



Fifth Session- Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 26, 1999

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Finance): I am pleased to table the following reports which have previously been distributed. The Canada/Manitoba Infrastructure Works Annual Report; the Government Information Systems Management Organization (Man) Inc. Annual Report; the Fiscal Stabilization Fund Annual Report; and the Crown Corporations Council Annual Report.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): I am pleased to table three reports: the Annual Report for 1997-98 of the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba; the Annual Report for the Health Information Services of Manitoba Corporation for the year ending March 31, 1998; and the Annual Report for 1997-98 for Manitoba Health.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table, pursuant to The Regulations Act, a copy of each regulation registered with the Registrar of Regulations since the regulations were tabled in this House in December of 1997.

Madam Speaker: I am pleased to table the Freedom of Information 1997 Annual Report of the Provincial Ombudsman, copies of which have previously been distributed to members.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 18—The Correctional Services Amendment Act

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr.

Gilleshammer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 18, The Correctional Services Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services correctionnels), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Nursing Shortage Impact on Health Care System

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, over the last four years hundreds of nurses have lost their jobs in Manitoba. There has also been a major change in the training for nurses in this province. The BN program exists and has been expanded, but the RN program, the hospital-based nursing program which used to train nurses in two years and then one year of practicum, has been radically changed and downsized and closed down by this provincial government.

What has been the impact of those changes on nursing shortages here in Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I think, as the member opposite knows, changes have been made to the nursing education programs basically with the support of nurses here in Manitoba and right across Canada. The member is right that there is a Bachelor of Nursing program, a four-year program here in Manitoba, which can be taken now in three years under an accelerated program. I understand enrollment in that program this last year alone was up some 23 percent.

We also have a licensed practical nursing program which is run out of Assiniboine Community College. I believe their entrance last year was about 90 and that certainly will be significantly increased. So, again, our Faculty of Nursing and our licensed practical nursing

program at Assiniboine Community College are going to be significant contributors to more nurses in Manitoba because there is absolutely no doubt that Manitoba needs more nurses, which is the case right across Canada. We have undertaken a number of initiatives that I am more than pleased to outline for the member opposite in terms of attracting and bringing more nurses back into the nursing profession here in Manitoba.

Nursing Education Programs Graduation Rate

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the minister did not answer the question. I asked what was the impact of the decision the government made, and he never answered the question. As I understand it, we used to graduate about 500 nurses per year, and as I understand it we are not graduating, through any of the programs, the numbers of nurses at the speed at which we used to graduate those nurses in the past. I would like to know how many people are we graduating, how many nurses are we graduating right now, what is the expected graduation rate over the next three or four years, and what is the discrepancy in terms of need?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, as I have indicated, the nursing education program was changed back in the early '90s and that was done with the support of nurses not only here in Manitoba but indeed right across Canada. In fact, it was actually at the request of nurses from across Canada to make the changes. Again, we are continuing to change the program to allow for more opportunities to take part in nursing, and that is why the four-year program can be done on an accelerated basis. A licensed practical nursing program is going to be done on a significant increase in the upcoming year in terms of the numbers of enrollments.

So we recognize, as is the case right across Canada, because of some of these changes in the educational programs right across Canada, that is one of the issues that has contributed to a shortage of nurses not only in Manitoba but in literally every province in Canada. That is why we are taking the number of steps that we are

taking to lead to more enrollment at our educational facilities, additional incentives like our \$7-million nurse recruitment fund to bring more nurses into the profession, creating more permanent positions in nursing, which is something that nurses tell us all the time, and we are working with employers to do that. A number of initiatives are underway to bring more nurses back into that profession in the province of Manitoba.

Nursing Shortage Bed Closures

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): The nurses' professional body did recommend the change, but a number of bedside nurses warned us about the change, and it is the government's responsibility to deal with the recruitment and retention of nurses, Madam Speaker. The minister again did not answer the question. How many are graduating? How many do we need? And what are the projections? Those are very simple questions. The minister never answered them. I would like to ask the minister: are any beds being closed or contemplated to be closed because of a shortage of nurses here in Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the short answer to the final part of the question is no. Fortunately, in our system, we have very dedicated health care professionals, our nurses, our doctors, our other people in the health care system, and in many cases the needs of our nursing services are being met by nurses working overtime, by nurses working a longer shift than they originally would intend. So the needs are being met by nurses currently in our system, but there is a need for more nurses in the province of Manitoba. There is a need for more nurses right across Canada, and that is exactly why we have set up the number of initiatives that we have done here in the province to do just that, to bring more nurses into the profession through our educational opportunities, to bring more nurses back into the system, to bring more nurses back to Manitoba, a number of initiatives that we have introduced to create more nurses here in the province of Manitoba, recognizing that that is something that we are committed to doing.

* (1340)

Nursing Shortage Bed Closures

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, under this government's mismanagement of our health care system, things have probably never been worse in the province of Manitoba in terms of health care. The only trauma unit in the province for trauma injuries is the Health Sciences Centre, and the Health Sciences Centre is planning to close, in May, four of the 10 surgical ICU beds and you know why they are planning to close? Because of the lack of nurses. I want to ask the minister to explain how it is after 11 years of mismanagement, we are planning to close four of the 10 beds in the surgical ICU because of lack of nurses.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Without accepting any of the preamble from the member opposite, we have continued to direct additional resources to health care here in the province of Manitoba. Our last budget, 1998-99, has \$100 million more than the budget from the previous year. Over and above that, during this fiscal year, as our finances continue to perform very well, we dedicated significant resources again to health care needs.

So health care continues to be the No. 1 priority, 35 percent of our budget, close to \$2 billion. We continue to dedicate resources into our health care system, and I have already outlined very clearly for the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and members opposite, a number of strategies that we are undertaking in conjunction with our educational facilities, in conjunction with nurses, to bring more nurses back into the health care system in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Chomiak: When the minister undertakes to confirm the information with respect—

Madam Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Chomiak: —to the Health Sciences Centre, can the minister also check whether or not two weeks ago at St. Boniface Hospital four beds in delivery had to be closed down and a doctor had

to be pressed to do nurses' services because of lack of nurses at St. Boniface Hospital?

Mr. Stefanson: I certainly will check into the issues raised, and I will undertake to determine whether or not the information is in fact accurate because again—and the member from Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) is chirping, and he is one who brings inaccurate information which has been substantiated again today by Deer Lodge hospital that the information that he brought to this House was absolutely wrong, scare tactics, fear-mongering of families.

Recruitment Strategy

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Health explain to members of this House and to Manitobans through this House how it is after 11 years of government's mismanagement of health care systems, after Connie Curran, after firing a thousand nurses, after closing 1,400 acute care beds, why is it that in the last month leading up to a provincial election, all of a sudden the government has a newfound \$7-million program to attract nurses to Manitoba after 11 years of doing everything in their power to unattract nurses to Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): The members opposite do what they usually do, they fail to recognize that the issue of nursing shortages is not unique to the province of Manitoba; it is something happening right across Canada. In fact, when you look at nurses on a per capita basis, we have the third highest nurse to population ratio in all of Canada. That is why we are seeing provinces like NDP British Columbia with an aggressive nurse recruitment strategy.

We are seeing Ontario, we are seeing provinces right across Canada aggressively going after nurses, and that is why we have established a \$7-million fund to bring more nurses into the system. That is why we are creating more permanent positions in the health care system because nurses want more permanent positions, and that is why we are undertaking a number of initiatives to bring more nurses into our health care system. We recognize that. Nurses have raised that issue.

We have listened, and we are responding in the province of Manitoba.

* (1345)

Child Sexual Abuse Cases Psychiatric/Expert Evidence

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): To the Minister of Justice. Delay, insensitivity and bungling is what describes families' experiences way too often when they seek justice when a child is raped or molested, and they come to the court system. On Friday, there was a widespread criticism about the failure of the minister's department to introduce any psychiatric or other expert evidence at the Rick Therrian trial.

My question to the minister is: can the minister possibly explain what policy or financial directive is responsible for what appears to be such a less than vigorous prosecution of a child sexual abuse case?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I want to commend the prosecutors in my department who do an excellent job of representing the people of Manitoba. Our government has provided numerous additional resources to ensure that our prosecutors have sufficient resources to conduct their trials. If there are cases that need special evidence, those matters are considered very seriously. I am not aware of a situation where our government would deny that kind of funding in that kind of a case in order to ensure that the people's voice and the voice of victims is heard. So I do not agree with what the member is saying, and perhaps he could demonstrate some factual basis for the things that he is saying, as he usually brings very erroneous information to this House.

Backlogs

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Is the minister then saying that he is satisfied with how child sexual abuse cases are dealt with by this government when there is a pattern of child cases weakened by backlogs of up to two years and more, including children who are only two and four years old, instances of improper

questioning of child witnesses, of insufficient preparation, of cases like the bungled babysitter cases? Is he saying everything is just fine, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, that is not in fact what I am saying. Our department has been reorganizing over the last number of years in order to provide a very effective service to victims. In fact, in a recent case in Ontario, it was specifically noted that Manitoba's Victims' Rights Act is the only act across Canada that has an effective enforcement mechanism.

As for backlog, our courts are among the most efficient in the country, as opposed to the case of British Columbia, where in British Columbia the chief judge says the courts are in crisis. Thousands of cases under an NDP government are thrown out every year. We do not have that in Manitoba because this government is committed to ensuring that cases are properly prosecuted and ensuring that our prosecutors have the appropriate resources.

Prosecutions Branch Child Victim Unit

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Would the minister whose Victims' Rights Act stripped victims of crime of rights in this province look at this matter more closely and join us in supporting the establishment of a child victim unit in the Prosecutions branch with a fast-tracked, specialized prosecution of child victim cases?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, if the member spent some time listening to the answers in Question Period and indeed if the member took up my offer of actually going to speak to my departmental staff to show how in fact our cases are being brought forward on a timely basis, he would perhaps have the answer to his question. It is interesting that it is our province that is making tremendous strides in the area of prosecuting especially sensitive cases, whereas compare British Columbia where the chief judge says criminal cases are being delayed to the point where we risk dismissal or reduction of thousands of charges because the court system is

unable to meet the accused's right to a trial. That is in British Columbia, the NDP government there.

Post-Secondary Education Tuition Fee Policy

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, in 1993 the Roblin commission recommended to this government that they develop a tuition fee policy, and in 1995, an election year, the government actually did promise one. In 1996 and 1999, three ministers of Education have claimed that they are working on one. Then they had an interim transition committee which worked on one; then they had a Council on Post-Secondary Education which worked on one. But the end result has been it is 1999 and there is no tuition fee policy for Manitobans.

So I would like the Minister of Education, the present Minister of Education, to explain to us why, over six years, this has not been possible for this government.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): Another recommendation of the Roblin report called Doing Things Differently was the establishment of the Council on Post-Secondary Education. The council has been working with the institutions and gathering input and consulting extensively with students, with associations and with institutions. It is a complex issue, as everybody knows, and that consultation yielded a lot of feedback and input which is being worked on as we speak by the Council on Post-Secondary Education.

* (1350)

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, could the minister explain why in April '98 his predecessor, the Minister of Education, told the Legislature that the tuition fee policy is, and I quote, in its final stages? Yet Brandon University board of governors were told this year that it will not be implemented until 2000.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member knows full well, Madam Speaker, that what was being

discussed at that time was the draft policy being put out by the Council on Post-Secondary Education which has been the subject of consultation.

The difference, I think, between the honourable member opposite and her party and honourable members on this side is that we have consistently been a consultative and a collaborative organization. We do not rule from above, as the honourable member would suggest we do.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, could the minister confirm that in fact the real tuition fee policy of this government has been hands-off, let tuition fees rise until an election? In 1995, they put a 5 percent cap on; this year, the minister is looking at a 10 percent cap. That is the real policy of this government.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, we have indeed said that we are going to review the proposals coming forward by the institutions for tuition. A year ago, the institutions were advised by government that they would be receiving at least a 2 percent increase in funding for this fiscal year, which in my view is a significant amount of time to put your house in order and address the whole issue of tuition at the institutional level.

But the honourable member who speaks as she does today—in my view, somewhat arrogantly—should be reminded of what her colleague sitting right behind her, the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), said to students at the U of W last fall. She said, and I quote—under the headline: NDP critic waffles on tuition freeze—You are trying to put me in a box. I will not go there. Some years there should be tuition freezes under an NDP government, she said. I would say we would freeze tuition, but, Cerilli hastily added, there probably would not be freezes.

Emerson Health Care Facility Capital Project

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. It was years ago when the community of Emerson and people living in that surrounding

area were first told that they would have an Emerson health care facility, and that was years ago from this very government. More recently, they have regurgitated that commitment once again for the fourth time.

My question to the Minister of Health is: can the minister say anything more convincing to suggest that the latest announcement is anything more than another cynical pre-election ploy by this government?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Well, Madam Speaker, let us look at the point in time when there was a hold and a pause put on the capital program for health back in 1995. It was at a time that his Leader was sitting around a table in Ottawa with the federal government and significantly reducing support for health care right across Canada. From the period '94-95 to '98-99, in the case of Manitoba alone, it amounts to about \$260 million every single solitary year that that funding was taken out of the system.

Now, in fairness to the federal government today, they have taken some steps to start to restore some of that funding reduction, and we do appreciate that, but it is a small first step. It is only restoring roughly one-third of what they have taken out of the system, but at least now we have an indication from the federal government over the next four years that they are going to be restoring what averages about \$75 million to \$90 million a year, gives us some additional certainty, and certainly we are able to continue to give more and more certainty to Manitobans which we have done throughout that entire period of time when the federal government was taking that kind of money out of health care. We continued with a significant capital program; we have done the majority of that 1995 program. You can look around Manitoba, and we certainly are committed to the hospital facility in the community of Emerson.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would ask the Minister of Health to recognize that what he just put on Hansard is about as good as could be tossed into a landfill site; it is so full of garbage in terms of what he has said.

Capital Project—Community Contribution

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): My question to the Minister of Health is: can the Minister of Health confirm that the community commitment is in place so that the Emerson health care facility construction can in fact begin? Is it, in fact, in place?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): In terms of our capital programs to date, the community contribution has not been an impediment to having projects go forward, in fact quite the opposite. We had even more community contribution, community involvement in the types of projects that we are putting in place in all of our communities. What that leads to, Madam Speaker, is being absolutely certain we put in place the most appropriate facility to meet the needs of that community and the surrounding area. Certainly I will fully expect that the community of Emerson will be able to come up with their contribution, whether it is through a combination of municipal assessments, through fundraising, through any money that they might have in their capital trust funds and so on, so I do not see that being an impediment for this project to go ahead as soon as possible.

* (1355)

Mr. Lamoureux: I would ask the Minister of Health to recognize that we are not questioning the commitment of the residents in the Emerson and surrounding area. What we are questioning is the government's true intent whether it believes that it needs to generate that community commitment in advance, or is this nothing more than a pre-election ploy on behalf of the government to go out and make all these capital announcements, knowing full well that it might not materialize, because that is what it has demonstrated in the past.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, I would suggest to the member for Inkster, if he wants to do any questioning, he should question his Leader's commitment to health care in the province of Manitoba. Because, when it comes to standing up for health care, we do it. The Filmon government, our government does that, unlike the Leader of the

Liberal Party who sat around the table while health care was significantly reduced in the province of Manitoba and indeed right across Canada. We are committed to the project in Emerson. We have hundreds of millions of dollars of capital health programs underway, and certainly the Emerson project is a key part of our health capital commitment going forward in this province.

Multiple Sclerosis Drug Therapy Pilot Projects

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, after years of advocacy, a group of MS patients finally were allowed to participate in a government pilot project covering the drug Betaseron. Now, one year later, this government, we understand, will soon announce a second pilot project covering Betaseron and four other drugs, that is, a second one-year pilot project. I would like to ask the Minister of Health: why, after a one-year pilot, is a second pilot going to be offered for patients who are already doing well on Betaseron and the therapy is clearly working? Why another pilot project?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, it is a very important question because what was happening with the pilot project is there is an evaluation being done on that project, and it is scheduled to be completed this summer in July or August. The original pilot was scheduled to terminate in September, so it created a situation where there was a very tight time frame between the evaluation of the pilot project and a decision in terms of making Betaseron a permanent feature of our Pharmacare program.

I met with the MS Society and other individuals, and we indicated a reasonable thing to do was to extend the project through till March 31 of the year 2000 to allow that evaluation to be done. I will indicate there has been a preliminary evaluation which has shown initially positive results, but there is a commitment to do a full and complete evaluation in July of this year, so the responsible approach is to extend the program through to the end of March of 2000 to do that evaluation, to then have that data in front of all of us to make the decision on a go-forward basis with the drug

Betaseron. We also at this point in time were requested to add three additional drugs to the program immediately, and we have done that again at the request of the MS Society.

