wonder if we had had the chance to meet with the minister, and if the minister had had to show us that he was, in fact, meeting with those associations or with those fishermen to put together Bill 41, the amendment, then I do not think that we would have a problem. In general, I do not believe we have a problem with this bill—to now

An Honourable Member: Well, let us pass it then.

Mr. Clif Evans: We will be passing this on, and I know that some of my other colleagues want to make comments about Bill 41. I will, hopefully, hear what they have to say because they have some concerns, too.

The fishermen in the north basin have come to this minister and requested changes to improve the fishing industry and to enhance the fishing industry in the north part of Lake Winnipeg. This minister, for whatever reason, is ignoring and denying the requests that these fishermen have made, but now he is asking for, or going to have, all these powers of licensing and powers of establishing licences and what can be allocated. Why? What is in place right now—

An Honourable Member: The feds have it.

* (1520)

Mr. Clif Evans: The minister talks about the feds having it. Yes, in regulation to the marketing part of it, but the powers in issuing licences are the responsibility—they are a provincial responsibility.

An Honourable Member: Not now.

Mr. Clif Evans: The minister says, not now. Whom does the fisherman go to to get his fishing licence—[interjection]—and yet get permission from the feds? That is right. I understand that, but what it does not also do is, it does not provide us with, given the minister has such powers, who are going to get those licences now that he does not have to approach the feds? Who are going to get the licences? There are many licences out there right now, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are concerned with the powers.

The minister jokes and laughs about this, but it is a serious situation, very serious situation, in and along Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba and in the northern part of the province, for commercial fishing. The concerns, too, that I have, and I bring some of these concerns in, maybe not in total retrospect to Bill 41, but the sustainability of the fishing industry is very important, and I feel that the fisherman and the commercial fisherman in this province are geared and want to be able to work with this minister or this government or the fishing industry department itself to sustain a good fishing industry for this province and for the fisherman. It is a very vital part of the whole commercial fishing.

I want to say, away from Bill 41, that the minister, I feel, should listen more to the fisherman, should listen to the senior staff of his department, should listen to the associations and, if he says he is doing that, then so be it. I certainly do not like some of the little things that he has in this bill that worry me. I am just not sure about this minister's intent when it comes to this bill.

We will see, as the bill goes on and have the bills proclaimed just exactly what the reaction is going to be, but I do have a concern that was passed on to me by fisherman, and that is in respect to the part Property in fish. I would just like to go over the two clauses of Property in fish: "The property in all wild fish, including wild fish that have been unlawfully caught, is vested in

the Crown, and no person may acquire any right or property in such fish other than in accordance with this Act." That is 14.2(1).

Section 14.2(2) Property in fish lawfully caught: "Any person who has lawful possession of wild fish has, subject to this Act, all property rights in the fish."

I would like to read the response that I got to those two sections.

As regards the changes to The Manitoba Fisheries Act, Bill 41, we tender the following: It is disgusting to see the addition of the Property in fish sections, 14.2(1) and 14.2(2), which purport to regulate fisheries against any existing treaty rights fisheries. It appears that, together with the licence requirements in the act, the province is attempting to regulate the sale of all fish. In other words, the province is attempting to do indirectly what it cannot do directly, and that is the sale of fish interprovincially or internationally. We would advise the provincial government to consult First Nations and all fisherman when such provisions are made, especially the creation of property rights in fish.

We can only suppose, and my trusted colleague from Point Douglas will like this, we can only suppose that the provincial government now owns the beluga whales that come to Churchill. This legislation runs into absurdities, and as far as the First Nations are concerned, fisheries is primarily a federal jurisdiction. Therefore, fisheries does not fall under The Natural Resources Transfer Act.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing, obviously there are concerns with this amendment and obviously there are many concerns with the fishing industry that we want to see improved and hopefully they will be improved, and I expect this minister to do what he can to work along with the commercial fishing industry in this province and do whatever he can to sustain it, develop it into a better operation for the future of all fisherman. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may be allowed to speak to the bill. Thank you.

Just to put a few words, with respect to this particular bill, on the record. The intent of this bill is to transfer, of course, regulations; no changes to the current regulations, from what I understand, are in fact being made. This act will consolidate and co-ordinate authority for the licensing and allocation of aquatic organisms harvested under The Fisheries Act of Manitoba. [interjection] We will let Hansard straighten that out. I will not repeat that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, trusting that Hansard knows exactly what it is that I said.

The new act allows the transfer of appropriate federal regulations from Manitoba fisheries regulations from 1987 to the provincial regulations. The second purpose of the legislation, according to the minister, at least as the minister has indicated, will give him the authority to regulate the live bait industry in Manitoba. Specifically, the minister made reference to the new leech harvest. With sport fishing now a multimillion dollar industry, live bait such as leeches has become a growing industry. Anyone with a net and a willingness to get their feet wet can sell live bait on the roadside. Small places have been doing this for years without any impact on the environment. It is possible, however, that the commercial harvest may be started.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course, there are many Manitobans, in fact most MLAs inside the Chamber will acknowledge the benefits for Manitoba as a whole in terms of this, the fishing industry. The fishing industry contributes in so many different ways. For some people it is a way of life. When you look in terms of our aboriginal people, this is something in which they obviously hold very close and dear to their heart. It is a part of their heritage and tradition. You can take a look at the individuals who are employed within this industry. There are hundreds of Manitobans that receive direct jobs; there are even more that receive indirect jobs through this particular industry. There is the whole area with respect to the industry's potential for growth in areas such as tourism, and all of these different positive components with respect to the fishing industry can be very beneficial to the province as a whole.

It is a question of how we are going to manage this wonderful resource, and that is why this particular piece of legislation is important because it does have and does provide great potential for all Manitobans if in fact government does what is the responsible thing with

respect to this industry and protect this wonderful, valuable resource for not only today's people but also for tomorrow's. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

Bill 50—The Remembrance Day Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), Bill 50, The Remembrance Day Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le jour du souvenir), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

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

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak on The Remembrance Day Amendment Act. I want to say before I start that I have consulted with my local Royal Canadian Legion and with the executive of this Legion led by Mr. Jeff Matheson, so that the views presented here represent the sense and spirit of my consultations with Mr. Matheson and with The Royal Canadian Legion, Fort Rouge Branch.

* (1530)

First, I want to say that the Fort Rouge Branch unanimously supported the clause which would include veterans of the Korean War, the Gulf War and international peacekeeping activities in The Remembrance Day Act. Having said that, I want to say it is with the remainder of the bill, particularly with the amendments, which would allow retail businesses to operate after 1 p.m., that offends my local Royal Canadian Legion and which I too find objectionable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not come personally from a military family, but family members on both sides served in both World War I and World War II. For example, in World War I, my great-uncle was a prisoner of war from 1915 to 1918, and his sufferings and his legacy are a part of our family history and a part of our understanding of who we are as a family, nor was he the only relative of

his generation to serve in what I think history calls the Great War. Both my British and Canadian grandfathers were a part of that conflict and spent time in the trenches in Belgium. My father and his twin brother fought in World War II, and my father was among the Canadians who landed in Normandy on D-Day.

My father-in-law, born in Poland and now a Canadian, tells a most amazing struggle of courage and determination to survive. In 1939, he was in the Polish militia; he left Poland in 1939, as I am sure members of this House can understand. He went to Hungary, Greece, Beirut, Syria, Jordan, and after a brief stint in the French Foreign Legion, he finally met up and joined the Polish regiment of the 8th Army. From there he fought in Egypt and in Italy and particularly at that famous Italian battle of Monte Cassino.

On the civilian side of World II, my mother survived the Battle of Britain, but, after one air raid too many, she came home to find her house and all her possessions completely devastated; she had lost everything. My brother—my mother's first born—was born in a tube station in London, and, as a child, I remember stories of the war. I remember stories of my parents' suffering and deprivation. I remember for years after the war my mother sending food parcels to Britain, because Britain was so devastated by World War II that people in Britain lived on rations well into the 1950s. My Dutch mother-in-law tells graphic stories of the war in Holland—the brutalization, her brother sent to a concentration camp, living on tulip bulbs and eating rats.