Ms. McGifford: I would like to ask the minister why his government plans a pilot project using the drug Copaxone which has already proven effective. Why not simply put it on the formulary and get on with it? Why another pilot project?

Mr. Stefanson: Again, Madam Speaker, the discussion I had certainly with the MS Society was to include three additional drugs, Copaxone, Rebif and Avonex. We have done that immediately. We took steps within a matter of weeks of meeting with the organization. We did outline to them how we were going to proceed by completing the evaluation, extending the program to March, then having the kind of data we all need to make an informed decision on a go-forward basis, and that is the basis that we are going forward.

In terms of individuals currently on the program, there are 74 currently receiving Betaseron. In terms of the initial assessments, the initial assessments have been positive, but certainly a major part of the pilot was to have a project evaluation conducted by Dr. Colleen Metge of the Faculty of Pharmacy, and that is significant; that is important to do that. We are committed to doing that, and I think we have put in place an appropriate program to allow that to be done without creating any uncertainty for the individuals who are currently on Betaseron and have it covered under our Pharmacare program.

* (1400)

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I thought the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) was the minister of pilot projects.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member please pose her question now.

Ms. McGifford: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Why will not this minister, who knows that for years people suffering—victims of MS courageously fought to get coverage for

Betaseron, finally got a pilot project—why will he not make a commitment to proper, continuous coverage of yet another pilot project? We have heard his rhetoric. Why will he not just simply make the commitment? To not do so insults people with the disease, their suffering and their courageous struggle over the years.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, the member must have had her question written out and did not listen to my answers to the first two parts. What I have indicated to her is the pilot was extended. The pilot was scheduled to end in September. The evaluation being done by Dr. Colleen Metge was going to be completed in July or August. What we have done is we have extended the program through to March of the year 2000. We have added three additional drugs. We are going to do the evaluation. I know members opposite sometimes have difficulty with the concept of actually doing an evaluation of something, determining the results and making an informed decision, but we believe in doing that.

I have met with the MS Society, outlined how we were intending to proceed. My deputy has also talked to them in terms of how we are proceeding, and they certainly accept that it is a reasonable way to proceed: to have the evaluation done, make the decision well in advance of the expiry of the program in March so that all of these individuals know with absolute certainty what is going to be taking place. I have indicated the preliminary assessment certainly is positive, and I think that is a good sign for people who are currently on the pilot program. We certainly are committed to complete the full, detailed evaluation and make an informed decision at that time.

Education System Physical Education Curriculum

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): This government, two Education ministers ago, proposed to cut physical education from high school. That former Minister of Education even proposed to eliminate recess. After pressure, the government decided to eliminate by 50 percent the activity time for physical education and include health. Studies keep finding that

children are less and less active and more and more obese.

I want to ask the current Minister of Education if he will acknowledge that his government has reduced physical activity time in phys ed and that, under his government, there is still a curriculum vacuum in physical education. Can he tell us if by this fall there will be a new curriculum for physical education?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): Well, Madam Speaker, I simply will not accept the accusations made by the honourable member for Radisson, especially when on the issue of tuition fees, in one breath she says some years there should be tuition freezes under an NDP government: I would say we would freeze tuition. Then she takes a breath and says there probably would not be freezes. This actually does not surprise me, and maybe that accounts for the nature of the questions we are getting today, too.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a point of order. Beauchesne Citation 417 is very clear that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

The question was on physical education and physical activity in schools, and this minister is reading the same press clipping he read earlier. If I have ever seen a sign of a tired government, it is reading the same press clipping over and over again. But until we have an election, we do have Question Period in this House, and I would like to ask you to bring the Minister of Education to order and actually answer the question.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister, on the same point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Because the honourable member for Thompson raised this as a point of order, I would like to contribute to that by pointing out that on the same day a spokesman for the Leader of the New Democratic Party said that freezing

tuition is a goal, but the New Democrats have not yet established it as a policy.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, indeed the honourable member did have a point of order. I would ask that the honourable minister reply to the question asked.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister, to quickly complete his response.

Mr. McCrae: I accept your ruling, Madam Speaker, of course.

The honourable member for Radisson raises questions about physical education, and indeed I note in the news recently reference to obesity among our children. For that and lots of other reasons, the Department of Education and Training is indeed contributing \$150,000 to a three-year, nation-wide fitness study. This is a concern right across Canada not simply in Manitoba, and indeed physical education is a very important part of the upbringing and education of our children.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the minister could tell the House if the study he has just made reference to will evaluate the impact of this government's reduction in the activity time for Manitoba children and the fact there has been no curriculum for health and physical education for at least three years.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, unlike the honourable member opposite and members of her party, we do not simply want to spend dollars without any hope that it is going to do any good. That is why we looked very carefully at supporting the University of Manitoba, because indeed we believe that we can establish guidelines in the future for the delivery of physical education in our schools so that our young people can be the beneficiaries and lead happy and productive lives.

Ms. Cerilli: I would like the minister, Madam Speaker, to explain how under this government

there are going to be more TVs and more video games in schools and less physical education.

What strategy do you have in your government to reverse this trend of reduction in physical activity of children in Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: Here again, Madam Speaker, I guess I would be incorrect in thinking that honourable members opposite discussed the content of the question of the honourable member for Radisson before her coming forward because, again, she wants to argue against things that I know honourable members opposite, if they were canvassed as a group, might have trouble with positions being taken today by the member for Radisson. She is saying to us, forget about technology and just put it all into physical education.

Madam Speaker, both are important. What the New Democrats are saying is that computer technology is not part of the future of our children. I could not disagree more. That is why, in our funding announcement in January, specific funding was made available for technology in our schools.

Point of Order

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, I wonder if you would remind the Minister of Education that Question Period is time for the minister to answer our questions, not try and interpret what we are saying. Would you call the minister to order and have him answer the question?

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education and Training, on the same point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Same point of order, Madam Speaker. I perhaps can be forgiven if I have tried to understand what is coming from the side opposite. All Manitobans are trying to figure out what it is that is coming from the NDP. I am simply making my own humble efforts.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Radisson, it indeed is not a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* (1410)

World Trade Organization Agricultural Issues—Negotiations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, last week a group of people from the Minister of Agriculture's staff went to Ottawa to begin discussions on the next round of world trade. We know that during the last round Canada's position was very weak, and as a result, Canadian farmers came out as the big losers.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he can tell us his position and whether he can indicate whether he has directed his staff to ensure that the Wheat Board and orderly marketing are not bargained away at the next round of world trade talks.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I can inform the honourable member and members of the House that only this morning at 10:30 I was privileged to present a position paper to the House of Commons Foreign Relations Committee that is touring the country in preparation for these important World Trade Organization discussions. All issues concerning trade, particularly agricultural trade, were talked about and certainly what is most important for Canada, most important for my farmers, who understandably feel extremely frustrated. We have met most of those conditions in the last round. We have removed the Crow. We have removed other things. We have played by the rules, while our major trading partners have not. So our No. 1 priority is to have principally the Europeans and the Americans play by the same trade rules that we agreed to in the last round.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would like to ask the minister again: can he indicate the direction he gives to his staff when they are in these negotiations or whether his position is to ensure that we do not lose more, that orderly marketing and the Canadian Wheat Board and the few supports that Canadian farmers have left will not be negotiated away as our other supports were negotiated away at the last round?

Mr. Enns: I can further indicate to the honourable member and to the House that along with me were representatives of the Canadian Wheat Board as well as the agricultural

Keystone producers organization. Representations from the Manitoba dairy industry were also present. They are making their own presentations to the same committee. But I clearly stated Manitoba's position that we continue to support the Canadian Wheat Board. We have some serious concerns with respect to their domestic policies, as the impact on our ability to add value to that major commodity, namely wheat, but I have also expressed very clearly and unreservedly my ongoing support for the systems that we have in place in Canada and that, quite frankly, we were the boy scouts, if I can put it that way, Madam Speaker, in the last round. It is now for the Europeans and the Americans to start to demonstrate some good faith in these trade negotiations.

Monnin Inquiry Outside Prosecutor—Terms of Reference

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): To the Minister of Justice. The minister's department retained the services of an outside prosecutor to review, presumably, the evidence adduced at the commission of inquiry into the vote-rigging issue and presumably also on the report of former Chief Justice Monnin.

I ask the minister if either now or tomorrow he could table in this House the communications between the government and Mr. Leonard Doust, the outside prosecutor, which would include and cite the terms of reference for his inquiry, as well as whether there was any opinion or direction given by the government with regard to whether the report can be made public.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): As the House is aware, the government and the executive do not get involved in the prosecution of offences. Indeed, from time to time I ask my staff to provide me briefings in particular cases, but it would be improper certainly for the government to be involved in giving any direction to a special counsel.

As you are aware, the issue of prosecutions and special counsel is a particularly sensitive one, and therefore it is important for government

to remain distanced from any such communications.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, my question I think was quite succinct. I asked the minister if he would table in this House, either now or tomorrow, the terms of reference that were established for Mr. Doust's inquiry and his opinion. Would he provide the communications now?

Mr. Toews: I thought I had made myself clear that the government did not give any direction in this case.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Altona Festival of the Arts

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, I rise before the members of the House today to speak about an exciting event that is taking place in my constituency and in the community of Altona.

On April 6, the annual Altona Festival of the Arts got underway and will run until May 2. The festival session is taking place in Altona at the Altona Mennonite Church. Close to 600 participants are registered to perform at the Altona Festival of the Arts this year, making it one of the largest arts festivals in all of Manitoba. They are drawn not only from the Altona area but also from areas all over southern Manitoba. The communities of Morris, Carman and Vita and many other communities in southern Manitoba have registered contestants in this area. In fact, the festival draws from such a broad geographical area that the co-ordinating committee is currently asking the public to suggest a new name for the festival that would better identify it as a regional event.

The festival features several different arts forms, including vocal, choral, stringed instruments, speech arts and piano. The lights concert, featuring the highlight performances of all the sessions, will wrap up this year's festival. The Altona Festival of the Arts offers a great opportunity for performers to showcase their

talents and encourage the community to become actively involved in the arts. I commend the festival president, Loren Hiebert, and the members of the festival committee, along with the many volunteers, who put a great deal of time and effort into making this festival a real success.

Aboriginal Incarceration Rate

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): This afternoon I would like to just comment on the recent comments of the Supreme Court, regarding the incarceration rate of aboriginal people, who called it a national disgrace. The Supreme Court stated in recent years that sentences of imprisonment of aboriginal people have increased at an appalling rate. The court said that aboriginal people are imprisoned in grossly disproportionate numbers, with a male treaty Indian 25 times as likely to be admitted to a provincial jail than a non-native. A female treaty Indian is 131 times as likely to go to jail as a nontreaty woman is. Even more disturbing, the disproportionate numbers are still growing. The court predicts that the matter will be even worse in the future unless the trends are dealt with quickly. Poverty, lack of opportunity for educational training and employment have combined to give many aboriginal people a sense of powerlessness and despair, and all too frequently this results in their becoming involved with the justice system.

* (1420)

As the 1991 Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report stated in its opening sentence: Our justice system has failed aboriginal people on a massive scale. The AJI said that it is not merely that the justice system has failed aboriginal people, justice has also been denied to them. This is even truer today than it was in 1991. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Villa Youville Personal Care Home

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, last Friday, I, along with the First Minister, the Honourable Gary Filmon, had the pleasure of participating in the announcement of the new Villa Youville Personal Care Home in Ste. Anne. The new \$8-million, 66-bed facility

will replace the current personal care home now housed in a series of hostel buildings. The old structures will be renovated by Villa Youville Incorporated to provide additional housing options for the seniors in the area. The new accommodations will be constructed on a new site on the south side of the river connecting the existing facility. The personal care home will incorporate design features such as provisions for residents with Alzheimer's disease, wider corridors, space for adult daycare programs and a larger multipurpose room. An enclosed walkway will connect the two sites. This modern facility will ensure our seniors receive top-quality care in a home-like setting. This community has told us how important Villa Youville is, and we want to ensure the tradition of caring offered at this facility continues.

As we enter the next millennium, seniors in Ste. Anne, Lorette, Richer, La Broquerie and the surrounding area will be assured they do not have to leave their communities in order to receive quality care in a compassionate and caring environment. This facility will be a welcome addition to Ste. Anne. I would extend warm congratulations to Claude Lachance, director of the Villa Youville, and the chair and board of directors for the participation, consultations, discussions and the plans on the future of Villa Youville. Please join me in wishing them continued success in the days and years to come. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Book Week

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I was pleased to attend on Saturday night the culmination of Manitoba Book Week featuring the annual Manitoba writing and publishers awards, co-sponsored by the Association of Manitoba Book Publishers and the Manitoba Writers Guild. The highlight of the evening was the keynote address by Tomson Highway. Peppered with humour and decidedly iconoclastic, he outlined Manitoba's literary evolution and the international reputation of our writers.

I know all MLAs will join me in congratulating all nominees and acknowledging our economic and cultural debts to these writers,

designers and publishers. The winners were, first of all, Manitoba Book Design of the Year Award for Kelly Clark, publisher, University of Manitoba, designer, Fran Carmichael; Best Illustrated Book of the Year Award, Cartoon Charlie: The Life and Art of Animation Pioneer Charles Thorson, Great Plains Publications by Gene Walz; Le prix littéraire des caisses populaires, Tant que le fleuve coule par Marie Jack; McNally Robinson Book for Young People Award, Diane Wieler for Drive, Groundwood Books; John Hirsch Award for Most Promising Manitoba Writer to Deborah Keahey; The Mary Scorer Award for Best Book by a Manitoba Publisher to Art and Illustration for the Classroom, Peguis Publishers. Finally, the McNally Robinson Book of the Year Award to Miriam Toews for A Boy of Good Breeding, Stoddart Publishing.

In closing, again, we congratulate all nominees and winners and thank them for their contributions to Manitoba.

K & G Mushrooms

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, last Thursday my colleague the Honourable Merv Tweed and myself, along with Baljit Nanda and Karm Sahl of K & G Mushrooms Foods Limited, participated in the announcement and sod turning of a \$5.4-million expansion of their operations near Portage la Prairie.

I am immensely proud of this announcement and all of the work that has gone into this announcement and creation of almost 40 new jobs in Portage la Prairie over the next two years. This \$5.4-million expansion came with the assistance of a \$1.5-million repayable loan from Manitoba Industrial Opportunities Program.

I want to thank the principals of K & G Mushrooms out of Denver, Colorado, that have shown their immense support of the Manitoba economy, but truly, Madam Speaker, we have earned that support because here in Manitoba we have been able to show persons abroad that we truly have a climate for economic prosperity here in this province.

K & G Mushrooms will be embracing the technology that will increase by 30 percent the output of the Portage la Prairie plant. K & G Foods is able to significantly increase this output by increasing the per-square-foot number of mushrooms. Furthermore, K & G Foods has been able to utilize new technologies to access markets here and abroad. This expansion will be completed in September and will allow the company to increase its exports to the United States. Thank you.

Committee Changes

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I have a committee change.

I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections (7 p.m. this evening) be amended as follows: St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for Monday, April 26, 1999, (7 p.m.), be amended as follows: the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) for the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill 2 for third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill 2—The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, I rise to put on the record some

comments regarding Bill 2 and the election process, the way we divide ourselves up in this province to represent the best way possible the people of Manitoba. The people of Manitoba, after all, send us here to reflect their views, and this is an important step. It always is an important step for us as legislators to organize ourselves in such a fashion that we can best reflect the views of Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, it is my belief that we, not specifically we here in the Legislature, but that in the final analysis the legislation that we here in the Legislature pass needs to reflect, as well as we can, several things, several criteria that I think are very important. One obviously is population. Tradition, not only in Canada but in the system by which we govern ourselves throughout the British Commonwealth and other parts of the world, has been based, not entirely but at least in part, on the system of representation by population. Now, representation by population was something that was very important decades and even centuries ago when the population did not have much representation from the people who were making laws and rules that affected the population. So there was quite a move centuries ago to move away from the monarch, as an example, making rules on behalf of the population, or from a feudal lord making rules that affected the population.

Madam Speaker, at that time there was a very great need to make the political system and our system of governance based on something other than the very few governing the very many. So I would suggest that most of us on both sides of the House, if we were legislators centuries ago, would have been fighting for representation by population. I would have. It seems to me that it was a good move in the evolution of democracy to go from a system where very few people govern over the very many people in any country. So that is one basis upon which we divide ourselves up in this Legislature to represent the people of the province of Manitoba.

* (1430)

I would suggest, along with that, Madam Speaker, that the concept of representation by population needs to be tempered somewhat by

other factors. One of those factors, and I would suggest the most important factor that we need to keep in mind whenever we pass legislation in this House having to do with the boundaries, is the very important concept of geography.