As a student of literature, I remember the novelists and poets of both wars. I remember their effects on a generation of readers and, of course, their effects on a generation of readers in regard to the war. From Wilfrid Owens's berating and satirical poem, *Dulce et decorum est*—it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country—to Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and closer to home our own Charles Yale Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed* or Timothy Findley's Governor General's Award-winning novel, *The Wars*. Timothy Findley's 1976 Governor General's Award-winning book, *The Wars*, is Findley's own attempt to expiate the ghosts of the first war and to understand the sufferings of his own family and sufferings of all Canadians. The epigram to this book is a quotation from the Greek philosopher

Heraclitus. Here I quote from Heraclitus: Never that which is shall die.

I mention this today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I sincerely believe that the changes to The Remembrance Day Act as delineated in Bill 50 will, contrary to what Heraclitus says, mean that Remembrance Day, as we know it in the province of Manitoba, will die. Two years ago, I was in Ontario on November 11, and Ontario honours Remembrance Day in a very, very different way than we do. I can assure you that in Ontario where retail business goes on as usual, it was completely a business-as-usual day. As far as I could see, the sacrifices of our veterans were not honoured whatsoever.

My personal habit on November 11 has been to attend a ceremony or to follow the ceremony in Ottawa, usually on radio or television. I can, in all honesty and truth, say that both in my family of origin and in my family of creation—if I can make that distinction—we have always honoured November 11 and we have always used this occasion as a time to discuss issues of war and peace and as a time to reflect and meditate on the realities of war and peace and the causes of war. This is, as I believe, the way in which November 11 should be observed. One day a year should be completely and totally different from all other days and set aside to commemorate and honour our veterans.

I mentioned my family members earlier, not to brag about their accomplishments, but because their accomplishments and experiences are so similar to those of millions of other people, some who live to tell the tale and millions who died. As the past recedes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and as commercial enterprise clamours, it would be very easy to modernize, and I put “modernize” in quotation marks, November 11, to have a service in the morning and a shopping spree in the afternoon. So we would gradually lose touch with the past. We would forget people like my uncle who spent years in a prisoner-of-war camp. We would forget people like my father, who landed in Normandy, or my father-in-law, who to this day carries his wounds around with him.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) has approached the amendments to The Remembrance Day Act as if the only problems with the current situation are labour-relations issues. Of course, these labour-relations issues undoubtedly exist, and these labour-relations issues

undoubtedly need to be taken care of. But November 11, as my colleague from St. Johns pointed out to me in private conversation, is a community issue. I believe that the majority of people in Manitoba wish to preserve an entire day of remembrance, a day when commercial enterprise, with very few exceptions other than essential services, when enterprises close down as a sign of respect and a sign of remembrance. This has been our tradition, and traditions have an important role to play in welding us together as members of a community and members of society.

This November 11, my partner and I will attend a ceremony at our local Royal Canadian Legion. We are going to lay a wreath in honour of the dead. These ceremonies are important, these traditions are important, and I, for one, want to continue them.

So, in conclusion, I would like to ask the Minister of Labour to reconsider his legislation. If there are anomalies or conflicts in The Remembrance Day Act or anomalies or conflicts between The Remembrance Day Act and The Retail Business Holiday Closing Act, then he could certainly provide a housekeeping bill which would allow us to solve these problems, but throwing Remembrance Day open to commercial enterprise is, in my opinion, not the solution. I think such legislation is disrespectful and insensitive.

So, on behalf of The Royal Canadian Legion Fort Rouge Branch, I request a full day of remembrance in order to honour our veterans and to remember their sacrifices.

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

* (1540)

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if I would have leave of the House to make a contribution to Bill 50 at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

Mr. Enns: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to acknowledge and say I appreciated very much the comments from the member for Osborne (Ms.

McGifford). I think that if we lived in a less complex world, I would want to share and support the views that she just expressed, but the world is more complex, regrettably, for different reasons.

I particularly noted her comment that in other jurisdictions like Ontario, for instance, where time has erased the importance of Remembrance Day, the setting aside for a day for all of us, this generation and generations to come, to pay some respect, some acknowledgment of what those who have gone before us have contributed to our well-being, particularly in a free and open society, such as the ones that we enjoy. You know, that is to be regretted.

I see in Bill 50 that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) has brought forward a compromise which does not satisfy all aspects of the question, but certainly a genuine opportunity for us in Manitoba to ensure that Remembrance Day does not die, that Remembrance Day is remembered. My only admonition to the Minister of Labour would be the strictest possible enforcement of the provisions of the bill.

The bill does set aside the morning, it does set aside the hour, that most of us have traditionally come to do the very things that the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) mentions. We do that in our small communities throughout Manitoba, that hour that has been internationally set aside, 11 a.m., where we pause to remember the sacrifice of Canadians past in the defence of this great country.

It seems to me that, if we recognize really what our society is about, there is a far better chance of really observing Remembrance Day and the importance of what Remembrance Day is all about by rigidly imposing the conditions of this act that is before us, that all nonessential commercial activity in fact be closed for the morning, be closed so that those of us who do, and there are many, wish to observe the various services that are held in the morning of November 11 to observe the special ceremonies around the cenotaphs throughout the province that often are the focal point for these ceremonies on that hour, 11 a.m., and then allow that compromise, if you like, to the situation, condition that we have in this country to allow for commercial enterprises commence at one o'clock.

To do less allows for it to erode from us, as it has in Manitoba, and I really commend the Minister of Labour for addressing the situation. I think Remembrance Day services can and will be enhanced by this measure. There will be a greater fairness among the commercial enterprises that are operating in Manitoba as to who can or who should not or who carries on commercial businesses. I can only indicate to the members of the House that I think it is in fact a situation where a compromise is a good measure, one that will ensure that for many, many years and hopefully generations to come November 11 will continue to be a special day in Manitoba.

I just simply want to conclude by acknowledging the minister who sought out and brought together a good working committee that gave him advice that led to this bill. Committee members from the different stakeholders involved, Legion people involved, labour people involved, business community involved, that all have a concern with the way Remembrance Day was being practised or abused in the past, and the minister brought all that together under the leadership of a capable chairperson.

I think these recommendations are ones that this House ought to, quite frankly, adopt with a degree of unanimity. It would be appropriate if we could show our respect to the memory of those who have sacrificed and those who still bear some of the scars if, on this particular occasion, we could set aside our partisan differences and recognize that it was a kind of an all-interest group committee that advised the minister that led to the clauses to the bill that is before us, and certainly I believe it deserves the support of all members of this Chamber. Thank you.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a few comments I want to put on the record related to the legislation that is before us. I want to take and illustrate a bit of a dilemma that I am experiencing in my department.

Since the Second World War, I think many ministers in the Department of Natural Resources have struggled and coped with the challenge that hunting season on November 11 has presented from time to time. In fact, since the Second World War, there has always been

hunting on Remembrance Day, and some days opening day has fallen exactly on the 11th.

What I want to put on the record is the fact that this year again, under the cycle the way it operates, deer season opens on the second Monday of November every year. But, depending on the timetable the way it works out, every once in a while November 11 is on a Monday when deer season opens, and that is what is happening this year.

When the seasons were formulated of the various resources, deer, bear, moose, caribou, ducks, geese, prairie chickens, when these come forward, somewhere along the line inadvertently it was overlooked, I suppose, certainly by myself or I might have caught it at that time. When we finally issued, and we try and issue our season information well in advance so that our lodgers and outfitters, who are very dependent on resources from across the line when they do their bookings, when they leave before Christmas to get their bookings for next year's activities, we try and have this information for them. I mean, if there was an error made, it was already made last year for this year's season.

Once I realized that, I knew there was going to be some problem, because UMM executive, at their annual convention two years ago passed a resolution stating that this should not happen. So what I did in the meantime, I brought in the area vice-president and the past president from the legion together with the executive of the UMM, and we discussed the problem that has been there, not just for me but it has been there in the past.

I gave an undertaking that I would write them a letter, both the UMM executive as well as the legions, explaining to them the dilemma that I have because I cannot just say, well, now we are going to change it; we are not going to allow the hunting to take place on November 11, because people have booked and made arrangements virtually a year in advance. There would be some people that would be hard done by financially, and it is just too late to do that.

They accept the fact that they cannot change that at this point in time. However, I have given an undertaking, and we had discussion that we were going to do exactly what the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) has done in this bill. We are going to get all stakeholders involved. We are

going to get the Manitoba Wildlife Federation involved. We are going to get the lodges and outfitters involved. We are going to get the legion people involved. We are going to get everybody involved and see whether we can come to an understanding once and for all so that this dilemma does not keep recurring every year. If there is an understanding that maybe on that day, on Remembrance Day, there should be no hunting till—you know, based on the legislation that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) has brought forward.