It is no secret to members of this House that some parts of our province are much more densely populated than others. As you travel around the province of Manitoba, the sparsity of the population in some parts of Manitoba is very significant. That presents very much a challenge for some of us in this House who represent very large geographical ridings. Distance is another one of these concepts that I think we must consider whenever we pass legislation having to do with boundaries in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, when I think of geography and some of the problems that poses in representing Manitobans, I cannot help but think of a riding in which I used to live. That riding is Rupertsland. Of course, when I lived in Rupertsland, it was much smaller than what it is today. When I lived and taught school in Norway House in the early and mid-1980s, there was another riding in the area called Churchill.

What happened in the wisdom of those that have been here before me and in the wisdom of the recommendations of a previous boundaries commission was that the North was reduced. The north part of our province was reduced by one seat, and we saw the evaporation of Churchill. We saw the Churchill riding being amalgamated or moved in with the constituency of Rupertsland.

This is where, Madam Speaker, some debate could occur between those who steadfastly believe in representation by population, a concept which on its own merit does have a lot of significance, but on the other hand we have the concept of geography and distance that I think need to be considered in order to produce a riding in which we can at least have a hope of representing Manitobans, especially in those northern ridings of Rupertsland and the former riding of Churchill.

I think this Boundaries Commission had before it the opportunity to rectify what I see as an issue which lessens any MLA's opportunity to

serve people in the North. This Boundaries Commission, I think, had an opportunity before it. Instead, what is presented to us is a situation in which some of the boundaries in the North have been changed around, have been moved somewhat, but I think this was an opportunity—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if I might ask for the indulgence of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). Regrettably, in some confusion here, the motion was not moved, so we will stop the clock and restart it for the member.

* * *

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. Render), that Bill 2, The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les circonscriptions électorales, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Struthers: Do I have 40 minutes now, or do I have—

An Honourable Member: I want to compare your first speech with your second one.

Mr. Struthers: Oh, no. Madam Speaker, for the sake of the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I will try to recap fairly quickly what I have said previously on this matter.

An Honourable Member: That is okay. We heard you the first time.

Mr. Struthers: Maybe then the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings) could help me out as I attempt to recap what I have already put on record.

Madam Speaker, representation by population is something that is a concept that is accepted throughout democracies of the world, but at the same time it is my belief that other concepts such as geography, other factors such as distance, need to be taken into account when we deal with legislation in which we change the boundaries of our constituencies because, after

all, the constituencies are that unit, that very basic unit that we use to form democracy in this Legislature. It, in a way, is a guarantee that Manitobans will be fairly represented in this House, this House, after all, which is the House in which we make the laws and the rules and the regulations by which Manitobans are governed, and that is important. That is a very important job.

We must do everything that we can to make sure that Manitobans have as much say, as much input as they possibly can into their own governance because, when the struggle to obtain representation by population occurred, the people who were being governed did not have much say at all. As a matter of fact, in many cases they had very little say. As a result, in many instances in the past, if someone was to look through their history books, they would see that one of the very few options available for people being governed by a small elite was to take up arms, was to resort to violence. In some cases they were successful and in some cases they were not. In some cases, they overthrew the monarch or the feudal lord or whoever it was that was imposing his will on the many.

* (1440)

In other cases, the governing elite, mostly through control of the military, mostly through intimidation, were able to fend off the masses, were able to fend off the people who were being governed. Usually what happened was the leaders of the group that was protesting and trying to overthrow the small group of an elite ended up facing dire consequences, years of imprisonment, torture and, sometimes, in the end, death, because they were standing up for what they believed in because they were representing people who were not being represented in a fair, egalitarian way.

Now, I am not going to suggest for one minute that that is where we are headed in this province because of the debate that may or may not occur on this bill, but it does I think place in some kind of context the importance of the concepts which we debate here in this House. I believe that proposals being made through this legislation are absolutely fundamental to the operation of our democracy here in Manitoba.

Manitobans have some guarantees that they will be democratically represented in government. One of the guarantees is by electing people of integrity and honesty to positions, electing people who will do as they say they will do and then watching those people when they are in government and then deciding after a period of time, in our case four or five years, whether or not these were actually honest people of integrity. We do that through elections in this province.

Another way in which Manitobans have guarantees is to look at what we have in writing, what we have accepted in this legislation, the acts that we pass in this legislation, the bills that formulate the opinions of Manitobans. That, Madam Speaker, is a guarantee, because it is written down. The debates are recorded in Hansard. The final bills are voted upon, accepted, given Royal Assent, proclaimed, and then kept here on record, kept in the Legislature, kept in public places where people can go and check out what we here in the Legislature have passed. That is another guarantee.

There were several things that struck me as I considered the Boundaries Commission's work this summer and its reports over the course of the fall, the maps that they produced, some of the rationale for changing the maps, and, of course, Madam Speaker, the first criterion that was considered by the Boundaries Review Commission was the census, the most up-to-date census that was available to them. Based on that census, the original map, a first draft map, was put together. That first map was based primarily, I suggest, on the population data that was collected through the 1996 census.

Now, that map, that first draft, did not contain the advice of Manitobans. I am not being critical of that, Madam Speaker. I am pointing out that that is the process, because after that first map was compiled the Boundaries Commission travelled throughout Manitoba and collected the opinions of Manitoba and considered the first draft map that they had compiled.

Well, Madam Speaker, I was not being critical before, but I will attempt to be somewhat critical of that part of the process. I was not very

happy that the commission toured the province for a short period of time in the summer months when I do not think they received from the people of Manitoba all the advice they could have if they had approached the people of Manitoba at a different time of the year. I think the process could have been much better if the commission could have either extended its time and gone to more communities over a longer period of time or if they had indeed started earlier with their public hearings.

Madam Speaker, I think it is absolutely imperative that when a commission is drawing and redrawing the constituency maps of Manitoba, that they go to the communities in which they are proposing significant change. As an example, one of the changes that was put forth in the first map was a move that would have seen the community of Cross Lake taken out of the riding of The Pas and moved into the riding of Thompson. It was my suggestion at the time that since that is a significant sized community in the North and that the change that the commission was suggesting was a significant change, that they should go and talk with the people of Cross Lake to see how that was going to affect the people of Cross Lake. It seemed to me to make sense. That did not happen.

I also thought—and I am speaking a little closer to home here—that the commission should have taken a trip down No. 5 highway from Dauphin to Roblin and I think would have heard from more Roblin people as to what those folks would like to see happen with their community in terms of where their town would be in the overall constituencies map. I think that would have been a good, positive suggestion, so I made that suggestion, but that did not happen either, Madam Speaker.

I want to also point out that I think we do not value enough the factor of geography and the factor of distance when we redraw the boundaries for the province of Manitoba. When I lived in Norway House, it was a totally different experience than what I had been used to living up in other parts of rural Manitoba and rural Saskatchewan. As someone who played a little bit of hockey, I remember the days when you could load up the 13- and 14-year-old

hockey players in a bus, drive 20 minutes down the road and be at another little town which had a hockey team and play your game and be done and back home all in the course of an afternoon. That, Madam Speaker, is absolutely impossible when you coach a hockey team or play on a hockey team in communities such as Norway House.

Now, that illustrates the differences from one part of our province to the next, as I am sure you would be told if you asked the MLA representing Rupertsland. He would tell you the difficulties he has and any MLA would have representing what I believe is either the largest or one of the largest provincial ridings in the country. Not only is it difficult in terms of its size, but it is difficult because one community to the next is so far apart. It is also difficult because one community to the next does not have a highway or a gravel road or much of any kind of a transportation system other than chartering an expensive plane or in some cases going by boat or in some cases by skidoo from one community to the next.

That is a huge difference from my constituency of Dauphin or from any of the constituencies that fall within the Perimeter Highway. I think that members on both sides of the House understand that. I think it is absolutely clear that some of the members of this House have huge ridings and great difficulty, greater than some of us who are actually quite lucky to represent smaller, more accessible ridings.

* (1450)

I think that is understood by both sides of this House. I think we ought to do something about it. I would have loved to have seen that recognized by the report of the Boundaries Review Commission and would love to see it recognized by re-establishing a fifth northern seat. I think there is a need for it. I think it is justified. I think there is a rationale to ensure that another seat is added to the North in order to better represent the people living in the northern section of our province. Indeed, Madam Speaker, that is allowed for in the legislation. It is allowed for if the Boundaries Commission

accepts the 25 percent variance that is allowed through the legislation for northern communities.

That is not just dreamed up, Madam Speaker. That is not just something that is thrown into the mix just for the fun of it. There is compelling rationale to allow a 25 percent variance. As a matter of fact, I was quite amazed that when you looked at the populations of the original map that was drawn, that a northern seat, namely Thompson, ended up being the largest seat in the whole province—a northern seat the largest in the whole province, and we are supposed to be talking in terms of a 25 percent variance for northern seats. That is opposite. Those two realities are absolutely incongruent. You cannot have both in the same report.

After hearing from the public and after reconsideration, there were some changes made. We still have a long way to go in that regard, Madam Speaker. I fully believe that we should be moving toward a 25 percent variance for northern ridings.

Another good example is the constituency of Flin Flon. I have had the opportunity to join my colleague from Flin Flon and travel around different parts of his riding, bounce in on that road from Thompson to Leaf Rapids. I get a taste of what the MLA for Flin Flon and previous MLAs for Flin Flon go through in attempting to do the best job they can of representing their constituents. It is my contention that we should do what we can to help those MLAs do an even better job of representing their constituents. I do not want to have constituents underrepresented. I do not want to have issues and concerns go unaddressed because we have loaded up too much on northern MLAs, and this was true years ago as well as today.

The other factor that I think we need to keep in mind when we deal with the Boundaries Commission and their reports and the redrawing of our constituencies is the data that we use to make these important decisions. It seems to me that there was a discrepancy between the data compiled by the review commission which relied on the census figures from 1996 and the

information that we receive from many bands and chiefs and their councils of the many First Nations in the North who believe that their numbers were higher, who believe that the numbers that they had on their band lists were accurate and were higher than the numbers being used to determine the boundaries and the constituencies by which we organize ourselves here in the Legislature.

I think, Madam Speaker, that discrepancy is worth looking into, because if we are making decisions without the best, most complete, most accurate data, if we are making our decisions based on that, then we are not coming up with the best possible decisions that we can. I think it is incumbent upon us; I think we are obligated to do that. I think we are obligated to get it right. If a substantial portion of our population is saying that they do not believe that the most accurate information is being used to make determinations on something as important as democracy, then I think we have to take that seriously. I think we have to review the way in which we compile the data to be used to make these decisions.

I want to say that I am fully in favour of having the commission operate at an arm's-length distance, if not longer than arm's length, from those of us here in the Legislature whose input is quite properly being put forth as we debate the legislation. One of the strengths of the process that I observed over the course of last year or so is that it was done at some distance from the legislators, from the politicians, from those of us who now will be out campaigning in these constituencies and attempting to represent the constituents to the best of our abilities.

Madam Speaker, the one complaint I have in that area is that it took so long for this government to bring forth the legislation that we are debating here today in the Legislature. I was very disappointed that it took as long as it did for this government to introduce in this House legislation based on the report of a commission that was to be arm's length from us here in the Legislature. What the government did was shorten up that arm's length quite a bit in my opinion.

I think the government should have had us back in the Legislature before Christmas to debate this legislation. I think the government played some politics. I think the government played some politics by taking so long in introducing this legislation. I think we should have done it a long time ago. I think we did not get a chance to debate it in the House, because the government was in some hot water on other issues, namely, the Monnin inquiry, health care, education, agriculture, all those issues that it did not really want to face any questions on here in the Legislature.

As a result, this government stalled the democratic process. This government stalled the democratic process for its own political gain. I think that was wrong. I think every 10 years we have an opportunity to redraw the maps to reflect Manitoba better and that we had our opportunity this time, and the government dragged its feet on bringing this legislation in, tainting the process at the same time.

The other issue that is very important with the Boundaries Review Commission is the actual composition of the Review Commission. There were three people who came to Dauphin representing the commission, three very intelligent, I think, very capable people; three people who are committed to putting together a fair boundary map for us to use here in the Legislature; three people who are committed to providing Manitobans with as good a democratic process as we can. So I have nothing against the three people who performed this duty. Madam Speaker, I just do not think there were enough of them.

* (1500)

I think somebody from rural Manitoba should have been on that commission. I think that somebody from rural Manitoba who has lived in rural Manitoba, raised a family in rural Manitoba, participated in the community events that take place throughout rural Manitoba, can offer to the commission another perspective, a rural perspective. I think that that person could make the Boundaries Review Commission and the whole process a whole lot better. It seems to me we have had that opportunity. We could have done this already. We had 10 years since the last Boundaries Review Commission which

used basically the same three positions—not people, but positions—last time, 10 years ago, as we used this time, 1989 to 1999. We had the chance to do that. We could have added a rural person to the Boundaries Review, to the commission itself. I think that would have been an improvement of the process.

I think so. I also believe that everything I just said—[interjection] For the sake of the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), no one, as far as I am concerned, has ever decided to put an MLA on the Boundaries Review Commission. No one has ever decided that. Now, if the member for Inkster is in favour of something like that, he can stand up and he can say so. I am not going to put words in the member for Inkster's mouth. He can do that himself.

But everything I said just now about a rural person on the Boundaries Review Commission, you can say again and substitute in the word "north." If you put somebody from northern Manitoba on this commission, you will enhance the workings of this commission, and I think you will come up with better recommendations. I think you will put somebody on that commission who understands the problems associated with representing northern ridings. I think you will put somebody on that commission who understands the nuances. I use the word "nuance," but you know nuances might be too smooth a word to indicate the challenges that face rural MLAs in this Legislature.

Somebody from the North, for example, would understand the shopping patterns of northerners, the paths that are beaten down between which two communities rather than being fairly arbitrary and dividing up the map without that kind of information. You can take the hard data that you have got and any census you like. Even if you want to take the hard data available if somebody actually did consider the roles from the band councils, take all that hard data, and you can divide up the map how you like, but if you do not have somebody on that review who understands how the North works, or understands how rural Manitoba works, I think you are missing something.

I also believe that somebody should make the recommendation that an aboriginal person be

included on the review, that an aboriginal person represent aboriginal people on this commission. Again that, I believe, would enhance the workings and enhance the final output of this commission. Again, Madam Speaker, we do not appoint people to these commissions, we appoint through institutions. What would be wrong with putting in legislation that the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs be appointed to the Boundaries Review Commission so that 10 years down the road, when we go through this process again, we will know that aboriginal people will be represented in this process?

How many aboriginal communities did the Boundaries Review Commission visit to get input on something as important as how we divide ourselves up into constituencies? We have to be doing things that includes people, that includes northerners and includes aboriginal people, that includes those of us who live in rural Manitoba.

Again, I want to draw your attention to another aspect of the commission's job that I think they forgot about. I have mentioned a 25 percent variance that is available to the Boundaries Commission in northern Manitoba. There is a 10 percent variance available for constituencies that fall into rural Manitoba as well. There are some rural constituencies that are very large. I need only point to the constituency of Swan River which, under the new arrangements, will be almost as much a northern seat as a rural one. I point to Roblin-Russell, a very large constituency from Boggy Creek in the North along the Saskatchewan border and the Riding Mountains, right down to Hamiota, Miniota. That is a huge riding. Now, some changes have been proposed to that riding which I understand make it slightly smaller, but it is still going to be a challenge for the current member, the Minister for Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), or the next member after the next election. It is going to be a challenge. There are some huge ridings in rural Manitoba.

The other thing I want to point out, Madam Speaker, we will stick to the Roblin-Russell riding or the new Russell riding and just take—I am sure the Minister of Rural Development will agree with me on this—another challenge for any MLA in that riding is that not only is it a fairly

large riding but there are little communities spread out right through that riding from north to south and east to west.

I wonder how many MLAs know where the community of Menzies is.

An Honourable Member: The community of who?

Mr. Struthers: Menzies, a small little community that deserves to be represented just as much as Winnipeg, Dauphin, Brandon and the rest of them. But Menzies is a little community right in the middle of the new Russell constituency.

An Honourable Member: It is Menzie, not Menzies.

* (1510)

Mr. Struthers: You can drive along the highway right past Menzie—thank you—and it would be very tempting to keep driving right along to a bigger community where you are going to talk to more people, but the people of Menzie need to be represented.

The people in Olha need to be represented, and that is just a district. It might be tempting not to do that. It might be tempting not to drive out to Olha, but I would imagine that any conscientious MLA would include that in the list of communities to go and visit and check out with people the concerns. What that means for an MLA is that you need to spend a lot of time on the road. You need to spend a lot of time commuting from one small community in one small district to the next. You can go to some of the communities in the constituency of Dauphin, for example, spend your whole day knocking on doors, and not cover one floor of an apartment in the city of Winnipeg. Those are differences that we have to try to reflect when we put forth our legislation. Those are things we have to remember, and those are things that were allowed for in this 10 percent variance that rural constituencies are allowed.

Again, it is not just something that is made up. It is not just something that is there for political reasons to try to keep us rural people

happy. There is a rationale for it. It is an acknowledgment that there are challenges in rural ridings. It is an acknowledgment that we here in the Legislature are taking steps to improve the representation of rural people. I think it makes sense. I think a 10 percent variance is totally reasonable. I think we should draw our maps and set up our constituencies to reflect that 10 percent variance. We have that opportunity. We had 10 years to do this. This government chose not to. We have not done it in the last 10 years. I think we have a chance now over the next 10 years to move forward with some of these ideas. I think it is a chance to move forward with our commitment to rural and northern Manitoba and it is a chance for us to move forward with our commitment to the best possible representation for rural and northern Manitoba.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I very much look forward to this bill passing. I very much look forward to competing in an election based on the new boundaries. The many changes proposed for the Parkland Region of Manitoba I think are good ones. I believe that they represent an improvement in my chances as an MLA in representing as many people as possible. But what I think we have to break ourselves away from is that feeling that you can simply take the 1.1 million-or-so people in Manitoba, divide them by 57, which is the number of constituencies, come up with an average and then have every constituency come as close as possible to that average. I think what we end up having is a province with 57 ridings that do not reflect the local flavour, the local nature of our constituencies. I think you end up with constituencies that less reflect the people of Manitoba rather than accurately reflect the make-up of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, what we would get when we simply divide the province into 57 pieces is something that is far less adequate, something that is far less reflective. I think we end up with constituencies that are unable to take into consideration the differences that we all know exist from one constituency to the next. On the other hand, I do understand that you do not want to have a situation in which there are huge differences in population either, and that is not

what I have been arguing for. I do not want to have people think that we can have two extremes when it comes to constituencies as well. I do not want to be arguing to make rural ridings so small that in order to maintain 57 in the province that some other seats are huge when it comes to population, and that would not be an acceptable situation either. That is why I am not a fan of one extreme position or another. I think what you need to do is find a reasonable position somewhere between having huge and small ridings based on population and on the other hand having huge and small ridings based on geography.

I think everybody understands that. I think people are starting to understand how important geography is when we organize our constituencies in Manitoba. I think everyone understands the challenges that are faced by some of the member of this House when it comes to the size and the distance involved in northern and rural ridings. So I want to just conclude quickly by saying that I look forward to these boundaries being passed through, and I hope that many of the recommendations made during this debate will form the basis of this legislation that would help guide Manitobans and the commission for their next round of census and next round of boundary review.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I choose this opportunity to put a few comments on Bill 2 at third reading. They will only be brief. I commend the commission and its work. Some of my colleagues, members of the House will recall, I think, when it was introduced for second reading that the Premier, First Minister (Mr. Filmon) did make note of the event. For me, as a rural person and as Minister of Agriculture, there is something noteworthy in these recommendations. That is that probably in the first time since this legislation has been enacted, in the early '50s, by the then Liberal Premier of this province, Mr. D. L. Campbell, for the very first time rural and northern Manitoba have not lost a seat.

That is not a comment that is meant to be taken out of context by my friends from the Capital Region, the greater city of Winnipeg; it

just reflects the demographics of our province. But it is significant for, I know, my colleague the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), significant for me. In fact, if I can inject a small partisan note, I suspect, on the hustings, I may even want to make some politics out of it: that our policies with respect to rural Manitoba are bearing fruit; that the policies of decentralization that were entered into right at the outset of this government with respect to the public service have added to slowing down the decline in some parts of the rural population move and in some parts of rural Manitoba actually seeing it grow. So it is worthwhile commenting on that about the bill that we are about to pass.

Madam Speaker, I do want to put a few comments on the record because I am troubled by what we are doing. I listened to the government House leader (Mr. Praznik). I listened to the honourable member that just spoke. I listened to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer). We are, obviously, passing a piece of legislation that Her Majesty's official opposition has expressed some considerable concern about, and they have reason to express that concern. I happen to share a lot of that concern. I happen to believe that geography and other aspects of representation need to be taken, and could have been taken, into greater consideration by this Boundaries Commission, but we are being hoisted on our own petard to some extent because you have to remember we as lawmakers have lost sight in this building of what our responsibility is.

* (1520)

Our responsibility was simply to report the findings of the commission to this Chamber. There was no obligation on the part of this, or any other government, to accept those recommendations, but because of the rhetoric of the times, because of the fear that perhaps this government would take what some might have conceived as unfair advantage on running on the existing boundaries, the troops came in, political scientists from the academe world. Professor Schwartz said it would be immoral, illegal, everything, to run on the old boundaries. The CBC even told them that; the Leader for the Liberal Party and, yes, the official opposition chimed in too: It would be a dreadful, terrible

thing to run on the old boundaries. What utter nonsense. That is just simply forgetting who we are.

We are the lawmakers. Read The Electoral Boundaries Act. The Electoral Boundaries Act clearly says to the government of the day: You shall receive this as information and table it in the House, which our First Minister (Mr. Filmon) did, at the earliest possible opportunity.

You recall that we only got the information December 18, but we got ourselves all in such a frenzy about this that, of course, now we have to pass the legislation, and we are. We will pass it. There is nothing wrong with it, but the points that were made by the opposition that reflect on the difficulties of representation in those massive northern seats are valid ones. The reflection that other members have made to take into greater consideration the difficulties in rural constituencies that are ever increasing, and the fact that the legislation specifically allows for some elbow room, 10 percent, 25 percent, those are all very valid comments.

Madam Speaker, you see, there was no particular pressure. One would have thought that that kind of pressure might well have come from members opposite during these past 10 years. I think the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) said it best. An error, if an error was made, was in accepting the last go-around, where the commission seriously moved away from using its opportunities of having those built-in conditions taken into fuller consideration, that is, the 25 percent leeway in the northern seats, the 10 percent in rural seats.

But, Madam Speaker, I just could not help but remind ourselves from time to time that let us not forget our specific responsibilities here and let us not be cowed or coerced into taking action that really is uncalled for. If there was a desire right now at third reading that this is not the kind of legislation that we want to pass, then we do not pass it. There is nothing immoral, and there is nothing illegal about that.

I know full well that that is not going to happen. Members opposite have indicated that they are supporting the bill. Members of the Liberal Party have been in a frenzy about

moving this bill forward, and we as a government are obviously bringing this bill in as a measure to be passed. But it is a lesson for us to recall and to remind ourselves very clearly of what specifically the legislation says. The legislation called on us to introduce this measure into the House which we have done. The House is dealing with it, and I certainly will be supporting the bill.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I welcome this chance at third reading to put a few remarks on this particular bill, which is of importance, I think, to all members of the Legislature. I was interested to hear the comments of the previous speaker, I think the longest-serving member of this Legislature, and I do wonder what the connection is between the particular speech and ideas that he presented and those of his House leader at the beginning—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was simply musing on the contrast between the comments that the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) just put on the record about this bill—certainly, they are worthy of consideration, but they do seem to me to be quite different both in tone and intent from the way in which his House leader preceded at the beginning of this session.

Nevertheless, I would like to thank the members of the commission, the three main members of the commission appointed by statute, and also the many staff whom they employed and perhaps still employ as we move into an election period, because there is a great deal of work that is attendant upon any kind of commission of this nature. It is one that requires travel. It requires work in at least two languages, and it is one that requires a great deal of listening, of study, of drawing of boundaries, of testing out of certain kinds of assumptions, and one where I think staff are particularly important and very much relied upon by commissioners who also have active and important responsibilities elsewhere.

It is an important task, of course, for all members of the House. It is an important task

for all Manitobans, because the task that they are set of essentially drawing boundaries is one also of creating communities. We may think of boundaries simply as lines on a map, but it is much more than that. It is a way of creating a political community. As one redraws a boundary, one also sometimes moves people into communities where they may not feel comfortable. You try in effect to create another kind of sense of community, and every commission that tries to do this, I think, faces difficulties, faces problems of incorporating old loyalties and new realities.

I remember the Norrie commission report faced many of these, and, as I am sure most such commissions do, it employed a geographer. I think the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) made reference to this as well. This is one of the things that geographers do. They are the people who draw boundaries, who reflect upon the nature of community, who look at the lines of communication within a community, and I particularly remember the Norrie commission. I have always said it was one of the best written reports I have ever seen. It certainly had some very well laid-out fundamental explanations of how change had come about in education funding and in education divisions within Manitoba.

Politically, it was a different question. I do not want to go into that here, but I certainly commend that report. I remember that the report also spoke about the difference between lines on the map and the mental maps that people hold. This was certainly true, I think, when people came to respond to the Norrie commission, just as it was when they came to respond to this commission. People spoke about their allegiance to certain kinds of communities, and they spoke about it in terms not just of shifting one community out of Dauphin and into Roblin-Russell or vice versa, but they spoke about it, too, in terms of the names that were given to them. Names and naming of communities also have great significance to people. So people in Manitoba, I think, spoke on this to the commission, and the commission in some situations also changed this. I commend them for that, for listening to a number of the—or at least responding to a number of the delegations that were brought before them.

The drawing of boundaries is not just an issue, of course, for Manitobans; it is one that faces communities around the world. If we look today at what is happening in Kosovo, what happened in Croatia, what happened in Slovenia and even in Czechoslovakia in the last decade, what we have seen, in fact, is a whole redrawing of a map and the creation of new kinds of communities. Whether we agree with them or not, it is a series of communities which have been created out of war, in some cases out of language, in some cases out of religion, in some cases out of forms of communication, of changed means of communication which allowed new kinds of communities to be formed, many of them based upon historical loyalties and linguistic loyalties that go back to the 12th or 13th Century.

In Canada we face similar kinds of divisions. Probably in Canadian history, the ones that we have faced most significantly have been those between Lower Canada and Upper Canada at the turn of the 18th Century and the redrawing of the boundaries in 1774 and again in the 1840s as people tried to come to grips with the issue of the maintenance of a strong French-Canadian, a strong Quebec community, as well as the principle, the growing democratic principle throughout the 19th Century of representation by population. From 1774 right through until 1867, in fact, Canadians in what is present-day Ontario and Quebec grappled with those issues. They formed political parties around those issues. They debated those issues; they created parallel leaderships of Baldwin and LaFontaine basically out of those issues, the desire to retain community, to give strength to both parts of an English and French Canada but also to give acknowledgment and to give support to the growing definition of democracy as representation by population.

* (1530)

After 1867, of course, the same issues come into play, as we look at the creation of an Upper House in the federal government and the debate here in Manitoba as well as elsewhere over the presence of an Upper House and a different kind of representation across the province. As Manitoba, too, came into confederation, we look

at the kind of province that the resistance of Louis Riel tried to form.

Riel had hoped for a larger province; he had hoped for a province which would be hospitable and would represent the homeland of both English-speaking and French-speaking mixed-blood peoples not only of Red River but of St. Laurent and of the Saskatchewan country as well. Through his resistance, he was, in fact, able to achieve a province which did have a kind of democracy, which did have a number of political constituencies in the Red River Valley based largely on the old historic alliances of the parishes of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

He was unsuccessful, however, in creating the larger province, the larger Manitoba that he had anticipated. Instead, we got a postage-stamp province; we got a very narrowly defined Manitoba, one, in fact, which excluded Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. The postage-stamp province's boundaries did not even go up to the southern edge of Lake Winnipeg. That certainly was a very narrow definition of the history of Manitoba in the 1870s, and it was one way, of course, in which the federal government retained responsibility but also the authority for natural resources over the much larger Northwest Territories.

So boundaries for Manitoba have always been significant from the initial times of the European legal settlement of Manitoba. But populations do change, and just as we have seen new boundaries and new communities, political communities, created across Manitoba over the 19th and 20th centuries, so in recent years we have also seen a considerable shift in populations around the province. Although the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), the previous speaker, made reference to his pride in the growing rural population and attributed it to the policies of his government, we should also look in fact to the depopulation of western Manitoba, all along the western edge of the province, north to south, tremendous depopulation.

Yes, indeed, there has been an increase, and a very welcome increase, both through migration as well as through immigration in southern Manitoba. We certainly welcome and applaud

that too, but it is a shift of population. Overall the population of Manitoba has not been expanding certainly at the rate of provinces like Alberta, British Columbia, or even Ontario.

So, Madam Speaker, populations do change, occupations change, the focus of communities change. Particularly, and this is one point the Norrie commission was very strong on and put very well, that as technologies have changed, both telephone and roads in the 19th Century, certainly railways, the opportunity for creating new kinds of communities has also changed, patterns of marketing changed, the shopping areas of rural Manitoba in particular do change as some communities disappear and others take on a kind of rural node responsibility.

So all of those things have changed, and the Manitoba Legislature over the years has put in place a nonpartisan approach to dealing with this. Now, not all provinces have done that. I think the Manitoba Legislature over the last years, all parts of the House, should be congratulated for the kind of nonpartisan system which people have put in place and in which, in general, the people of Manitoba have great confidence. It is all well for the Legislature to pass a particular law but to develop a system and to have a series of experiences of this type of legislative commission in which people have confidence is another matter. I think that is something which on the whole has happened and which is important for us to identify and to recognize.

I said at the beginning that the people of Manitoba certainly recognize their political communities. In some cases, even though they recognize the loss of population, there is a dislocation which comes with changes of name and changes of boundaries. Political communities, as are social and communities of mentalité, also take on particular characteristics. I was looking recently at a thesis from the political science department which talked about the identification by place of particular kinds of voting patterns so that even though the composition, the actual social and political composition of an area might change, in fact there are studies which show, and with Canadian experience, that the actual sense of a place, whether it is north end, west end, or St.

Boniface, for example, there is a sense of place in which when people move into it, they have a sense that there is a political identity and a particular political pattern of voting which has emerged in conjunction with that place. That was a whole new area for me. It was not something of a kind of literature which I had been exposed to before, and it seemed to me very applicable and helped to understand a little some of the reactions to any kind of boundary commission, including the one we have just seen in Manitoba.

In the case of my own riding, Madam Speaker, the commission has extended the boundaries of Wolseley to the west end north of Portage, and I do not particularly want to comment on the rightness or the wrongness of this. The commission has reported. We are now debating the nature of that report and the possibilities for change in the electoral boundary process. It does include the west end, and it is still very much an inner city riding in which it will be possible, and I say this to my rural colleagues, it still will be possible to walk this riding in a day. A lot more houses, a lot more walkup apartments, because my riding as an inner city riding had lost—I think, it was down over 11 percent. There are a number of reasons for that loss of population, and some of them do affect the nature of the discussion we are having today. One of the reasons for that, of course, is the transition in some parts of the riding from duplexes to single family housing, but that in itself could not account for the loss of over 11 percent of population.

In my view, there are two other reasons which are very important for the loss of it, and one is very clearly a political reason. It is the abandonment of the inner city by this government and by the declining housing and by the decline in many elements of healthy communities in parts of the riding. So a loss of population to the suburbs, I think, is there and one that has been experienced by other parts of the inner city as well.

But also I would say one of the difficulties facing any inner city constituency is the difficulty of actual enumeration. This Boundaries Commission, like any other commission looking at population, has to use the

numbers of the Canada census. Both on reserves and in the inner city, I think, member after member of this Legislature will tell you that those communities were undercounted, that many people were missed. When the census takers went through the inner city, I know that they had difficulty in getting admittance to many buildings; many of the three-storey walk-up apartments which are very common in my riding, in fact, quite a characteristic of it from around the period, about 1908 to 1914 is when most of them were built.

* (1540)

Those apartments have become increasingly more secure so that unless you know the telephone number of somebody inside, and if any of the people you are visiting, in fact, do have a telephone number, then you have great difficulty in getting admission to that building even on a second call or on a third call. That is a very common phenomenon through the inner city, and I think that is one of the difficulties that the census takers faced, and we saw it when we looked at the permanent voters' list in the federal election. I have made a number of comments in this House about the inadvisability of the province taking the federal numbers as the gospel for the province because, in fact, in the inner city they were not representative of the nature of the numbers of the population.

Finally, in the inner city, of course, you have areas with very high mobility, people who will move two and three times a year in order to find better accommodation or because the lease changes or for a variety of reasons, or because they are moving back and forth to other communities in Manitoba. That mobility, of course, makes it also very difficult to maintain a good census and a good and accurate permanent voters' list, and that, too, affects the kinds of numbers which any commission such as this has to deal with.