These are the things that I cannot arbitrarily make that decision on at this point in time, but I am prepared to develop that dialogue with all the stakeholders and hopefully by next year we will be able to have an understanding as to how we will deal with it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to make those remarks related to this act that is before us. Things are not always that simple and cut and dried, and I appreciate the opportunity to put this on the record.

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

Bill 55—The Financial Administration and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 55, The Financial Administration and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant la gestion des finances publiques et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson).

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No? Leave has been denied.

* (1550)

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I just have a few words to say about this bill, which is one that replaces the original Financial Administration Act, which, I believe, was established back in 1969, the year that I

became a member of this Legislature, but I am sure it was worked on for many years before that.

An Honourable Member: Too long.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Too long. Well, it depends on your point of view, I guess.

At any rate, apparently Manitoba is the only province that does not define its financial management and control situation by legislation. If I am wrong on this, the minister can correct me. I am sure he will, but this is my understanding. What the bill does is define the power of the Treasury Board, the controller and the minister a little more clearly and, among other things, provides for full accrual accounting and amalgamates The Loan Act authorities, for example, presumably to reduce some paperwork. It increases accountability for government expenditures by way of legislation requiring Estimates supplements and annual reports, which is a good thing.

So, basically, we support the bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It appears generally that it is of a housekeeping nature. It is not necessarily the kind of reading you want to do at night. These are the explanatory notes that we got. I do not know whether it is favoured bedtime reading or not.

An Honourable Member: When you are finished memorizing that, I want you to start on the phone book.

Mr. Leonard Evans: That is about as bad.

At any rate, as I say, it is housekeeping, and generally it is modernizing and clarifying financial administration, so that is fine.

There is a bit of a trend, if you will, in there. There seems to be a movement to give some more authority to the minister or the Treasury Board. There seems to be more authority given to the minister than he has up until now under the act. I am talking about limits of spending and that sort of thing.

At any rate, what we are concerned about is that if you allow decisions to be made, let us say, by minister's approval as opposed to Order-in-Council approval, which requires the cabinet, whether there will be the same amount of information available to the public. As we know, decisions made by cabinet, Orders-in-Council are

public documents. This is not necessarily the case with ministerial decisions.

There are a lot of details that I am not going to get into, but I am just highlighting a couple of points, because I believe, when we go into committee, I guess, it will be the Committee of the Whole, we will be discussing details of the bill clause by clause, and we can ask some questions at that time. But it seems to us that the authority of the Treasury Board is set out in a particular section, it sets out the role and responsibilities, which is fine, but we are wondering, does this give the Treasury Board more authority than you would normally have in provincial jurisdictions?

There are some parts of it that we think may be very open ended. As I said before, there are some areas now that the minister will be able to approve without going to cabinet, and, again, those decisions do not have to be published in the same manner as the cabinet decision.

Also, we are pleased to note that there will be reporting requirements about loan particulars, that this information will be made available to the public. I believe that the expression in the act is available for inspection by the public in a register in the Department of Finance, and, again, I am not sure whether this is opening information to the public or whether it is making it more difficult. I am not saying it is. I am just saying, is it making it more difficult for the public to have access to this information?

I note too that there is a reference to the creation of a debt retirement fund or, at least, there is the balanced budget legislation. There is a provision now for the debt retirement fund, and so perhaps this makes sense to co-ordinate with that. However, again, we have some questions about scheduling of the debt retirement. There is reference to it in the balanced budget legislation. We are just wondering how this particular Section 60, which I know we are not supposed to get into section by section, just how this is going to work. So I will just leave that for the moment.

Again, with regard to untendered contracts, it seems to improve the transparency in the reporting of untendered contracts but, again, we are just wondering, how is the minister going to make this information available for inspection by the public? There is reference made to that, and then because we have had some frustration in the

past in identifying beneficiaries of untendered contracts, particularly when they are awarded to a company who subcontracts to another person. At any rate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though this is of a housekeeping nature, it virtually replaces the existing Financial Administration Act, and it is a very important piece of legislation. It is very basic, important and very basic to the running of government.

I just want to, in conclusion, say by way of observation that the Department of Finance, of course, sort of lives and breathes by this particular bill. It is very critical for that department and for the minister of that department. I just want to comment that we have been blessed in this province over the years with a very excellent staff in the Department of Finance for many, many years, and they continue to serve well. We have had good efficient administration by dedicated public servants, and I am glad to take this opportunity of making that point.

So, having said that, we are prepared to pass this bill and to raise a few questions when it gets into the committee stage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 55. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 58—The Parental Responsibility Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), Bill 58, The Parental Responsibility Act (Loi sur la responsabilité parentale), standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

Stand? No. Leave has been denied. Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks on Bill 58, The Parental Responsibility Act, with telling a story about some young people who were involved in an illegal activity and telling you what happened as a result.

It seems that there were a number of young boys who were on their way from a school in the north end to a school in East Kildonan to play a basketball game and they had to change buses at Redwood and Main. One of the young people said to his friends, let us go into Shoppers Drug Mart and steal some chocolate bars, and his friends agreed. So they went in and they lifted some chocolate bars, to use the euphemistic term. In reality, they stole some chocolate bars and put them in gym bags. They walked out of the store, and immediately they were nailed by the security person working for Shoppers Drug Mart. They were taken into the basement, and they had the daylights scared out of them. They were told that charges would be laid and that one of the consequences would be that they would have a criminal record and could not cross the border into the United States, which was a scary prospect for some of them. They were more worried about not being able to travel to the United States than having the charges laid.

Anyway, they had to stay in a basement room for about three hours until the police arrived. The police came, they took the information, and the boys were allowed to go home. I do not know how all of the parents handled this situation. I can tell you how I handled it as a parent. We told our son that he was to go with a written letter of apology to the store manager and pay restitution for the items that were stolen. I accompanied him in doing this. We met the store manager. He gave him the letter, and he apologized in person, standing in the aisle in the store in a very public place. He was young at the time. He had tears of remorse in his eyes.

I think that he learned a very valuable lesson, because his parents made him accept the responsibility, and as a result, no further action was taken. However, we did get a phone call from a probation officer working in the Department of Justice. It happened to be a personal friend who phoned us up and said this is what may happen. However, if the store manager accepts the apology, nothing further will be done. We were quite grateful that it did not proceed to court or that he did not have to appear before a youth justice committee. I guess our gratitude goes to the manager of the store who agreed to handle it in the way that was, I think, appropriate in the circumstances for someone who was doing this for the first time.

* (1600)

I think that most parents would probably act in a similar way in similar situations, and I think probably most store owners would agree that this was an appropriate resolution to the problem and accept the apology and the payment for the goods taken. Unfortunately, there are probably parents in our society who would not force their son or daughter to pay restitution, who would not enable their child to accept responsibility for themselves. In fact, I think that is probably the best way to go, to make the individual accept responsibility, but it requires parental guidance and not all parents are willing or able to do that. So we have a bill here that attempts to address this problem.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

In the United States the director of the American Bar Association Centre on Children and the Law, Howard Davidson, has said, and I quote: Parental responsibility policy initiatives are neither inherently conservative nor liberal approaches toward crime and delinquency. Far too many courts as well as family youth service agencies have either undervalued or ignored the role parents play in their children's severe misbehaviour and what should be done about it.

He presents the child advocate's view: The parents whose actions or indifference contribute to their children's violent and destructive behaviour must be held to a legally appropriate standard of responsibility and be educated about the sanctions

So we agree that there may be circumstances under which the parents can or should be held liable, but the problem, as I understand it, is that it is very unlikely that a conviction will be obtained, that because of the requirements, either at small claims court or in civil court to prove that the parents were totally negligent, that it would be very difficult to get a conviction. It would be very difficult for any victim to obtain a judgment.

Now we have said that this bill is a small step in attacking the problem of youth crime, but I think we need to look at the much broader perspective wherein this government is making it difficult to enable parental responsibility, and I am thinking here of different cutbacks of government programs that have been helpful in terms of raising children and of supporting families in

the community, and there is certainly a very long list, but I will restrict myself to a number of areas.

One, for example, is the elimination of funding to 14 friendship centres in the province of Manitoba, and the government of Manitoba alleged at the time that these were advocacy organizations, which certainly was not true. Almost all of the friendship centre budgets go for programs, including sports and recreation and programs for families. There have been some great successes. For example, at the friendship centre in the north end, they had a ball team that won a championship, and that was wonderful for the children and for their parents. As we know, organized sports and recreation are a good outlet for youthful energy and keeps kids off the streets.