But, Madam Speaker, people cared, I think, about a number of ridings in Manitoba and made strong representations to the commission, and the commission listened to them. They cared about the names of the boundaries; for example, Montcalm, although in terms of the com-

mission's own research, it had a legitimacy in the actual use of that name by the city of Winnipeg.

It actually, I think, to most people in that area tended to mean the Montcalm, a place well known to many students, possibly well known to many members of this House, affectionately known at University College as the Monty and well known, I think, over quite a long period of time. It was not a political community; it was not a mental community; it was not a place to which people felt they had or could achieve some kind of allegiance. Similarly, I think, the loss of the name St. James, one of the historic parishes of Red River, the Parish of St. James, an English-speaking mixed-blood parish, goes back, of course, to the 1830s and 1840s, and people did not want to lose that name from the electoral, political community map of Manitoba.

So names are important, indeed, as any commissioner will find, and the actual drawing of the boundaries are important. I can agree it is a very difficult thing for any commission to accomplish this, and I am sure that the members of the commission and their staff learned a great deal about Manitoba and Manitobans as they did this. It is good process. It is an arm's-length process. It is one in which people have confidence, and it is a neutral process. But it can be improved, and I think what we learned from this particular round of changes is that there are a number of areas where members of this Legislature would look to improving the whole process.

I have heard, I have listened or read a number of the comments made by my colleagues on this side of the House, and it seems to me, Madam Speaker, that the possibilities for change, possibilities for improvement, come in a number of areas. Firstly, I think people have pointed to the membership of the commission. The three-member commission—the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Judge, and the president of the University of Manitoba—is one that has served for a number of terms of change now. It may indeed be the time now to look at expanding that to recognize that northern Manitoba, rural Manitoba, would like to have some representation on that commission which makes such a great difference to the political life of the community, as well as, in a sense to the

way in which people see themselves and the way in which they represent themselves.

Secondly, I think we need to ensure that the census actually accurately represents the population of Manitoba. The band lists of the some of the aboriginal communities did not correspond, I understand, to the number of people who contemporarily were living in those communities. Similarly, in the inner city we have voiced many times in this House the difficulties that the limitations of that census have offered us.

I think also the timing of the commission itself, the timing of the hearings, is something which posed problems for some communities both aboriginal and for rural members. There was a very short window there for people to make representations, to actually hold the meetings and discussions which they would need to hold before making a commonly accepted presentation to members of the commission. I think in future both the timing and the extent of that need to be looked at. This is something which can be done over a relatively long period of time. We do have a formal process. It is not something which needs to be rushed. It is something which can afford to take the time to be more flexible on that and certainly to be aware of the importance of the timing of hearings.

I would say, finally, a number of the speeches that have been made in this House have spoken particularly to the issue of aboriginal representation, aboriginal representation on the commission itself and also the importance of holding hearings in aboriginal communities. I think that is particularly important not just in a practical sense but also in a symbolic sense. The history of the aboriginal vote in Manitoba is, I think, well, it is similar to Ontario's, but it is unlike that of Saskatchewan or British Columbia or Alberta.

In the first election in Manitoba in 1871, aboriginal people had the vote. They had the vote in the first federal election, as well. It was subsequently taken from them, and you will find this in the records of the Church Missionary Society. I assume they are also in the records of the federal government. They were asked to

choose after that election, and, of course, what we are dealing with particularly is the Brokenhead Reserve and what is now called Sagkeeng, what was then called Fort Alexander, and at St. Peters, of course, which was the prime one and from where the correspondence emanated.

The St. Peters people did vote in those first elections, but the federal government then argued with them that they could either take treaty or they could vote, and they must choose. Now, these were people who already had the vote and had it taken from them. We might find similar ones actually in the federal elections of the 1880s on the Iroquois Reserve, where Sir John A. Macdonald did some extensions of the franchise in the 1880s to the Iroquois. Subsequently, I think, some of that was removed.

More generally speaking, the aboriginal vote is one which, of course, has come very late. Not only was it taken away in Manitoba, but then it was also not reinstated until the middle of this century. It was John Diefenbaker, the federal Conservative Prime Minister, who first gave the vote to aboriginal people at the federal level. It was, of course, Tommy Douglas, in Saskatchewan, who gave the first vote—and before Diefenbaker—at the provincial level. I think it was before your time, Jim. [interjection] The member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) invites me to tell him when his time was, and I am sure, Madam Speaker, it is coming. I am sure it is, and we will wait for it with bated breath, great anticipation.

However, Madam Speaker, the vote to aboriginal women, of course, came later, and in some provinces, Quebec and Newfoundland, was very late, much later than Manitoba's. So the enfranchisement of aboriginal people has come so late and, in some cases, so grudgingly to aboriginal people that I think anything which deals with electoral boundaries and with voting there is an important symbolism for any government to hold hearings in aboriginal communities and to report those hearings and to listen well to the presentations of aboriginal communities, to their mental maps of where they see themselves, of the kind of communities to which they are bound by ties of family, of

language, kinship, as well as ties of communication. As we all know, and earlier members have spoken very extensively on the difficulties of travelling in rural and northern Manitoba and argued that there should be different criteria used both in the North and in rural Manitoba for the establishment of those sorts of constituencies.

With that, Madam Speaker, with thanks for the work of the commission and also a sense that there are some proposals that people have made in the House over the past days of debate that are worthy of consideration and ones that, I think, we will be looking at in the future. Thank you for this opportunity.

* (1550)

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of this legislation, which continues a long tradition of Manitoba to have depoliticized the process of setting boundaries. Having stated that, of course, I will support the legislation. That does not mean that I believe the process was without problems. I want to echo the words of many previous speakers who pointed out that the role of rural and, in particular, northern MLAs is an extremely arduous role.

Frankly, the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) is not just a person of great integrity and great ability as an MLA, he is a person of great courage. To travel continuously among the many communities he represents under very adverse weather conditions throughout Manitoba's seasons, it is not just an act of representing his constituencies, it is also often an act of courage because, as is common with people who fly in the North, often the conditions are less than favourable. So I believe that it is frankly wrong of the commission not to avail themselves of the opportunity of the legislation which would have allowed for small and northern seats.

While I commend the commission, in particular the president of the University of Manitoba, who I believe was genuinely moved by what she heard in Thompson—I commend them for making some adjustments between the preliminary map and the final map—nevertheless, I believe that the commission did not go nearly

far enough in recognizing the unique difficulties of representing northern Manitoba.

I also want to speak about the process of dealing with the City of Winnipeg. It has long been my view that the City of Winnipeg is extremely backward when it comes to dealing with jurisdictional boundaries. We have witnessed, since the Unicity legislation of 1971, frequent and quite massive changes in municipal wards from an original 50 wards down to the current 15. It has meant that not only are the wards extremely large, but the numbers of people represented are not from the same components of the wards. In other words, the boundaries have not just been the amalgamation of three smaller wards but have cut across existing boundaries.

When you layer on top of that the recreation districts which see, for example, things like the Victoria Community Club in my area twinned with Lindenwoods with whom it has absolutely nothing in common—Lindenwoods and Victoria being part of not the Fort Garry area but the Charleswood area, from the point of view of recreation—Lindenwoods having schools that feed Charleswood, the Assiniboine South School Division, whereas Victoria kids go to Fort Garry School Division. You layer, on top of that, the federal and provincial boundaries, you have a situation where there is absolutely no continuity for citizens with their elected representation.

So I have long been of the view that there ought to be some hard work done to align school divisions, recreation divisions, urban municipality wards, provincial electoral divisions, and, of course, if it were possible it would be nice if there were some fit with the federal divisions, although that is probably impossible, but at least the first four are under the legislative control of this Assembly. I believe it would be a service to all of our citizens if we could do the hard work to allow there to be both stable and relatively co-terminus boundaries for all officials and for the most important services that affect our citizens' lives.

The second point about the city of Winnipeg is that I believe the older areas of the city, which are the areas that suffer some of the largest social problems and economic problems but also

are the areas that are historically quite stable in population, should be the starting place for boundaries redistribution, not the final piece of the pie that gets cut up every time boundaries are redistributed every 10 years. I believe it was wrong to start with the suburbs and work into the core, that the principle ought to be that the older areas that are stable should have long-term representation that represents that community historically over time, much like in fact happens for the most part in rural communities who for the most part have some stability of their representation because their population has not shifted a lot.

In the city of Winnipeg, the older parts of the city of Winnipeg have been cut up into, I think, unacceptably small pieces and new constituency boundaries which makes it very difficult to provide effective representation when you cannot build the relationships with the community groups, the recreation groups, the school trustees that would allow you to work on those problems in a long-term way.

I believe that this Legislature should consider giving direction to future boundaries commissions that they ought to begin their deliberations and their population adjustments with the center of the city and work out, rather than with the suburbs and work in.

When I look at the situation in Crescentwood, where I am the current MLA—and Crescentwood, of course, disappears in the new boundaries—I had three different city councillors that I worked with, and yet each of those city councillors represented three times as many people as I did. I had two different school divisions and seven different school trustees. I had two different federal ridings. I had four recreation districts. So it was extremely difficult to develop a kind of identity of that community and what it would represent and how it would work together to solve its problems.

The third issue that I want to raise in the short time available this afternoon is the question of undercounting of lower income areas of big cities. This is a problem that has been well documented not just in Canada, but across North America and indeed, I think, is a problem around the world. Where there are people who are

disproportionately poor or disproportionately mobile, traditional census techniques simply do not work. People get undercounted and, because they get undercounted, they get under-represented.

I just give one case in point. In the Point Douglas area, if you look at the changes in Point Douglas on the basis of population shift as counted by Statistics Canada, it is about a 25 percent shift. If you look on the basis of the voters' list, it is about a 36 percent shift. In other words, the enumeration in Point Douglas is so bad that the enumeration has missed at least 11 percent of the people of Point Douglas, at the very least. We would argue that the census missed a very significant portion of people who live in Point Douglas. If you simply talk to the people who run both censuses and enumeration for election, they will tell you that it is extremely difficult to get enumerators. It is extremely difficult to get census people because it is difficult to gain access to many of the homes. It is difficult to find people at home.

I think anyone who has canvassed or campaigned in the inner city will tell you that it is very common for the electoral list to be less than 35 percent accurate. I can recall canvassing in apartment buildings in the inner city in the last federal election where there were no more than one-third of the names on the voters' list correct. Two-thirds of the names were incorrect on the federal voters' list. So the undercounting, under-enumeration, undercensusing in the inner city means that it too is not properly represented in this House because, on a straight representation-by-population process, any area that is under-censused will be underrepresented. I believe that that is indeed the case.

I am also very concerned that we are moving in the direction of a permanent voters' list without a process to make sure that that voters' list does grow with time. The current federal list that was used in the city election of this past fall is so hopeless when it comes to the inner city that it is almost useless for canvassing purposes. It is simply drastically, drastically out of date and it undercounts. I went to a number of apartment buildings in the inner city where half of the suites were not on the list, let alone the people in them. So you would have a list that a

24-suite apartment building only had nine or 10 suites, let alone the fact that in those nine or 10 that were on the list, probably half the people were no longer there.

* (1600)

What that means is that democracy gets weaker and weaker as those who have the most to lose feel themselves having the least voice because they are not there. They are not counted. Their votes do not count as much. Their boundaries change every time there is a change. They feel themselves to be pawns of the system. That breeds the kind of long-term contempt that was evident in the last American elections, for example, where fewer than 35 percent of eligible voters turned out in most of the big urban areas and, given the close result in the popular votes for the American presidency, less than 20 percent of the American people voted for the current president of the United States of America.

If we go the direction of permanent voters' lists and give up on the process of trying to fairly count our inner cities and fairly bring people onto the voters' list, we are simply moving down the trail of more and more alienation from a process which is the only thing that stands between us and totalitarianism as a society.

So I support the independent boundaries process. I think this process had much to be desired that was not accomplished. It was a shame, in my view, that the Boundaries Commission did not avail itself of the opportunity to travel to some northern communities other than Thompson.

Madam Speaker, with these remarks, I am pleased to support the legislation.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. C. Evans), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, is there leave of the House to waive private members' hour?

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

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, is it the will of the House to have recess for a few minutes?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to have a two-minute recess? [agreed]

The House recessed at 4:03 p.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 4:09 p.m.

Motions of Condolence

Neil Gaudry

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. McCrae),

THAT this House convey to the family of the late Neil Gaudry, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty and a useful life of active community and public service and that Madam Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

Motion presented.

* (1610)

Mr. Filmon: In sharing my thoughts and reflections about our late colleague, Neil Gaudry, I will say that, as I have on other occasions, the most difficult part of a motion of condolence for someone with whom we have personally served is the personal reflections and the sense of loss that we all share in remembering the individual.

I want to begin by saying it was my great honour to have served as honorary pallbearer at Neil's funeral. It was a wonderful celebration of his life, and there were a tremendous number of colleagues from this Chamber who shared in that service. It was beautiful to see the great

reverence with which he was remembered and the great joy that people had in celebrating his life and his contributions.

Neil, of course, passed away earlier this year at the age of 61. I will attempt to list many of his interests and achievements in 61 years of tremendous dedication and devotion to family, friends, and community. I will probably miss some and I am sure that others of his colleagues will be happy to join in and fill in many of the gaps.

Aside from his service in this Chamber from April 26, 1988, until this February, Neil, of course, had many other achievements in his career. He was a businessman, principally known as secretary-treasurer with Malcolm Construction Ltd. for a period of 25 years. He was, of course, very active in the community, very proud of his roots in the Interlake, but also of his time in St. Boniface and certainly became synonymous with so many different activities in St. Boniface.

He was a member of the Board of Directors of Notre Dame Recreational Centre for 12 years, nine as treasurer. He was a member of the St. Boniface Council of the Order of the Knights of Columbus, serving as Grand Knight from 1980 to 1982, and subsequently became the district deputy for a four-year term. He was founding president of Accueil Colombien, a seniors complex in St. Boniface where I believe his mother lived, and he was a very popular regular visitor on almost a daily basis over a long period of time. He was chair of Langevin Residence, a multipurpose community residence for handicapped people. He was a member of the Order of the Voyageurs and together, of course, with his wife, Léona, his beloved wife, Léona, they served as the official voyageurs in 1984 and 1985. My first recollection of Neil was in that role.

He was, of course, very fond of his French-Canadian heritage and its culture and involved for several years with l'Ensemble folklorique de la Rivière Rouge and, of course, in 1983 mayor of the pavillon Canadien-Français at Folklorama. He was very involved in education, believing that to be a fundamental value that was important to be passed along to generations and

served on the Provencher School parents committee and the Collège Louis Riel parents committee. He also, of course, was a life member of the St. Boniface Historical Society and for 10 years a member of the Board of Directors of St. Boniface Museum and served for many of those years as chairman. Neil brought in Mr. Maurice Prince, the executive director, to see me on a number of occasions on issues to do with the museum.

He was proud, of course, of his roots in Saint-Laurent and was a member of the Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph, and he spared no effort, of course, being involved in the effort to clear Louis Riel's name so that he could one day be recognized truly as a Father of Confederation. Neil served for several years on the Board of Directors of Foyer Valade in the Taché Centre. He was, of course, involved with Club La Verendrye and club des hommes d'affaires, as well as Chambers of Commerce in both St. Boniface and Winnipeg.

Neil also from his time here in this House became an active member of l'Assemblée internationale des parlementaires de la langue française, and he served in a number of capacities such as the Western Canada vice-president. He was a Canadian parliamentary observer of the presidential election in Togo, Africa, and a Canadian parliamentary delegate at the annual conference in Bucharest, Romania, in November of 1995. More recently, Canadian parliamentary observer to the general election where he joined with President Jimmy Carter in Caracas, Venezuela.

I know that these are the official responsibilities of Neil Gaudry, the organizations to which he belonged, the many, many levels of achievement that he assumed, the responsibilities, the positions and all of those, but, of course, it does not go anywhere close to being able to describe the warmth of the human being that Neil Gaudry was. I know that Janice and I would meet Neil and Léona at many, many public events, many occasions in which we would just spontaneously be at the same gathering, and it was always a matter of seeing friends. It was never a partisan exchange; in fact, I do not recall ever having a partisan exchange with Neil Gaudry despite the fact that

we are in a very partisan environment and we sat on opposite sides of the House. I remember the times in this House when he brought forward issues, and I always respected his position as somebody who was representing his community, not only the community that he represented in this Legislature, St. Boniface, but the Franco-Manitoban wider community that he chose to speak for very eloquently and very effectively in this House.

I know that on issues such as the French language services policy of this government that our main objective in addition to good policy, in addition to meeting the tests that we put out for public policy, was to ensure that Neil was onside and happy with it. He rarely, although he raised some of these matters in Question Period, did so on an argumentative or accusatory basis. He always did so on a basis of trying to find a better solution. When Neil came to this House with those matters, I know that my colleagues and I always said, will Neil agree with this, will Neil approve of this, before we put forward the solution to the problem.

I remember that, when we were in the stages of developing our response to the Supreme Court decision on Francophone governance of our schools in the province that ultimately led to the creation of the DSFM, Neil was just as involved in it as though he were a member of the government caucus in offering his advice and assistance, in attending meetings in attempting to ensure that there was a groundswell of support for the consensus position that was being developed. I know he worked hand in hand with my colleague the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) in her role as Minister of Education and Training, and we always felt that Neil was ultimately the true test of whether or not something was appropriate in terms of services to the Francophone community. He could always be relied upon to give you a straight, objective, nonpartisan analysis of the situation.

* (1620)

So we worked, I can say this, together on issues, and I always felt that Neil's bottom line was our bottom line, and that we did all of these things in an effort to try to ensure that we were making better public policy.

I know that Neil went through some difficult times in recent years here in this Chamber. We shared confidences, worked together to try and help him to resolve his issues as a member of the Liberal caucus here in this Chamber. He came to see me to ask about certain things to do with office space, accommodation and other things, and I always knew that I could trust him absolutely and implicitly. I believe that he thought the same about me, that we would talk over the issues, that they would be done in confidence, and I would do whatever I could to accommodate him and his interests and his needs. I know that members from time to time had some political sport, probably myself included, with the various difficulties that the Liberal caucus went through, but I felt that Neil always seemed to be able to rise above and retain his own integrity no matter what was happening around him. I was reminded of the old Rudyard Kipling saying: If you can keep your head, when all about you are losing theirs, you will be a man, my son.

Neil was certainly a man of tremendous stature and capability, and he could always keep his head no matter what was going on and always see things in a very, very balanced fashion, coming at it from a tremendous position of integrity and honesty and great, great depth of character. So I will just say that, as everyone else, I am sure, will, we mourn his loss. Janice and I certainly mourn the loss of his friendship, and we offer to all of his family, particularly to Léona, to Roger, René and Nicole, our heartfelt sympathy and our constant gratitude for the life that Neil dedicated to the people of St. Boniface, to his friends and community, and to the people of Manitoba. We are forever grateful for the contributions that he made, and we will remember him very, very fondly and with great appreciation for all those things that he did for the people of Manitoba, and, as well, of course, for the friendship that we will cherish forever.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): It is with a great deal of sadness that one assumes the responsibility to respond today in condolence to speak to the proud life of Neil Gaudry, an MLA in this Chamber and a person who many of

us worked with for well over 10 years in this Chamber day after day in our responsibilities. There are a number of emotions that one feels like expressing at a time like this and obviously the great loss we all feel across all party lines with Neil's death at 61 years of age, a death way too young for a person with so much vitality.

I want to send our condolences to Léona, Roger, René and Nicole and express some of my emotions today to this Chamber and to the people and to the family. We all knew Neil in different ways through our different experiences—our personal experiences with Neil, our political experiences, our experiences in the community, and obviously his family would know him through their family connections.

On a personal note—and I want to start with some personal comments—I always felt Neil was a very, very kind and generous person, a very dignified person, humorous and proud at the same time. He was always a person you could talk to and would meet in the hallway and would exchange a little bit of humor and a lot of dignity and a lot of warmth. It was, as the Premier has said, always a nonpartisan greeting with a little partisan joke, if you will, but a person who could laugh at others and himself equally, which is I think an important characteristic for anybody who is going to survive in this Chamber, but an individual with a great heart as well as a good mind.

I always knew he was a compassionate person, a generous person. He loved the activity of life. I mean, you would pick up activities that he would be involved in by being involved with them yourself or you would pick them up the next day. I was at St. Boniface golf course last summer and heard that, of course, he was there the night before at the annual golf tournament and celebration, and he was not the first one to leave the event in the celebrations that followed the golf tournament. I, of course, would experience some of these same lasting memories myself, the Caribou at the Festival du Voyageur, whether it was—well, I will leave it at that, because we all know that that was very much part of the festival—but the great ability to share with Léona and Neil those wonderful events that he was so dedicated to and were so important to his representation of St. Boniface.

On a political level, he was a Liberal. There were no ifs, ands or buts. He was an unequivocal Liberal, proud of it. As the Premier had indicated, he was very concerned about French language services whether it was in education, the community college, the university, the français divisions. He was also very concerned about Metis people and the aboriginal people. He was very, very helpful to those issues that were very important, and Louis Riel has already been commented on by the Premier. He was always at any event celebrating the historic life of Louis Riel and his great contributions to the establishment of Manitoba as a province.

He was not always easy to predict in his votes as a member of the Liberal Party, and maybe members of the Liberal Party themselves can share with us those insights. It was an interesting barometer. I know that there were times he voted with the government. I know last year he voted with the opposition on the budget, but I guess it would be safe to say that we did not know always which way he would vote. It was an interesting strength I think he had in a partisan Chamber, to have that ability to vote in a way that he thought was important to his principles and his policies but not always to be as predictable as perhaps some of us might be from time to time.

He was also a member of the national unity task force of Manitoba and was involved in the unity public hearings, I know, in St. Boniface in the past. I think that we have gone through some very interesting and unique times in this Chamber on national unity issues—the Meech Lake proposal and its weaknesses that we tried to improve but also the concerns that people had from all political parties trying to deal with that issue, and the great emotion that took place in this Chamber in June of 1990. The Charlottetown Accord and its impact on minority language rights one way or the other were also very important issues, because we knew that Neil was a proud Canadian and very concerned about keeping this country together, and that came through in all his speeches and his comments.

* (1630)

I think all of us as proud Canadians were proud to work with him on our national unity issues: how we best keep Quebec as part of our national family and at the same time respect minority language rights here in Manitoba, French language rights in Manitoba, and English minority rights in Quebec; and how those mirrors of rights reflect themselves in the changing nature of constitutional innovation and other changes, and at the same time respect aboriginal people and First Nations people which, of course, as the critic in his party for those areas, he was also very concerned about.

So, on a political basis, he had a lot to contribute and contributed a lot to this Chamber. As the Premier indicated, oftentimes we knew he was working in a way to try to find solutions in this Chamber—lots of MLAs do that—and Neil did it very, very well on behalf of the people of St. Boniface. The people of St. Boniface had a very good representative in Neil Gaudry in this Chamber. He was a good MLA in the full sense of the word, of representing the people and their hopes and desires and their aspirations and also the issues to their language, culture and law. I think that is the highest testimony any of us can pay to a fellow MLA. He was an excellent MLA for the people of St. Boniface.

In his community, Neil was larger than life as a representative of his community, St. Boniface. In a lot of ways it is hard to follow the previous MLA for St. Boniface, Larry Desjardins, in that role, because it is a true community. You are not just representing a constituency; you are representing a community of St. Boniface with all the challenges that that represents to this Chamber. Neil fulfilled that job as a community representative because of his strong roots in the community. I did not always understand this. In '88 when I heard he was running—and I think there was some potential nomination battle or other event—and I said: Who is Neil Gaudry? I had not met him in the early '80s as the Premier had, and he said: Oh, he is a very, very popular person in St. Boniface, very deep roots in every major organization; he has represented the people in these organizations for years. He will do very well in the election of '88. He did, of course, and subsequent to that in his job as representing those people.

The Festival du Voyageur I have mentioned, and the historic association of St. Boniface. The Premier has mentioned the St. Boniface Museum, the Metis organizations, Rivière Rouge, the Knights of Columbus, a member of the Notre Dame Recreational Centre, Langevin Residence centre for handicapped people, parents council at College Louis-Riel and Provencher school, the board of directors at the Taché nursing home, and, of course, other responsibilities in the seniors complex that the Premier has indicated.

We could go on and on and on with his responsibilities and his accomplishments in his community on behalf of his community, many accolades, many tributes, many areas of responsibility that he held. That made him truly a strong representative of the people he represented in this Chamber. That was reflected in his speeches or in his comments to you, which were more frequent, I would say, than his comments when he met you or when he saw you in the Chamber. He would be talking about his feelings from his community and what that meant. He was a person, a rare jewel, I think, in this Chamber, a person of compassion, of generosity.

I will miss Neil Gaudry. He has many friends in this Chamber and many friends in the community. On behalf of our caucus, I want to offer our condolences to Léona, to Roger, René and Nicole. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to put a few words on the record on this very important motion of condolences and extend, on behalf of the party, our condolences to Léona and the family.

Madam Speaker, when I think of Neil and the whole of St. Boniface, you know, there is the Festival du Voyageur, which many Manitobans get to see as it gets publicized through media events and so forth, in which you get a bit of a touch of what St. Boniface is all about. Through the years as I have got to know Neil, I have always thought that he embodies that spirit of the festival. Just a wonderful, joyful individual to be around all the time.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) made reference to some difficult times, and there has been some very difficult times in the Liberal Party over the past 18 months. Prior to those difficult times, there was a great sense of a working relationship, of a positive attitude that was developed. Back in 1988, when Neil and I both were first elected, we were all somewhat new, obviously, and we kind of clustered in groups of individuals. Neil and I were privileged to the extent that we continued to get re-elected, both in '90 and in '95, and our relationship was able to grow.

Unfortunately, through many divisions, it took a bit of a setback, Madam Speaker, because of some of the things that were happening. As things started to turn around, I reflected to the last caucus meeting, the Wednesday prior to his untimely passing. It was a wonderful meeting in which, after the caucus discussion, I had engaged in a couple of conversations and the individual that I got to know prior to the division was the individual that I was starting again to see, an individual who was quite jolly and contributing and smiling.

We were speculating, in a very positive way, whether or not he was going to be running in the next provincial election. This was something in which I have seen Neil jostle with—whether it is Sharon Carstairs or Paul Edwards—as he was always wanting to make a decision which he felt was important for him, his family and his constituents.

Towards the end of the meeting, both I and, in particular, our Leader, Jon Gerrard, were of the opinion that it looks like Neil would indeed be running in the next provincial election. For the Liberal Party, we really believed that we needed Neil, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the official opposition made reference to not knowing Neil prior to '88. I did not know Neil either prior to '88. In fact, back in '88, I thought we had this all-star candidate that was being proposed. That was Guy Savoie at the time, and everyone anticipated that Guy was going to win the nomination. Then out from what appeared to be nowhere came Neil Gaudry, and nowhere, Madam Speaker, definitely excluded the community of St. Boniface because what became very evident was that Neil had the

support through the years, no doubt by the communications and the connections, that deep-rooted connections that both the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the leader of the official opposition made reference to, that this individual was able to come virtually from nowhere, from outside of that St. Boniface, and take that nomination.

There was a great deal of excitement back in '88. When Neil had gone through and beaten out that particular opponent, there was no doubt in terms of the winnability of St. Boniface. Individuals within the party were saying, you know, this is an individual that has the ability to bring back this riding of St. Boniface to the Liberal Party because of his sense of commitment to that particular community. I heard a lot about it back then, and as time allowed for me to gain more of an insight of who Neil was, I understand why Neil was so successful not only in the nomination back in '88 but winning.

* (1640)

I think if we reflect on the Liberal Party and its performances in previous elections, as the Liberal Party itself started to dwindle in the minds of Manitobans in certain areas, in certain pockets, that did not occur. Neil was very successful at getting re-elected, as I pointed out, both in 1990 and again in 1995. I think that speaks volumes in terms of if you look into the real reasons why this individual was so successful I believe is because he had his priorities right.

His first priority was, in fact, his wife, Léona. I must say, my wife Cathy felt very special when Léona embraced her at the service. The Gaudry family has been very warm and accepting of both me and my wife, and even during the worst of times, Madam Speaker, Léona was still smiling and still being good to me and Cathy.

I had, even during those worst of times, discussions with Neil, and both of us knew that things would work out. It will take some time, but it would work out. I believe that it is Neil's family that was in essence what gave him his strength first and foremost and kept him very strong both inside and outside of this particular building. There is no doubt whatsoever in my

mind that his reliance on Léona was absolutely critical. He would never have been the person that he was without Léona. That is in part the message that I received from Neil in the discussions that we have had, and we had talked about families in the past. He made a special effort of being super kind to my children, a 10-year-old and a seven-year old. I remember listening on the radio shortly after his passing and someone made reference to Santa Claus. I cannot remember the context, but I can recall my little girl walking into the office and swearing that she saw Santa Claus.

Next to being that wonderful family-oriented individual I believe is his constituency. I believe that Neil put his constituency ahead of the Liberal Party. It was more important for Neil to see a strong, vibrant Francophone community, not only within the community of St. Boniface but outside of St. Boniface.

I sincerely believe that Neil's actions when it came to debates within this Chamber or debates from within the caucus that he always took into consideration things such as what his constituents would want to see him take into consideration along with what the party's, in particular the Leader of the party's comments were in regard to an issue.

Neil was not someone who spoke at great length within the caucus, but when he did speak he did have the attention of everyone. When I say everyone I am referring to the days when we were a caucus of 20 or 21 in which there were a lot more good times because, when you are in a larger caucus, you seem to be able to have better quality friendships develop. The Premier made mention of Neil as someone who would often confer with the government in trying to assist the government in making good policy.

Madam Speaker, Neil, to the very best of my knowledge, was never one for grandstanding. He never fought saying, I have to ask a question, unless he really believed that the question had to be asked. Where Neil was most effective was in his ability to sit down with individuals one on one or one on two and have conversations from his heart as to what he believes is right. He was able to take that and have that sort of a discussion from within the caucus and then into

the Chamber, and that is why I believe that he won the respect of members of all sides of this Chamber, because no one questioned his approach at trying to contribute in a very positive way to his community of St. Boniface and the community as a whole.

It is difficult for me, because I wish I knew what I could say in order to really give full justice to an individual that has contributed so much to our province. Suffice to say he will be dearly missed. He was an individual who did so many things for his family, for his constituency, for his party and for, I believe, all members of this Chamber.

With these few words, Madam Speaker, I again express the most sincere condolences to Léona, Roger, René and Nicole, other members of the family and friends, on my family's behalf and on behalf of the Liberal Party and Jon Gerrard. Thank you.

* (1650)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I, first of all, most importantly want to wish my condolences to the family and many friends of Neil Gaudry. I cannot imagine what a hole, what a gap that has left in their lives these last few months, someone taken far too young in age, someone who has already been mentioned is larger than life.

I just wanted to add my own personal reflections because much has been said of Neil's volunteer experience, the years he spent as an MLA. I had a couple of opportunities to get to know the other part of Neil as well, his Thompson connection, for example. I very early on learned of his many visits to Thompson. Malcolm Construction had an office in Thompson for many years and coming from the North where we are somewhat few in numbers, we value people who know the experience of northern Manitoba. It was very enjoyable talking; in fact, most of our conversations would usually be with him asking me how Thompson was doing and what was happening in Thompson and even referencing some of the many people he had worked with over the years.

But there is one sort of incident, one incident in particular that I think summed up

Neil for me. I am of the generation before French immersion in Thompson. I had two kids in French immersion and as my kids went through French immersion and brought their homework home and I sort of remembered some of my high school French, I felt emboldened one time to go to a reception that was held here for the Francophone parliamentary association. I wondered first whether I should even enter the door because my French was pretty rudimentary, but I actually felt comfortable because I went with Neil. In fact, I talked to Neil about it before and he said do not worry about it. He said if you are worried about your accent, you should hear some of the people from the States. You will do okay, and he said, do not worry, you will be at home.

So I went there and I remember starting off quite well. I was actually doing fairly well. I got to about the second sentence, the third sentence and I got to—somebody asked me where my constituency was and I was explaining I had a lot of aboriginal people in my constituency. I froze. I could not remember the word. So Neil said *autochtone*, you know, *aboriginal*. It went on like that for the rest of the five minutes, so I did learn the art of listening more than talking. But it was very much the way Neil was. When you met Neil privately or you met him at a reception, those partisan lines just did not exist. I still enjoyed that afterwards. He did encourage me to continue with my speaking of French, and I am working on it. I still fondly remember that. It was very much symbolic of Neil.

I just wanted to—by the way, in terms of legacies—mention that it is ironic this week that we have the rules changes that will bring about the election of a Speaker in this House. I often thought that one of the first candidates for Speaker would have been Neil. I honestly believe he would have had significant amount of support in the House, and certainly in that environment removed of some of the partisan differences we end up with as who is the first or the second or the third party, Neil would certainly do well.

I know, myself, that the best compliment you could ever make to someone is that they were a good constituency MLA. I think that is what Neil will be remembered for and that to my mind is the most important thing. I will suspect,

knowing some of the people I know in St. Boniface, that many years from now people will still remember Neil fondly as a good MLA. For many years in people's hearts, when you talk about the MLA for St. Boniface, certainly Neil Gaudry will be the first person who will come to their minds. He will live on in people's hearts, people's memories.