We have asked in this Legislature for infrastructure money to renovate the north YMCA, and YWCA which is closed, which the City of Winnipeg owns, and they have given permission to the friendship centre to lease as long as it does not cost the City of Winnipeg any money for physical upgrading or for operating costs. Yet, in spite of the fact that there is money left over in the infrastructure program because the Kenaston underpass was not built, the friendship centre, to the best of my knowledge, has been unable to get any of this money to upgrade the facility.

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

So I have had phone calls from my constituents saying that kids are playing in garbage bins in the back lanes. Kids are on the street, and we know that a certain percentage of them are going to get in trouble. The residents of the north end and of West Kildonan and The Maples and the entire catchment area for that facility would much rather see that facility open and kids off the street and in a safe environment and engaged in sports and in swimming and other activities and not on the street where the potential for getting into trouble is great.

However, this government is unable to respond and instead we have requests from the City of Winnipeg, for example, to spend \$4 million on a new entrance to the Pan Am pool. We have a problem with the priorities where some of this money, a lot of it, seems to be going to the south end of the city, and once again the north end

is neglected. We know that the federal government have their own priorities. They put money into the Wellness Centre at Seven Oaks Hospital which has fees that are much more expensive than the YMCA has ever had, and certainly only the people who can afford to will take part in fitness and recreation at the Wellness Centre and not low-income families and low-income children.

We are also concerned about cuts in the area of social assistance. For example, the province, by its policy of standardization, has forced the city to make cuts to their assistance on April 1 this year, including cuts to allowances for children from birth to age 18. The largest and cruelest cut of all was to infants between birth and one year, where their allowance was reduced by 26 percent.

So, on the one hand, this government wants to make parents responsible for everything their children do, but on the other hand, they are making life much, much more difficult for families in this city.

Another example of a cutback by this government that affected families adversely was the withdrawal of \$300,000 of funding annually to five parent-child centres in the city of Winnipeg, and as a result, they were forced to close. Here were organizations in neighbourhoods. They were a welcoming place for families with children. They were respite for families with children so that a parent could take a break and leave their child in a safe place. These parent-child centres are very important for people to network with other families in their neighbourhood.

The Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba has done studies on the importance of networking to low-income families and single parents and has shown through its research that in fact they are cost effective because they keep children out of care and out of child and family service agencies.

I would like to conclude by pointing out that there is a need for improvements to help parents to raise their children, and one improvement that this government could make would be to fund parent-child centres to have a comprehensive parenting skills program so that parents have the tools and the skills that they need to raise their children.

We have also criticized the government for cutting social allowances. We think that there is a link between—I think research suggests that there is a link between poverty and crime. Certainly there is a link between poverty and children being taken into care by child and family service agencies.

We have had private members' bills recommending an independent children's advocate. We recommend supervised access and custody centre. One of our platform promises was a parenting skills component to the mandatory health curriculum in schools and a comprehensive community and parent training program.

With those few remarks, I conclude. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I just want to put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 58. When I look over the bill and hear some of the feedback that I have received from the public with respect to it, one has to question whether or not there will be benefit by having this legislation pass, or will it in fact hurt? I think there is a valid argument to be made that it in all likelihood will not hurt per se, but will it in fact benefit? I think that there is an equally valid argument that one could say that we are not going to necessarily benefit from it either.

Having said that, I have given some thought in terms of what is being suggested and from what I understand, and in talking to some people who were doing some research on this particular bill. One of the greatest concerns in this piece of legislation is that it is a reverse onus of law. That is, it requires the defendant's parents to establish that they acted reasonably. The claimant does not have to establish anything other than the child deliberately caused the damage. Once this has been established, the onus shifts to the parents of the offender to establish that their parenting was not the cause of the child's deviant behaviour.

* (1610)

Ultimately, the court will be required to examine whether the child deliberately caused the damage at issue in the claim. Next, the court will enquire as to whether the parents acted reasonably in raising their child and whether the parents made responsible efforts to prevent the damage caused by the child.

I personally think the government could have done a whole lot more by looking and addressing some of the causes to why it is that we have such deviant behaviour amongst our young people. There are more positive things that can be done to deal with young people that in fact have deviated away from the law.

I was involved after hearing from the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) and seeing some of the work that he was doing with respect to the Maples Youth Justice Committee. I had taken that idea in work with other people from within the community, and we came up with the Keewatin Youth Justice Committee. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what you will find is that you get community members that are on a volunteer basis meeting with young offenders and getting them to sit down with their parents and trying to work out what should be done. In many areas, in fact, there is some sort of restitution that is made to someone or property that has been damaged or if they been violated in some fashion. But common sense is applied in getting people and community members involved. I ultimately believe, is more important than anything else.

We had attempted a while back to even go further to try to deal with individuals that are under the age of 12 to try to get them at a younger age going through a process where we are sitting down with the parents and the young offender, or in this case even the individual children that were under the age of 12, and trying to ensure that there is more of a higher sense of accountability, that parents are taking more responsibility for their children and working as a community to ensure that our young people are looking at other alternatives outside of deviant behaviour.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it saddens me to see the lack of action from this government, in particular the current Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), in dealing with this issue. I think it has more to do with personalities and personality problems and who owns the idea than anything else. Ultimately, I would argue that no one owns a good idea, that in fact if someone brings forward an idea and it can be acted upon, there is an onus of responsibility on the government to take some sort of action. Their action has been very lacking in dealing with helping young people along with their parents, and the youth justice committee is a great example of that. If we take a look at the nonfunctional family, what is the

government of today doing to assist in the nonfunctional family? I do not believe that they are even aware of many of the problems that are out there, that the youths are facing today, that parents are facing today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, far too often, we are quite content to stereotype and say, look, all the youths in this particular financial bracket or in this social economic strata are good, and it is all the kids that are youths in this other social economic bracket that are causing all the problems. Well, you know, you have deviants from all of the different sectors of society, kids that break the law, and one has to start to try to get a better understanding of why that is occurring. Once you establish that, you have a choice. You can either try to deal with the youth after they broke the law or you can try to deal with young people prior. There are many things that can be done. The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) made reference to the friendship centres, the Y and different programs that are provided.

I surveyed over two hundred Grade 9 students from my area and asked the question in terms of, well, what percentage or how many of you have stepped foot in a community centre in the last six months? Well, out of that group in excess of 200, if more than 10 percent had raised their hands—and this is after some teachers doing some prodding and so forth—I would be surprised. Yet we as a community invest so much into our community clubs or competitive sport. What we really need to do is we have got to start working with young people to try to get a better idea in terms of what sorts of things that they would like to see happening from within the communities. The idea of opening up our gyms in our local schools—we have these wonderful, you know, virtually millions and millions of capital dollars that are invested throughout the province, yet we do not really take advantage of those capital dollars, because I believe that there are many things that can be opened up to allow our young people to be more involved, to be able to socialize in a more positive fashion outside, not necessarily having to walk the streets and looking for trouble in some cases.

There needs to be a much more proactive approach dealing with young people and working with young people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is something that has been definitely very absent over the last eight years. The

government tries to give the impression that it wants to get tough on crime and the crime of young offenders. The Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) whenever she gets the opportunity will, for example, stand up to talk about the Young Offenders Act, and we want to get really tough on young offenders and so on and so on.

I can recall the last election where the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was behind, or closing a cell of sorts, trying to imply that he wants to get tough on crime. I have heard on numerous occasions, whether it was Paul Edwards or the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) and other members from the Chamber, where they start talking about, well, maybe it is time that we start getting tough on the causes of crime. There has been no evidence from this government to be able to demonstrate that willingness to deal with it. Some suggest that they do not necessarily get the link, and I think that the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) is correct in that, and until they make that connection we are not going to see any significant drop in youth crime.

By trying to say, look, you as a parent have to and will be held accountable and responsible for your children might work for a good number of children, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but, I would argue, is not the answer to our problems today. As I indicated at the beginning, will it hurt? Well, I think there is a valid argument that could be said that, no, the legislation will not hurt. Will it really be of some benefit? I would have liked to have seen the government bring in legislation in which we would see some benefit. I do not necessarily see any benefit with this particular piece of legislation other than the government being provided yet another platform to try to give the perception that we are getting tough with young people.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

I find that is most unfortunate, because the reason why we are supposed to be getting involved in politics is to address the problems at hand, and there is a very serious problem that is there today and has been there for years, and there are many different ideas, Madam Speaker, that are out there that would help address the problem. Those ideas are solutions. I do not look at this piece of legislation as a solution. I think that ultimately there might make legal counsels—because I understand it is going through the Small Claims Court, but still

individuals will go through lawyers and so forth. It might add a lot more misery to the whole system as opposed to trying to rectify the problem. I would highly recommend to the government that if in fact they are serious about trying to address the issue of youth crime that what they should consider doing is expanding the role, in particular, of youth justice committees.