Mr. James Downey (Arthur-Virden): Madam Speaker, I would like to join with my colleagues and all those members who have spoken and will speak in this condolence motion. As well, I would like to include my wife, Linda, and son, Ryan, and all the constituents of Arthur-Virden on the loss of a good member and a friend. I am pleased to be able to participate in the extension of this condolence motion to Léona and family.

A proud Manitoban, a proud Canadian, proud of his heritage and I believe elected for life, as it related to the constituency which he came from, certainly loyal to his party, strong in his beliefs and a vision as to how he wanted to see life unfold for the people he represented.

As minister I had the opportunity on many occasions to work with Neil Gaudry on projects that he had, initiatives that he felt were extremely important, and to the best of my knowledge, accomplished most of them, and it was not in a partisan way but in a way which was for the betterment of his area and for the province in total.

His sense of humour, approach to life, was of ease and certainly objectivity. To touch on a couple of his humorous approaches to me, always saying, when there was a federal cabinet minister particularly of his political persuasion in town, that I was always wanting to get a picture with him so that it would enhance my political career. I was of the opposite, trying to tell him that it was they who were trying to enhance their political careers by being part of that. That was a standing joke which we had. Neil always wanted to know, after hard work at the Legislature, whether or not we would be able to open the cabinet in my office after work and sometimes we did and sometimes we did not.

I think, to conclude, our province, our country and our lives have been enriched by

having Neil Gaudry as a friend, certainly as a spouse and a father, a citizen and a community representative. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, allow me to associate myself and the constituency of Lakeside with the condolence motion before the House. I do not know Neil Gaudry from his urban setting in St. Boniface, but it has been my privilege to have called on the home of his parents; his two brothers, Roland and Greg, active cattle ranchers, some 10 miles northwest of my farm in the south Interlake, a family noted for its contribution.

I simply want to take this occasion, I believe, with some justifiable pride, speaking on behalf of the modest community of St. Laurent which has brought forward some very notable people to public life, including members to this Chamber. Neil Gaudry and I shared neighbouring office space on the main floor of this building. Neil Gaudry would often admonish me to make sure that I looked after his brothers and all matters that they were concerned with, whether they were cattle issues or drainage issues or the like. I had a very good relationship with Mr. Gaudry who very often represented the Liberal Party at functions in the constituency of Lakeside, and he was always a guest, always a hospitable and generous person to be associated with.

To his family and to his extended family in St. Laurent, allow me to add my personal and that of Lakeside's concerns and acknowledgments to this condolence motion.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Je voudrais aussi rendre mes hommages au député de Saint-Boniface qui est décédé si soudainement en février. Neil Gaudry portait la ceinture fléchée aux occasions cérémoniales. Il était très fier de la nation métisse, mais certainement comme député de Saint-Boniface, il avait un lien important et historique avec d'autres générations de Manitobains. Comme les funérailles à la cathédrale ont démontré, le député de Saint-Boniface occupe une place dans sa communauté et dans la société franco-manitobaine entière qui est très différente de la situation de la plupart des autres députés.

Inévitablement, il est la voix d'une communauté qui est plus grande que la circonscription elle-même. Il parlait une langue qui n'a pas toujours reçu le respect de tous les Manitobains. M. Gaudry n'était pas le seul député ici ayant le français comme langue maternelle, mais je crois qu'il savait qu'il était le premier responsable pour sa survivance comme une langue quotidienne dans la vie législative du Manitoba.

J'ai travaillé avec Neil Gaudry au comité chargé de choisir les stagiaires législatifs. J'ai bien connu son énergie comme membre d'un parti sans beaucoup de députés mais qui portait les mêmes responsabilités ici que nous autres. J'ai vu moi-même et j'ai admiré son jugement indépendant et son sens de l'importance de l'égalité.

De la part des gens de Wolseley et des Néo-démocrates ici, Madame la présidente, je voudrais offrir mes sentiments de sympathie premièrement et surtout à la famille, mais aussi aux gens de Saint-Boniface et à ses collègues du Parti libéral dans cette Législature.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, I would also like to pay homage to the member for St. Boniface who died so suddenly in February. Neil Gaudry wore the ceinture fléchée on ceremonial occasions. He was very proud of the Métis nation, but certainly as the member for St. Boniface he had a significant historical link with other generations of Manitobans. As the funeral service at the cathedral made evident, the member for St. Boniface occupies a place in his community and in all of Franco-Manitoban society that is quite different from the situation of most other members.

Inevitably, he is the voice of a community that is greater than the constituency itself. He spoke a language that did not always receive the respect of all Manitobans. Mr. Gaudry was not the only member here having French as his mother tongue, but I believe that he knew that he was the person primarily responsible for its survival as a daily language in the legislative life of Manitoba.

I worked with Neil Gaudry on the committee responsible for choosing legislative interns, and I was well acquainted with his energy as a member of a party with few members, but who had the same responsibilities as we have. I witnessed and admired his independent judgment and his sense of the importance of equality.

On behalf of the people of Wolseley and the New Democrats here, I would like to offer my sympathies, first and foremost to his family but also to the people of St. Boniface and to his Liberal Party colleagues here in the Legislature.

* (1700)

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I too would like to add my condolences to Léona and the family of Neil Gaudry. I know from having gone to a family funeral, I cannot remember if it was Neil's mother or father, and seeing how close that family is and seeing their strong belief in God and their religion, that I know they are reinforced by that faith, and I know they will be strong during these difficult times.

But it is ironic, today I was at another funeral. I was at a funeral of a retired police officer who passed away. His son was my cruiser car partner. That man, unlike Neil, was not strong in his religion, so it was a very secular service. What they did is instead they asked people to come forward and tell stories. Well, for over an hour I was laughing harder than I laughed before. I am sure there are many stories that could be said about Neil, but this is being recorded in Hansard, and I think we will use discretion, because that is how I remember Neil. We had our difficult times, and we all know about those, but not everyone knows about the wonderful times that I had with Neil.

You know, when I first got elected in 1993, I was in a caucus of seven people and I did not know Neil at all. After a few caucus meetings and a few Question Periods, many people here know I hated asking questions, but it was the duty. I kept saying, well, how come Neil does not have to ask questions? Neil has his way of doing things, I was told. Leave Neil alone. So, okay, that is fine. So I did my duty and I pointed the fingers at the ministers and I asked the

questions like I was told. But after the '95 election there were only three of us, myself Kevin and Neil, and we became very close.

That is when Neil sort of took me under his wing and he explained some things to me. He says, if you want to help a constituent, learn the minister's staff, learn to relate to the minister, and deal on a personal level as one human being to another, and you will help your constituents more than standing up and shouting in Question Period. So Neil was my mentor. I learned a lot about how to serve your constituents from Neil Gaudry.

When there were only three of us—especially immediately after the election—I used to love to shock Neil. I would do things like come here in the middle of the night, and not everyone knew. For some reason, my former office key—for I think it was Room 228—happened to be a master key. So I had the joy of being able to go into Paul Edwards's former office and our old caucus office and come here in the middle of the night and be moving everything into Room 151. Eventually Todd, the building manager, would get angry at me because next morning he would find scratches on the floor where I had been moving furniture down the hallway. Neil would come in, and he would just laugh and shake his head.

I got to relate very well to Neil, because Neil was—I know it is probably not politically correct to say in these times—but he was a man's man. A lot of times at the end of a session and that, Neil would invite me down to his office, and he would serve me some cold tea. At least I think it was cold tea; it was that colour. You know, he would pour it in the glass. The glass would be a very short way from the top, and he said, would you like some coke in that? There was no room.

Neil would sit back in his big blue high-back chair, and I would think of the most outlandish things to say, the most shocking thing, the most politically incorrect things to say. Neil would just roar laughing, and he would say you are crazy. Tears would be rolling down his eyes, and that is the memory that I will have of Neil Gaudry. I will remember those good times.

I think it was in '95, the summer of '95, that Kevin and I decided we were going to take up golfing. Well, of course, Neil had his annual fundraising golf tournament which I would take part in. But, for that summer, every week we would go to a different golf course. Lo and behold, we even got Neil to go out to the north end golf courses. We went out to Kildonan Park Golf Course. We went out to Player's Course and that. The other part I liked about Neil is that I could beat him in golf, and that was a lot of fun.

As I have said in my throne speech and that, it was sad that we had some bad times, but even there Neil was my mentor in that now I realize that intemperate actions and intemperate words we have to live with. I think we were on the way to mending things, but some day, hopefully, when my life is over, maybe I will have a chance to be with Neil, and we will be able to resolve our differences. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I rise today to join with colleagues on all sides of the House to pay tribute to a fine gentleman and a very decent human being, Neil Gaudry. My most fond memories of Neil are those mornings when we came in the back door of the building together—both Neil and I parked at the back door—and there was never a time that we did not meet and exchange very pleasant greetings. Neil always had a smile on his face and always a kind word to say.

I have to say, too, to my colleagues, and as I did to Léona as we attended the memorial service for Neil, that I was one of the more fortunate colleagues in the Legislature. I happened on many, many occasions, especially at holiday times when Neil and I would meet on the back steps or in the back hall, have the opportunity to hug and kiss each other and wish each other the best of the season or whatever it might be. So I was one of those more fortunate, I suppose, that got the traditional Francophone kiss on both cheeks from Neil Gaudry on many, many occasions. He was a person that truly, truly represented his community and his constituents.

As the Minister of Family Services, I had many occasions to work with Neil on individual

specific cases of people he would bring forward in his community that were having issues, whether it be in the welfare system or on the Child and Family Services system. We always tried to work together to ensure that what was in the best interests of his constituents was done. I have to say that we were able to make some positive things happen as a result of that relationship.

I think the one thing that Neil was most proud of, and one of the times when I gained a lot of respect for Neil, was when he introduced a private member's bill last session, Bill 202, and spoke so eloquently about that piece of legislation. It was amendments to The Child and Family Services Act that would allow grandparents the opportunity, in more cases, to access their grandchildren and get visitation rights through contested divorce situations.

Neil brought that private member's bill forward, as we were going through consultations on amendments to The Child and Family Services Act, and Neil and I worked together. Ultimately, the exact issues that he brought forward in his private member's bill were incorporated into our Child and Family Services Act. I think, we have provided the ability to work together, crossing party lines, with Neil recognizing that the best interests of families and children were being served. So I have to give Neil much credit, and indicate to his family that I am very proud of the way he dealt with that issue, the way he brought it forward.

* (1710)

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to read one paragraph that Neil read into the record when he was introducing his private member's bill: "Madam Speaker, it is popular to claim that it takes a village to raise a child. I would like to point out to all the members of this Chamber that grandparents are an important part of that village. They are the elders who can guide and support younger members of our village."

Madam Speaker, that was the kind of person Neil Gaudry was. I have to say that many times when I walk into this Chamber and come down the stairs, I look just over to my right and I miss very much the smiles, the positive salutations

and greetings of one Neil Gaudry. He was truly an asset to this Legislative Assembly, an asset to the community and the constituency that he served.

I know that his family must feel very proud that Neil touched so many lives in such a positive way and he will be remembered so very fondly by all of us for many, many years to come. Thank you.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madame la présidente, Neil était plus qu'un collègue. Il était un ami spécial. Chaque jour quand j'entre dans la Chambre puis je regarde à droite je pense à Neil, puis chaque fois que je me lève pour prendre la parole je pense à Neil parce qu'il y a quelque chose qui manque. Il me disait tout le temps: "Laurendeau, en français." Je vais essayer, mais des fois les mots ne sont pas tous là.

Neil essayait de me montrer les mots nouveaux, puis des fois je disais: "Comment qu'on dit ça? Les Nouveaux Démocratiques?" Il disait: "Non, non. Ça c'est les Néos." Il y avait d'autres mots que je ne vais pas essayer de dire ici.

Mais quand même Neil avait un coeur si grand, il voulait tout pour sa communauté francophone. Il travaillait pour la communauté métisse, puis quand ça venait au Festival, ce sont ces mémoires-là que je vais vous raconter, on était là une fois avec Léona puis Neil—je pense que c'était le mercredi ou le mardi, je ne suis pas certain maintenant—on a pris un couple de Caribous ce soir-là puis un couple d'autres. Après ça, j'ai pris un taxi pour retourner chez moi puis, le jour après, il fallait prendre un taxi pour aller chercher le char.

Neil était là quand j'étais dans le trouble. Même quand je pensais qu'il n'y avait personne là, Neil était là. Il venait me voir quand j'avais des troubles puis on parlait des choses importantes à un individu. Il ma montré que le Seigneur était là quand on en avait besoin, et maintenant le Seigneur a un nouveau pour regarder nous autres quand on travaille, et c'est de Neil qu'il va maintenant avoir des renseignements.

Madame la présidente, la politique de la collaboration: c'est pour ça que Neil va tout le temps rester dans mon coeur. Il pouvait travailler avec tout le monde—quasiment tout le monde. Il y en avait un cas, et on pourrait dire des paroles ou raconter des histoires de ça, mais—ce n'est pas facile de dire les choses qui sont là de Neil. Son sourire est encore là. Chaque fois qu'on entrait dans la Chambre, Madame la présidente, vous entriez avec M. Remnant, puis moi et Neil, on vous faisait le bonjour quand vous entriez. Neil le faisait en français. Moi, je le faisais en anglais. Puis un couple de fois on a échangé nos sièges pour vous confondre.

Madame la présidente, je veux dire merci à Léona, Roger, René, Nicole, la famille Gaudry, de nous avoir donné la chance de connaître Neil, de travailler avec Neil et d'avoir Neil pour un ami. Merci.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, Neil was more than a colleague. He was a special friend. Each day when I enter this House and I look to the right, I think of Neil. Each time that I stand up to speak I think of Neil because there is something missing. He always said to me: "In French, Laurendeau." I am going to try, but sometimes the words are not all there. Neil tried to teach me new words, and sometimes I used to say to him: how do you say this, the nouveaux démocratiques? No, he would say, that is the Néo-démocrates [New Democrats]. There were other words that I will not try to say here.

But Neil had such a big heart. He wanted everything for his Francophone community. He worked for the Metis community and when it came to the festival, it is those memories that I am going to tell you about, once we were with Léona and Neil I think it was a Tuesday or Wednesday, I am not sure now, that we had a couple of Caribous and then a couple more, and then I took a taxi home, and the following day I had to take a taxi to go back and get my car.

Neil was there when I had troubles. Even when I thought there was nobody there, Neil was there. He came to see me when I had difficulties, and we talked over things that are important to an individual. He showed me that

the good Lord was there when you needed Him. Now the good Lord has someone new to watch us as we work, and will be kept informed by Neil.

The politics of co-operation are the reason that Neil will always remain in my heart. He could work with everyone—almost everyone. There was one case—we could get into some stories and words about that—but, it is not easy to say what there is here of Neil. His smile is still there. Every time we entered the Chamber, Madam Speaker, you entered with Mr. Remnant, and Neil and I would greet you. Neil would do it in French; I would do it in English. A couple of times we exchanged seats to confuse you.

I would like to say thank you to Léona, Roger, René, Nicole, the Gaudry family, for having given us the opportunity to know Neil, to work with Neil and to have Neil for a friend. Thank you.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleagues in this Legislature to offer condolences to the family of Neil Gaudry on his recent passing.

I think that sometimes it is felt that we live in a somewhat cynical world, and I also think that Neil Gaudry made performing the function of a politician a noble thing. In that sense, I think all of us in this Legislature, and perhaps all politicians who were Neil's contemporaries, can feel that we are a little better than we might have been had it not been for our opportunity to work with someone like Neil Gaudry. It was probably somebody like Neil who first said that it is amazing what can be accomplished when nobody cares who gets the credit. That is the way Neil handled his work as a constituency representative.

In my various portfolios, I had a number of occasions to work with Neil, to be approached by Neil over this matter or that relating to his constituency and people within that constituency. He certainly knew how to get the job done, as others have pointed out. He did so in a diplomatic way and perhaps it is something we could all learn from that, Madam Speaker, because it truly did get the job done and his

constituents as individuals and as a community are better off for it.

But I think that it would be appropriate to say that Neil Gaudry essentially moved quietly and modestly in the sphere of his life and without pretension did many good acts not for himself but for the cause of good. I cannot think of a better epitaph for somebody of the quality of Neil Gaudry.

Hon. Shirley Render (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I too would like to rise to pay tribute to Neil Gaudry. It was for me a privilege to work with Neil. Although our constituencies were neighbouring, we did not run into each other as much as I would have liked. We did work together with a volunteer group called Save our Seine, and in fact it was Neil, typically it was Neil, who initiated an all-party resolution here in the House regarding the Save our Seine group. As other members have said, that was the way that Neil worked. It was on consensus. It was quietly. It was not I, Neil doing this; it was let us work together for the betterment of the community. He was an excellent constituency person.