* (1620)

I have become, ever since I got to know the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), a great advocate, or at least an advocate I should say, of youth justice committees, because I see the potential. I only wish that the government would see the potential and to in fact look at expanding. Over a year ago, as I say, our justice committee was wanting to deal with young offenders under the age of 12.

But, Madam Speaker, the government of the day can either decide whether they are going to be supportive of youth justice committees, for example, and if they are going to be supportive, then provide the resources. That means you cannot rely entirely on the volunteers. There has to be a support base that is underneath those volunteers, because the volunteer's job is to keep in tune with the community and make sure that the job ultimately gets done, but there is a lot of the administration work that needs to occur.

Ultimately, if the government was prepared to invest in young people by dealing with issues such as the youth justice committees and providing them the proper resources and giving them the recognition which they so rightfully deserve, that in fact in itself would do a lot more good for Manitobans than Bill 58 could ever do. So I think that the minister responsible should be rethinking in terms of the whole way in which it is trying to deal with young people and those that, for whatever reasons, deviate from the law.

I guess I would conclude by indicating that, let us not stereotype people. I think most people would be quite surprised in the sense that it is a very fine line and any youth that is out there could, in fact, end up crossing that particular line. Let us start looking in terms of what is in the long-term best interests of our young people today, Madam Speaker, as opposed to trying to get some peace

that could be used in future propaganda. With those few words, we are prepared to end our remarks.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, this bill speaks really to the desperate state of this government in trying to divert public attention from both its creation of the conditions that breed youth crime in this province and its own inaction to at least provide some rear-guard action against the crime that this government is complicit in. This bill is a token measure. As I said on an earlier occasion, it is no more than one raindrop on the fire of youth crime.

Madam Speaker, any government that introduces a bill to enhance parental responsibility for youth has the moral obligation to also usher in a new era of family and youth supports. It is not enough for a government to demand greater parental responsibility without taking action to better enable the parental responsibility to be exercised in the home.

What we have seen from this government are policies that take away from the ability of parents to overcome major stresses and challenges in their lives, take away from the ability of parents to provide financial security for children, take away community resources that can provide positive alternatives for youth in this province.

The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) gave many examples. He knows very well what is taking place in the matter of child welfare rates and we know in our community what is happening at the corner or, more accurately, what is not happening at the corner of McGregor and Mountain, where the north Y for many, many years provided great opportunities, not only provided role models for youth, provided something for youth to do and a safe place, but provided leadership opportunities for the youth of North Winnipeg.

We are aware of how this government cut every nickel of support to the friendship centres of Manitoba. I often use the example of the friendship centre on Robinson, in an area where some area residents refer to as the war zone. There, because of the cuts, we understand that eight youth workers, in fact I would call them eight crime prevention workers, were taken away from the aboriginal youths of that neighbourhood in that community. There is a cause and effect, Madam Speaker, in policies like that.

We have spoken as a party about the need to reduce the gap between rich and poor, and how we have to use our tax system, and how we have to use the tools and the equalizers that in this session, Madam Speaker, are being torn away from Manitobans. We also have one constant theme of the legislative agenda that we are facing, and that is the ripping away of those equalizers, of those tools that neighbourhoods like mine rely on to lift themselves up to provide some equality and fairness whether that be in the area of public health, public education, whether it be in basic telephone rates, whether that be the ability to organize and stand up to the great power of business.

Madam Speaker, poverty is not a direct cause of crime, but it certainly is recognized as an indirect cause because poverty disproportionately breeds despair, and despair disproportionately breeds crime. There is a link which this government, the Conservatives through their policies of ignorance and intolerance, and I say greed, fail to understand. The policies of the right are out of sync with the reality and the needs of governing in the '90s. If you are going to deal with the challenge of youth crime, you have to deal with the causes.

So what does this government do with its inability and inaction? It says, look it, let us put up another bell and a whistle. Let us have some piece of legislation that sounds good and is based on sound moral principle and that is parental responsibility for children and youth. That indicates to me that by introducing this act as a response to youth crime without providing a new era of family and youth supports, this government is not committed to reducing youth violence and youth crime.

Madam Speaker, we have introduced, and we are going around the province and talking with Manitobans and getting feedback on our Gang Action Plan which is an 18-point program that deals with the short-term solutions, particularly in the justice system and the longer term systemic solutions that are required from families, schools and communities.

We, Madam Speaker, understand the link between social and economic conditions and crime. We talk about literacy when we talk about crime. We talk about youth opportunities for employment and employment preparation. We talk about safe places for youth to go to. We talk about the importance of recreation, not simply sports, but for arts, whether it be drama, music, art. We

know that the solutions to youth crime will come only when communities partner with government, with schools, law enforcement agencies, but it has been our firm belief that there is no tool in our community that can be as effective in bringing all the parties together and spurring action than the provincial government. All we have seen is an abdication of this government's responsibilities to protect the safety of Manitobans in any comprehensive way or any way at all in a meaningful fashion.

Even on the issue of the youth court, where there are backlogs of up to a year, the government seems absolutely either unwilling or unable to deal with that situation. The government is saying to those youths who are brought before the youth court what I would never say to my child, and that is, if you break a window today, there will be no Halloween goodies next year. There must be a swift linking in the mind, particularly of a youth, of a wrongdoing and a consequence.

* (1630)

The notion of legislation to attempt to enhance parental responsibility is nothing new. I noticed in government press releases and pronouncements that in their view this is quite revolutionary. I believe they used the words, the first of its kind in Canada.

This government obviously has written off the Province of Quebec as being a part of Canada, because Quebec has had such law for a long time, and indeed changes were recently made. In the Civil Code of Quebec the provision is found, and I quote, a person having parental authority is liable to reparation for injury caused to another by the act or fault of the minor under his authority unless he proves that he himself did not commit any fault with regard to the custody, supervision or education of the minor.

And the Civil Code goes on to further describe the law. Then to the south of us in the United States, 43 states at least have now enacted parental responsibility legislation. In fact, 16 states in 1995 and 1996 have passed such laws. The American laws differ quite significantly. Some require payment by parents for the cost of juvenile detention or restitution. Some forced parents to undergo counselling with their children. Some even threaten to lock up parents who cannot control their kids.

But it is interesting that there are no national statistics on how many people have been found liable whether guilty or civilly under the statutes. So certainly any movement in this province toward parental responsibility legislation is based in large part on blind faith if not just on tokenism alone.

In an article on parental responsibility laws by Howard Davidson, who is the director of the American Bar Association Centre on Children and the Law, he states the idea of holding parents legally responsible for grossly negligent or wanton disregard of their children's delinquent behaviour only makes sense in the context of a broader and more comprehensive family-friendly social policy than presently exists. As part of such a policy, it would be realistic to hold parents legally responsible for the destructive actions of their children if society provides sufficient resources for families to learn appropriate child development, behaviour control, parent effectiveness and disciplinary methods.

He goes on to conclude that such legal accountability is realistic and fair only when appropriate, affordable and abundant family-supportive and rehabilitative resources are available to families. It is simply inappropriate to rush into legislative solutions, he says, that punish parents for their children's criminal acts without ensuring that effective services are readily available to families at all income levels and in all parts of the state to help them be better parents.

This government does not appear to have any interest in what we advocated during the election campaign and since, that we have to look toward a comprehensive parenting skills programming in this province. We have to let parents know about the techniques and tools that may be available to them to raise their children in an effective, nonviolent way, to set limits, to have consequences, to respect authority, to be self-sufficient.

Those objectives should be embraced by the state. Yes, there are parenting skills programs and Health and Welfare Canada, for example, has developed them. Agencies, whether it be the Boys and Girls Club or others, have developed good parenting skills programming, but we have to go beyond lip service. We have to promote such programming, even considering mandatory parenting skills programming, perhaps in the mandatory health curriculum of high schools.

This side is not opposed, Madam Speaker, to the principle of parental responsibility in civil law, and to a certain extent, such responsibility exists in the common law today, but when we look at this bill, we ask, where is the meat? Why the tokenism? If you mean business about youth crime, then get down to business. Look at our Gang Action Plan. Look at the idea of the parenting skills programming. Re-examine your child welfare system and your changes. Re-examine how you have turned a blind eye to the North. Why? How you have turned a blind eye to the friendship centres of Manitoba.

We look at this bill. There are a few obvious problems that we will address further at committee. It was just a couple of weeks ago when the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) introduced the Manitoba civil justice review task force report and one of the, I would suggest, more important recommendations in that report can be found on page 32 where it says: The task force recommends the public be encouraged to resolve more disputes outside the courts, and there are other words supporting that recommendation. Yet, at the same time, the government, in the face of recommendations that say, stay out of court, brings in a bill that says, go to court.

It is the view of members on this side that there are more appropriate ways of dealing and providing consequences for children who have committed crimes. In St. Johns, for example, I am very proud, extremely proud, of the formation of our youth justice council. Last month we heard our first case, where a young offender will come with the parent and, hopefully with the victim's consent, face up and make up to the victim, make up to the community and face a council comprised mostly of people elected from the student and parent councils of the community. I believe the St. Johns Youth Justice Council is the first in Manitoba, perhaps in Canada, of a youth justice committee under the Young Offenders Act which is elected.

We are also comprised of students from high schools, students that were nominated by their peers who can provide, I think, a much greater insight into how to deal effectively with youth behaviour and crime than sometimes many adults. We are developing a mentoring program so that we can pair other youth and adults in our community with young offenders to allow the young offenders to get back on track. In addition to the youth justice committee model, there are models, for example,

as in Portage la Prairie, where family group conferencing is now taking place, as in Minnesota, as based initially in New Zealand.

There are sentencing circles, and we look to Hollow Water. We look even to Saskatchewan, where there was a sentencing circle involving, for the first time ever, a nonaboriginal offender. So we ask, why is the only response by this government to put an emphasis on the confrontational and often expensive civil courts? Second of all, if the government meant business with this bill, why did it not include the ability to claim damages for personal injury or death in respect of medical or dental, hospital, counselling costs, wage loss or funeral or burial expenses, bearing in mind, of course, the availability of the criminal injuries compensation regime?

* (1640)

We have a concern that The Parental Responsibility Act can only be relied on once a certificate of guilt has been obtained from the youth court. We are concerned that there may now be additional pressures put on either Crown Attorneys or senior officials in the Justice department not to refer cases to the youth justice committees of this province. Everything must be done to enhance the role of youth justice committees in Manitoba, not detract from them. We have called on this government going back to February of 1994 to expand the role and mandate of those youth justice committees. We need more timely consequences. They need supports. They need more education and mediation.

Referrals, in many circumstances, can be made from the police, so we have to ensure that this bill will not take away from the potential of youth justice committees. We have concern that this bill may only be used by large retailers. I hate to see this kind of regime being set up only to benefit such retailers as Zellers. Is this the Zellers bill, Madam Speaker? I think that if we include in there the ability to get compensation for personal injury, we are making a statement that what we see is the most heinous type of crime, is a personal injury crime, is a violent crime, rather than continue to go on this silly path of recognizing only the paramount sanctity of property loss or property damage.

It is important under this bill that Legal Aid be made available for any parents who are made defendants, of

course within the eligibility requirements of Legal Aid. We also have questions about the potential liability of noncustodial parents as we understand that disproportionately single-parent families are in despair and face challenges that may often or that can sometimes lead disproportionately again to child deviance. Yet that situation is not the fault, surely, of the custodial parent. That is the parent who is there, Madam Speaker. What about the noncustodial parent?

We have obvious concerns about the onus of proof under the bill, and we will be seeking answers to questions about the government's view on how many cases may well turn on that onus, and we will be looking for ideas from the public on that issue. We also wonder if the court might not have a role to order or facilitate parenting skills programming for parents who come before the court and may well be in need of such support.

In conclusion, I will say this. I doubt very much that there will be any rush to the courts, that this bill will do any measurable improvement to what I think is a crisis, and that is the crisis of increasing youth violence and youth crime. It is a token, and with those words, we are prepared to see the matter off to committee—or, after one more speech from this side.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I just want to put a few thoughts on the record with respect to Bill 58, The Parental Responsibility Act, especially after listening to some of the excellent points made by the previous speakers. They talked about as well how the government has looked in its election campaigning for a few political salient kinds of issues that are emotional and then they try and create a gimmick that is going to address those. I think that is what this is.

We have heard a number of people who work in the field of youth corrections and youth services that have said that this bill looks good; it sounds good. It is hard to argue with parent responsibility, but it is really not going to make that much difference. So it seems like that is what the government is more interested in. They are more interested in making things look good and seem good than actually be good and have some real effect.

It is important to mention that while they have gone ahead and eroded so many of the systems and services that are there to support children and families such as the

education system, the health care system, child and family services, programs for recreation—well, they have eroded that—now they are going to come back with another stick and say, oh, but it is up to parents to use this approach when dealing with children.

I want to talk a little bit about this whole issue of child-rearing. That is what this bill is about, and it shows that the government is, I think, once again using the very punitive and relying on this whole idea of deterrents when dealing with issues of children and crime and not looking at the alternatives which are creating alternatives, and this whole idea that the way to deal with children is to use fear of consequences to control them and that these kind of deterrents are the best way to deal with children and youth. We know that is not necessarily the case.

I am not sure if they figure that it is the parents that will be able to use this as a deterrent for their children because then they would say to their kids, well, you are going to have to pay me back if I have to pay for this, for anything that you damage, but I think it is that whole attitude, the punitive attitude, that the approach is punishment and deterrents rather than prevention.

A number of other speakers have talked about the erosion of services for children and families and how those would have prevented a lot of the conditions that are breeding crime and the economy and social conditions that this government is creating that are breeding crime and are breeding, I would say, attitudes of despair and hopelessness among many young people.

So this is in a way then a desperate attempt for the government to deal with the small number of youth who are increasingly violent or destructive. I am very concerned that the bill, though, is going to—again taking this punitive kind of approach—the legal route more than through youth justice committees. That is a very expensive, drawn-out, time-consuming approach to juvenile crime, and it may not even make sense when there could be the expense of having lawyers and a court system used to actually deal with the problems and deal with young people in trying to change the way that they live.

I am not convinced that—as the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) has said—when young people have to wait for a court date and wait for this process to unfold

that they even understand that there is any connection between what they have done and then down the road the consequences.

There is the whole issue of what young people are going to learn from this, from having parents pay for damages that they have done. I think that generally we are trying to move through a transition in dealing with children and youth from the use of corporal punishment to use of natural justice or natural consequences and restorative justice, and that means that when you break something, you are going to pay for it.

The Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) tried to suggest that this should be done with the Headingley riot and that the inmates that caused the damage should clean it up, but, as she saw, there were some problems in following that through, just as I think there are going to be some problems with the follow-through on this particular bill because, again, though it may sound good, it is going to be complicated.

* (1650)

Will there be legal aid for the families that are going to be trying to defend themselves under this law? How will they deal with families where there is divorce and there is either joint or one custodial parent and the whole issue of maintenance enforcement and how that would have to be an issue in many of the single-parent families that are in our community?

The last point that I want to make, though, deals with some concerns that were raised with me by staff with Child and Family Services. We know that this bill is not going to apply to wards of the state or kids that are in care of Child and Family Services and foster families. These professionals, youth care workers, were talking about not only the link between poverty and crime, but they were talking about when they deal with families where there are children who are acting out. They are trying to have the parents realize that there is a separation between them and their child, and they are trying to have this development of the responsibility for the children or the teens, in more cases, to start taking more responsibility for their own actions.

That transition in adolescence, where children become more responsible for themselves, is a very difficult one, and they are often accompanied with a number of power struggles. Those would include power struggles with their parents. This bill may get caught in the middle of that, where young people may, to get back at their parents, do some kind of crime so that the parents then have to pay.

The other thing that was raised by members of Child and Family Services staff was that because it is not going to apply towards the state, some families, and I have seen this myself, they will just give up and say, there is a \$5,000 bill now. I cannot deal with this anymore. I can no longer influence my child's behaviour, and they will then turn over the child to Child and Family Services saying that they have become uncontrollable or too violent. What are we going to do in that case? It will be interesting to see if any of these scenarios do come to be with the passage of this bill.

In conclusion, then, I just want to say that we have recommended a number of times that this government would reinstate parent-child centres, that they would reinvest in Child and Family Services, that they would put back some of the courses in schools that prepare children or prepare our teens to be parents. Those are the kind of positive initiatives that would, especially when we look at the high rate of teen pregnancy in our province, go a long way to try and deal with some of the conditions that create families that are going to come under this bill in the future. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 58, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice, The Parental Responsibility Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 59—The Powers of Attorney and Mental Health Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), Bill 59, The Powers of Attorney

and Mental Health Amendment Act (Loi concernant les procurations et modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale), standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

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, I would like to take a moment to put a few comments on the record with respect to Bill 59, and in particular because this bill has implications for constituents of mine. Bill 59 is in response to the recommendations put forward by the Law Reform Commission on the enduring and springing powers of attorney. This is a report that was published back in 1994. The purpose of the bill is implementing the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission report, and hopefully this bill will ensure that there is a balance between the protection of persons who assign a power of attorney and allows that the person's intentions are fully recognized.

I would like to speak about one particular part of the bill that causes concern because this section is an exception and is not implementing the recommendations put forward by the Law Reform Commission. The part of the bill that is causing serious concern and is very disturbing is in regard to the proposed amendments to The Mental Health Act. In this section the government has allowed the Public Trustee to decide whether a person will be better served by the power of attorney which this person has put in place, or by the Public Trustee stepping in and assuming responsibility and committee-ship. This is not what the Law Reform Commission recommended; in fact, it contradicts the spirit of the Law Reform Commission which throughout the document recognized the need to respect the wishes of the person who is making the decisions about their future and setting up the power of attorney.

Madam Speaker, as I say, this is not what the Law Reform Commission recommended. The Law Reform Commission, I want to quote one of the recommendations, and that is and I quote: Our recommendation implies that orders of the supervision and certification of

competency should be made. However, they should only be affected in appointing the Public Trustee as committee if and when the enduring power of attorney does not exist.

So the Law Reform Commission in their recommendation made it very clear that they wanted to ensure when a power of attorney was given that that power of attorney was not overruled by the Public Trustee. The Law Reform Commission recommendations in their draft legislation in the part dealing with The Mental Health Act has been gutted almost entirely by this government's bill. The essence of the Law Reform Commission draft legislation states that the Public Trustee should not be the committee of an estate of any person who has been given the enduring power of attorney that exists at the time a certification or order is issued concerning the person.

The reason I want to raise this is because this has affected a family in my constituency. We were very disappointed and this family was very disappointed and surprised to learn about how powerful the Public Trustee office is. The family that I refer to is one that I have written to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) about, and that is the Barbara and Elgin Tapp family of Swan River.

Mr. and Mrs. Tapp, in anticipation of possible future illnesses, went to a lawyer and put their children in place to act as trustees. They gave their children the power of attorney over their affairs. Very recently, quite unexpectedly Mrs. Tapp was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and had to spend some time in Brandon to have assessments done. At that time the Public Trustee stepped in and took over their affairs. Although the family had made a decision to let their—in fact, they had done all that was necessary to have their children in place to look after their affairs. The Public Trustee was able to overrule any decisions that the family had made, and now the family is forced to go to court and fight back to get control of the affairs, which was the wish of Mr. and Mrs. Tapp.

I use the example of Mr. and Mrs. Tapp only as one, but my understanding is that there are many, many other cases. We have to recognize that families are capable of making decisions. When a family makes this decision to have their children have the power of attorney or whether it is their children or their friends, if a power of attorney is appointed, that should be respected, and that is what

the Law Reform Commission recommends. We are disappointed by this legislation because that is not being addressed.

* (1700)

Under the government's bill, the Public Trustee has the power to decide whether a committee may act contrary to the Law Reform Commission's recommendations. So this government is not listening to what the Law Reform Commission has recommended with respect to this, and they are being very disrespectful to many families who have taken the time to try to very carefully put their affairs in order because, when families do these kinds of things, they should not be forced to go the courts to try to get control over their affairs back.

Now, if there are occasions when valid concerns are raised in relationship to the power of attorney, the Public Trustee does have the power under this bill in another part to apply to the court. The court has the broad range of powers to rectify this situation, including termination of the power of attorney which can then be the Public Trustee in committee, or else a new power of attorney can be appointed. So the Public Trustee has that ability to take over if there is abuse shown by somebody who has been given power of attorney. But the Public Trustee should not step in and overrule a family's decisions, and we would hope that the government would recognize that the legislation here is not implementing what the Law Reform Commission recommended.

I would hope that government would recognize this and ensure that families such as the Tapp family that has been put through a tremendous hardship over the last several months trying to get their mother's affairs in control—you have to understand that this has put a tremendous amount of pressure on the family. They are dealing with a mother's illness, and then they have the Public Trustee come in and imply that the family is not capable of looking after the affairs as was outlined by both Mr. and Mrs. Tapp.

As I say, Madam Speaker, there are other cases. I am sure other families go through the same thing because we have seen where the Public Trustee has used a very heavy hand in some of these situations, so I would hope that the government would recognize that families make decisions on how they want their affairs to be handled. It is not necessary for the Public Trustee to step in and take over

these affairs. When it is necessary, however, the Public Trustee does have the ability through other parts of the act to ensure that affairs are carried out safely.

We always want to ensure that there is not abuse of a person who does happen to fall under The Mental Health Act. We want to ensure that, but we also want to respect families who make the decision, prior to mental illness setting in, that those wishes of the person who has been struck by an illness can be assured that when they become incapacitated, their wishes are carried out by the powers of attorney that had been appointed.

So with those few comments, Madam Speaker, I will be the last speaker on this bill, and we are prepared to let this bill go to committee.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 59, The Powers of Attorney and Mental Health Amendment Act.

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

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 61—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), Bill 61, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996 (Loi de 1996 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): We are prepared to see this bill at committee. We have one question that may be either answered before or during committee hearings on the retroactivity of one of the amendments, but we have no opposition to the bill in principle.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 61, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 63—The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1996

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 63, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1996 (Loi de 1996 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité), standing in the name of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Speaker: Stand. Leave has been granted.

Bill 73—The Construction Industry Wages Amendment Act

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

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): We have put up the speakers on this bill. So we are ready to let it pass into committee, so we can have the opportunity to hear from the public. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, just to very briefly comment on this particular piece of legislation.

A number of problems have been cited with the public understanding and enforcement of this act. It is extremely complex with a multitude of wage schedules and classifications. Many would say that there has been an outcry in the construction industry that the act has had a negative effect on the recruitment in skill development of young persons in the industry. Also, it was hard to administer and enforce the act. We understand that, to a certain degree, the act no longer applies to the house building sector or routine maintenance repair and redecoration sector of the construction industry. What remains unchanged is renovation work and all other construction.

Another point would be that it clarifies that the assembly or installation of equipment or machinery is covered by the act, provided that they are integral with the building or structure itself. Of course, it adds to the range of factors to be considered by the wage boards when recommending wage levels to clarify and designate transmission lines to construction and demolition work under the heavy construction schedule. In other words, it makes it harder for wage boards to recommend a decent wage which, obviously, has a great deal of concern for us. It provides for public interest input and advice through the establishment of the construction industry advisory committee which has the potential to be a positive thing, Madam Speaker.

The question here is, will these changes erode wages? The obvious answer is, in all likelihood, yes, which causes a great deal of concern from our caucus. But the more difficult question is, is this the direction in which we need be taking on this particular piece of legislation? I think that there is a big question mark.

We look forward to getting some of the input from the industry once it does go to committee and may be in a better position afterwards to add a few more words. But, suffice to say, Bill 73 does cause a great deal of concern from within our caucus and we look forward to it coming back out of committee. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill

73, The Construction Industry Wages 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 76—The Gaming Control and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 76, The Gaming Control and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur la Commission de régie du jeu et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? Bill 76.

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I have a few words that I would like to comment on with respect to Bill 76.

You know, we waited for quite a lengthy period of time before we finally received the recommendations by Mr. Desjardins and his committee, and one of the things that I thought was interesting was that there were two sets of recommendations. There was the one from the board, where I understand there was some sort of a consensus that was achieved, and then you had the recommendations brought forward from Mr. Desjardins and some thoughts brought forward by Mr. Desjardins, and it is interesting in the sense of how the government is responding. Well, this particular piece of legislation is to implement one of the recommendations that has been brought forward, the establishment of a commission in particular.

I have a great deal of difficulty accepting this particular piece of legislation, primarily because I am not convinced that this is in fact in the best interests of the province. In fact, Madam Speaker, what we would have liked to have seen is the government take more responsibility for the

gaming policy and in fact developing a gaming policy for the province of Manitoba, because what we have seen is a government that is quite content on relying or getting addicted, if you like, to the revenues that are being generated.

They are not giving anywhere near as much attention to some of the social costs of this addiction that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and this government have with respect to the revenues.

* (1710)

A while back I had opportunity as the Lotteries critic—a couple of years back. It would have been a few years back actually—where I had the opportunity to meet with a great deal of different interest groups and individuals to hear what they had to say about the direction that this government was taking on gambling, and a vast majority of the people that I had talked to and groups that I had met with were really upset with the direction that this government was taking gambling in the province of Manitoba.

Gambling is something which, no doubt, Madam Speaker, we are not going to be able to prevent. It is a question in terms of to what degree government is prepared to allow gambling to occur. I disagree and the party disagrees with the government's direction in the sense that they believe that VLT machines can be put into every little corner of the community throughout the province of Manitoba. In fact we see gambling or VLT machines across virtually from high schools. I believe I even asked the question a while back—not in high schools, across the street from high schools.

An Honourable Member: That will be next, though.

Mr. Lamoureux: But it could be next, as one member points out, Madam Speaker, and it would not surprise me with this particular government. Actually, no, it would surprise me. That would surprise me. I do not think it would go quite that far, but I do not believe that that is in fact the best way to be dealing with the gambling industry as a whole, by having it in every, virtually every community throughout the province.

I can recall, the government members have often said, well, I am someone that has supported more than two casinos, more than three casinos and so forth. I think I have even heard it past a half dozen casinos. I have heard comments levelled over at the Leader of the New Democratic Party in terms of casinos on aboriginal reserves and where it is that the opposition parties jointly are coming from with respect to gambling.

Madam Speaker, I guess what I would suggest to the government is that gambling for the province of Manitoba should be tourism driven, and, when you look at the direction that the government has taken, it is not even close to being tourism driven. It is, in fact, being strictly revenue-generation driven, and I take great exception to that. As I have indicated, there are many negative social consequences of it.

The creation of this gaming commission, which this legislation is going to be doing, is only one other way in which the government is going to be able to hide behind gambling as an issue, or the VLTs in our communities in particular, into the future.

I would rather see a government that is prepared to look at the possibility, as has been suggested, in part anyway with the gaming commission with respect to reallocation of VLTs and possibly higher concentrations in some areas over other areas. The idea of trying to be able to generate a gaming policy that is closer to that tourism industry is something which I think would be positive.

What I do know, and what the Liberal Party has been advocating, is that we need to stop the bringing of gambling, if you like, and particularly the VLT machines, into every community throughout the province of Manitoba. I am aware, and I do not know to what degree the government has actually acted upon or accepted the recommendation of the whole referendum question for local communities, but that is kind of like having the cart ahead of the horse. Virtually every community today has the VLT machines.

You know, I believe that if you talk to the different community leaders that are out there, what you will find is that the cost, whether it is one of local fundraising to some of those social problems that we make reference to—and when I talk about social problems we are talking

everything from food being taken away from tables of children to family breakups to even suicides that have been attributed to the electronic gaming machines—that those are the types of things in which this government has been negligent and not giving any serious consideration to.

The creation of this gaming commission, I believe, is not going to do a thing towards resolving some of those problems that I have alluded to. In fact, Madam Speaker, one has to question why this government has determined that a commission is a way to go. I realize by saying these few words the government is not going to be prepared to withdraw this particular piece of legislation even though if it was up to me that is what I would be doing and suggest that the government do likewise because ultimately I would just as soon hold the government, the minister responsible, accountable for the gaming policies and not try to see it being sidestepped through a gaming commission that this government has seen fit to bring into legislation.

With those few remarks, we are prepared to allow the bill to be passed.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak on this bill. I want to indicate initially that we are in something of a dilemma on this particular bill because, in terms of the principles of the bill, we certainly have no disagreement. We have been pushing for some significant changes in policy towards lotteries in this province for quite some time.

I know both opposition parties have expressed a great deal of concern about the social impacts of the rapid increase in gambling that we have seen in this province. Not a day goes by where I have not had the opportunity to talk to people in my own community and other communities across the province where people have outlined the very specific personal costs of gambling, particularly the dramatic increase in the number of people using VLTs.

If you want to put it in perspective, I have had the opportunity to go to the casinos here, the McPhillips Street Station and Club Regent, and I have talked to people and I have talked to staff. What is interesting is the fact that there are people that walk into those facilities when they open and do not leave until they close. There

are people who spend entire pay cheques in there. There are people who virtually live there. I mean that. I have talked to the staff. It is really a sad situation.

I have talked to people, whether it be rural municipalities, whether it be people who work in many of the bars and restaurants where VLTs are in place, and they talk about seeing those kinds of circumstances. It is ironic too that people working in bars can—there is a server intervention program in place in every bar in Manitoba where you can say to somebody who perhaps has had one too many to drink that you should not consider purchasing more alcohol, but you cannot do that with gambling under the current situation. I think that is something we should look at.

One of the root problems in terms of the province's approach to gambling I think is, it has been an ad hoc approach driven by revenue. Let us not forget that the VLTs were introduced in rural Manitoba for purposes of providing funding for economic development and for maintaining the hotel industry. You know what happened, Madam Speaker? The government made a lot more money from the VLTs than it expected. It expanded VLTs from the rural areas into the city, and we have seen a huge jump in the amount of revenue the government is bringing in from gambling.

Now, it is interesting, because the Desjardins commission was appointed very much, to use the analogy, it was worrying about the horse after the barn door was closed. I mean, we ended up with the government, after it had the rapid expansion, deciding that it would put a moratorium on the number of VLTs and the gambling situation in this province and appoint this commission.

* (1720)

What is interesting is that the commission came back with a varied set of recommendations, and there was a dissenting report from the chair of the commission who wanted to go a lot further than some of the consensus decisions. What is most interesting is that this bill does not bring in the most fundamental change that was recommended by the Desjardins commission. This act, this commission we are seeing set up, will not have the power that was sought by the Desjardins commission.

Also, one of the other key elements, the issue of having a referendum on gambling within municipal limits was not included. That, by the way, is not a new idea. In

Saskatchewan it has happened, and what has happened in Saskatchewan is that many communities have opted out either of VLTs or, in the case of Saskatoon, out of the casino which is now in place in Regina. The bottom line is, those two elements are missing from this particular bill.

Now, we are placed in something of a dilemma. We could vote against this bill on second reading, but we are not going to be doing that, because we are still hoping, by supporting the principle of this commission, that we can encourage the government to toughen the act when it is brought before committee, because it is no use just simply separating the Minister responsible for Lotteries from the financial side of it, the Minister of Finance. I mean, that should have been done a long time ago. What we need is some greater certainty that we will not see this happen again.

I am a realist. I believe that gambling has always been here, and it is going to be here for quite some time. I do believe, however, you need a balance, and I do believe that government should not be in the position of having a major conflict of interest when, on the one hand, you have currently a situation where the government is the major beneficiary from gambling in terms of revenues and, on the other hand, obviously given that revenue position, perhaps less willing than it should be to deal with some of the social consequences.

Madam Speaker, I believe gambling is here to stay, but I do not believe that there is currently a balance in this province. There will not be a balance until we have stronger capabilities by this proposed commission to do more than just recommend. I believe this commission has to have the ability to have control over the direction of VLTs.

So we will be supporting this bill in principle on the second reading but with very severe reservations. We believe that the government should look at the recom-

mendations of the Desjardins commission. We believe it must strengthen the commission. It must allow not only for public hearings but for votes by municipalities on the issue of VLTs and gambling. We believe that the people best able to decide in terms of gambling are often local communities. I note—

An Honourable Member: It is the local option on drinking.

Mr. Ashton: We do that already with drinking, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) points out. I really believe that we need to look at the same in terms of gambling in this province.

With those comments, Madam Speaker, we are more than prepared to pass this into committee. But I want to put on notice that when it comes to third reading, unless there are significant changes to this bill, the New Democratic Party caucus will be opposing it. We want to see it toughened up at the committee level. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 76, The Gaming Control and Consequential Amendments Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30 p.m.? [agreed]

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, October 29, 1996

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