My knowledge of Neil came mainly from what I saw here in the Legislature. I was impressed. He did not grandstand; he was always a gentleman. He will be missed. My sympathies to the family. Thank you.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Gladstone): It is with great sadness and regret that I rise in the House to pay condolences to our late friend and colleague Neil Gaudry. It is with a heavy heart that I do this, as I would rather have him here, to hear his voice and feel his presence in this Chamber. However, Neil left such a tremendous legacy that we can all still feel his presence here. As I look above, look at the family the sadness that goes with every moment, my heart goes out to each and every one of the family as I had the personal knowledge of sharing some special times with these wonderful people.

* (1720)

Neil était un député qui a fait le travail de ses électeurs d'une façon efficace mais tranquille. Beaucoup de gens ont dit que Neil

s'intéressait plus à résoudre les affaires de ses électeurs qu'à voir son nom dans les journaux. Il n'a pas cherché la gloire. Je pense que cette idée illustre l'esprit de Neil Gaudry.

Il était ici pour servir la population de Saint-Boniface. Il est devenu bien connu pour faire son travail d'une manière personnelle. Il a visité les ministres lui-même pour discuter les affaires de ses électeurs et électrices. Sa porte était toujours ouverte. Les gens de sa circonscription ont perdu un représentant dévoué. Neil était adoré et respecté dans sa communauté.

Neil Gaudry représentait la circonscription de Saint-Boniface, et les communautés franco-manitobaines et michifs. Il a créé un profil pour ces peuples dans cette Chambre quotidiennement. Il était actif dans le Festival du Voyageur, les Chevaliers de Colomb, était bien fier de ses racines michifs. Grâce à sa présence et son caractère, beaucoup de gens Michif sont devenus plus fiers de leur héritage et de leur culture. Neil a porté sa ceinture fléchée avec fierté, et il a travaillé fort pour promouvoir la culture michif. Grâce aux efforts de Neil et d'autres membres de la communauté michif, on regarde Louis Riel comme un héros.

Neil et son épouse Léona avaient élevé une belle famille, dont il était très fier. Après sa mort, il y avait une photo de Neil avec un de ses beaux enfants quand il était petit. J'avais des larmes dans mes yeux en regardant cette photo, car elle saisit son esprit fin et tendre. Cet esprit, ces caractéristiques étaient les éléments les plus importants de Neil Gaudry.

Neil a laissé un legs avec le travail qu'il a fait, mais on se souvient de Neil aujourd'hui et pour toujours, car il était fin et généreux. Il était fidèle et chaleureux, et la personnification de l'intégrité. Neil était à l'aise avec les autres, et on a tous apprécié son sens d'humour et son affabilité.

Je voudrais partager avec vous les paroles des autres amis de la famille Gaudry qui étaient dans l'hommage de La Liberté. Et je cite : "Neil Gaudry était une personne très humble qui faisait passer le bonheur des autres avant le sien. Son départ est sans aucun doute une grosse perte pour la communauté canadienne française, et

surtout pour le peuple michif. Neil Gaudry était en effet le premier Voyageur officiel michif et il a bien représenté sa nation. Un autre ami a remarqué que, et je cite : "Le départ de Neil Gaudry laisse un énorme trou. Non seulement au sein du parti libéral mais de toute la communauté. Il s'est distingué parmi ses collègues pour ses grandes qualités humaines. Neil avait des amis dans tous les partis.

[Translation]

Neil was a member who did the work of his electors in an efficient but quiet way. Many people said that Neil was more interested in solving the problems of his electors than in seeing his name in the papers. He did not seek after glory. I think that his idea illustrates the spirit of Neil Gaudry. He was here to serve the population of St. Boniface. He became well-known for doing his work in a personal way. He visited ministers himself to talk about the business of his electors. His door was always open. The people of his constituency have lost a devoted representative.

Neil was loved and respected within his community. Neil Gaudry represented the constituency of St. Boniface, and the Franco-Manitoban and Michif communities. He created a profile for these people in this Chamber daily. He was active in the Festival du Voyageur, the Knights of Columbus, and he was very proud of his Metis roots. Thanks to his presence and his character many Michif people became more proud of their heritage and their culture. Neil wore his ceinture fléchée with pride and he worked hard to promote the Michif culture. Thanks to his efforts and other members of the Michif community Louis Riel is now regarded as a hero.

Neil and his wife Léona had raised a fine family of which he was very proud. Following his death there was a photograph of Neil with one of his beautiful children when he was little. I had tears in my eyes looking at this photograph because it caught his fine and tender spirit. That spirit and these characteristics were the most important aspects of Neil Gaudry.

Neil left a legacy with the work that he accomplished, but we remember Neil today and

always because he was kind and generous. He was faithful and warm and he was the personification of integrity. Neil was at ease with other people, and we all appreciated his sense of humour and his affability. I would like to share with you the words of other friends of the Gaudry family which were in the tribute in La Liberté, and I quote: "Neil Gaudry was a very humble person who put the happiness of others before his own. His departure is undoubtedly a great loss to the French-Canadian community and above all for the Michif people. Neil Gaudry was, in fact, the first official Michif voyageur, and he represented his nation well."

Another friend remarked, and I quote: "The departure of Neil Gaudry leaves an enormous void, not only within the Liberal Party but within the entire community. He distinguished himself among his colleagues for his great human qualities. Neil had friends in all parties."

[English]

During our responses to the throne speech, I listened as colleagues on all sides of the House paid special tribute to Neil. The same themes kept re-emerging. Almost everyone made mention of the fact that Neil rose above the partisanship that often divides this House to become a popular and well-respected colleague. The close to 2,000 people that showed up for his funeral service bears testament to strong feelings and respect that people felt for this man.

Our former Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Yvon Dumont, grew up in St. Laurent as did Neil. He was heard to remark that even while growing up, people looked up to Neil and respected him. He was a great man, and this greatness was obviously evident all throughout his life. He was a leader in the true sense of the word.

I made mention of the community projects to which Neil made a lasting impression, but he also travelled abroad to contribute to valuable programs. Neil made several trips overseas to South America and Africa to observe elections in emerging democracies and to help educate people about the democratic process. This is just one of the many ways that Neil made a lasting

and meaningful impression to the legislative and democratic process.

We were fortunate to have worked with Neil and I hope we will be mindful of the lessons which he imparted. He made invaluable contributions to his home community, the city of Winnipeg and indeed the province. Most importantly, though, Neil was someone many were proud to have called a friend.

Je me souviendrai toujours de Neil Gaudry comme législateur et comme ami. Merci.

[Translation]

I will always remember Neil Gaudry as a legislator and as a friend. Thank you.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, I would like to just express a few comments about Neil and our relationship and the relationship that I had with Neil here in the House. It was not a very political one, I must say. It was more of a friendship and more of a sociable one, and there are many things that I wrote down here just in the last few minutes that I remembered over the past eight and a half years. Not all of them I could not, because of all the things that we have said between each other over the past eight and a half years, I certainly could not remember, but he was always open to me as to others just as a friend. I would come over and sit down with him and talk about whatever, whether it was the golfing tournament that the hotel association was going to have or how business was going when I still had my business. We talked about constituency work, the type of things that were going on.

He did have a way of teasing me. When I decided to run in 1990, my partners to be were very good friends of Neil's from the Club Saint-Boniface, the Franco magnifico group, and amongst that group were some very close people with Neil and his family, I believe, and Neil—I know we sat there many times and me being a hotelier, he would say, when are we going to get over and see Franco at the St. B.? I would say, whenever you want to do that, Neil, you let me know, but give me plenty of time so that I can make sure either somebody is going to drive me home or drive me there, one or the other. The

invitation was always open to me just on a social basis. Politics between us was very rare; as I said it was constituency work, it was more family.

It has been a great loss to Manitobans in my mind because not only do people consider, and should consider, us strictly politicians, we have feelings, we have friends, we have camaraderie—I cannot say that properly—are comrades amongst each other. He would always wave. He would always say, comment ça va? to me. Once I found out exactly what it meant, I tried to respond. He always asked about my family, and again the laughter. We would go to the hotel association curling. He loved that. The hotel association golf tournament, he really loved that, and if you were close to Neil and his group you knew that he was around because all you could hear was the laughter and the laughter and the laughter and the good times Neil was having while we were at hotel association functions—and, of course, after, and it did not matter who it was. He was always friendly. He was always so interested in what you were doing as a person and not politically.

A few little stories that I just want to relate. One day, and I hope the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) remembers this when he was the Speaker, Neil and I and Mr. Rocan were sitting in the lounge. This was when we were smoking. Neil was sitting with us, and we were talking about nothing, just having a good time laughing. My colleague, Dave Chomiak, came in, and he looked at the three of us sitting there. He said, boy, it is nice to see that the three parties can sit down sociably and enjoy each other's company, and Mr. Rocan said now all we need is a Tory.

I have another story. Neil would always tease me and say, you know, you should be on the other side, Evans. And I would say, you know, Gaudry, so should you, so let us go hand in hand across, and he would laugh about that, et cetera. He would always tease me about that. I teased him about that too, and that was out of fun.

At a hotel association dinner where I had the pleasure of sitting with Neil and the Speaker and the Premier, Neil got up to say greetings, and he said: it is wonderful to be here today, and I was

just having a tremendous discussion with all my Tory friends at the table where I was sitting, and, of course, the Premier and the Speaker and everybody else and himself, his Tory friends.

Just to say that Neil was in my mind a jovial, tremendous person with a big heart who worked hard for his constituents, as we all do, but the dedication that he put in and everything that he has done in the years that he has been a member of the Legislative Assembly, I honour that, and I honour his family. Condolences to each and every one of you.

* (1730)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I stand to join in these condolences and to pay respect to our colleague, Neil Gaudry. I would like to recognize some of his personal qualities. They have been mentioned before, but they stand out in my mind. His warmth, that was always there. His smile was always along with it. He had a very easy-going manner which made him very approachable, very easy to work with. He knew his values and they centred him.

His professional qualities, he has had a very strong community commitment as the list of his dedicated service to the community reveals. He has had a commitment of issues to all Manitobans, but he has also had a commitment of issues to the Franco-Manitoban community and particularly to the new school division, the SFM, which was brought into his existence and where I first had the pleasure of working with Neil Gaudry on a regular basis around an issue that was important to him.

He had a commitment to heritage, and I met with him many times, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said, with Maurice Prince. He had a commitment to culture. My last meeting with Neil was when he brought in to visit with me the board of the Cercle Molière. I met with him at the Centre de patrimoine, I met with him at the Festival de Voyageur, and he had such a wide range of interests and commitments. He truly was all over the community. Mitch and I had a great opportunity to visit with both he and Léona in many places.

I would like to take a moment to express my sadness and my condolences to Léona and to the family. They are also all very personable and warm people. Politics is sometimes a difficult place to be, but when you were with Neil and his family, it always felt like it was a good place to be, so I will never forget Neil. I will never forget Neil the family man, Neil the warm-spirited person. I am going to miss working with Neil. I am very glad that I knew him.

From everything everyone has said today, it seems to me that we felt very special to Neil, and Neil was very special to us. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, it is with sadness in our hearts that we rise in this Chamber today to pay our last respects in tribute to Neil and Léona and family, having known Neil for the time that he was a member of the Legislature here for the riding of St. Boniface and having made a lot of friends because of Neil. Jean-Paul Boily and his wife, Brenda, invited us over for a social function and Neil and Léona were there, as well as many other people of the Liberal Party; Jean-Paul, of course, having been the president of the Liberal Party of this province for some time.

It might surprise some people that we socialized on a regular basis with many of the people that Neil knew, but wherever I travelled, whether it was in my riding or anywhere else in this province, especially in communities of Francophone descent, Neil was known. Whether it was in St. Boniface or St. Malo or whether it was in St. Jean Baptiste or Letellier or Woodridge or Vassar or St. Joseph, people always asked whether I knew Neil. You had to say that this person truly represented what the Francophone community in this province is all about.

Neil was known for not having abandoned his roots. When I travelled in '89, I believe, Harry, it was, when the now Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) invited me to his riding to the community of St. Laurent to meet with the then leader of the Metis Federation, the Honourable Yvon Dumont, to talk about a project in St. Laurent, Neil asked whether the project could actually receive some provincial

consideration. I said to Neil, really what interest have you got in St. Laurent? He said, I was born there.

Later on, I met Neil in St. Laurent when we visited some friends at the beach, and I thought it was rather unique that when we attended Neil's funeral that the card displayed something that I will never forget, a picture of Neil and a young child walking down the beach. That is where I met Neil on at least two occasions, walking down the beach. Anybody, I believe, that can walk down the beach holding the hand of a child truly has eternity in his heart.

I think Neil demonstrated that to us in this Chamber many times by how he conducted himself and in what high esteem he held his constituents and indeed all Manitobans by serving here and by serving his people. I am sure that the Good Lord will not forget the service he rendered to his people, to his family, and to his country. For that we pay a debt of gratitude and a tribute to Neil Gaudry.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I would just like to rise today and add a few words in tribute to our dear colleague and friend, the late Neil Gaudry. His sudden passing this past February certainly left a void that has been felt in this Chamber and all through this Legislative Building.

As a member of the Legislative Assembly, Neil was very well known and respected for his dedication and tireless efforts on behalf of his constituents. He was a very active member also of the St. Boniface community and he set an example of service to his constituency and to this province that we should all strive to follow.

Neil and I were both first elected in 1988 to this Legislature, and I am very glad to have had the opportunity to work with Neil through my duties as caucus chair and government Whip. He was the kind of individual and politician who would always look for the common ground and would work to find the solution that would benefit everyone involved. Outside of our official duties, Neil and I enjoyed an odd game of golf together. We also attended many functions where Neil and Léona were representing their party, and Adeline and I

certainly became very good friends of Léona and Neil. We will certainly miss their friendship, both inside and outside of the Legislature.

I would just like to send my thoughts and condolences out to Mrs. Gaudry and the Gaudry family on the loss of a dedicated husband, father, and friend. We in this Chamber thank you for sharing him with us and for supporting his work as a member of the Legislative Assembly. His contributions to his constituents and to the Legislature and to this province will not soon be forgotten. Thank you.

* (1740)

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and offer my condolences to Léona, Roger, René, and Nicole. My first meeting I guess with Neil Gaudry went back to 1988. I was the chairperson for the other candidate that ran against Neil Gaudry, Guy Savoie. That was my first involvement. It was a real experience to work in the Francophone community and one that I will cherish for a long time. I will carry with that my experiences and many good memories.

One thing that I will always remember about Neil Gaudry—there are several things, but the first meeting that I had with him, because I never crossed any lines as far as my political involvement as a campaign manager, being often stuck in a campaign office and sending the candidate out to do their work, but on the night of the victory for Neil Gaudry, I will remember this: Guy Savoie and Neil Gaudry, as they came together to offer congratulations, embraced one another with an endearment that I will remember and cherish. They demonstrated themselves and held themselves like brothers.

That is the way Neil demonstrated his involvement with us here in this Legislature because he definitely was here for the betterment of society, the service to his constituents and to all Manitobans and, it has already been said, many organizations that he belonged to. So I do have an appreciation for why Neil Gaudry—it did not take me long to realize that when I finally came into this Legislature, in 1990, to learn the qualities that Neil Gaudry presented to his

constituents and the people that he represented. I can understand in the years that I have been here and shared the times with Neil Gaudry in private conversations that we would have in my feeble attempts to converse with him, and limited as it was, Neil Gaudry was always accommodating. I respected him for that.

So it is with great remorse on behalf of my wife Jeanie and my family and all the members of Sturgeon Creek—I know that Neil Gaudry represented a saint in St. Boniface. Neil Gaudry was a saint, and, God willing, I think, we can all look on ourselves as our service to the people and use Neil Gaudry as an example as we go onward into our representation as members of this Legislature and remind ourselves of the conduct and how he demonstrated and held himself and the respect that he had among all of us here.

On behalf of my wife Jeanie and my family, I offer my sincere condolences and best wishes to Léona, Roger, René and Nicole, and all the people of St. Boniface in this tremendous loss. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Northern Affairs): Madam Speaker, it is indeed a privilege for me to rise on this occasion to pay tribute and to celebrate the life and legacy of the distinguished member, honourable member for St. Boniface, Neil Gaudry.

He set an example. As the honourable member has just said, he set an example of the calling which we can all aspire to in terms of his conduct, his demeanour and his content, his responsible way of participating in this House. He was also a service provider to his constituents in an exemplary way. Probably most important of all, I saw him to be a servant of God the Creator, who brought credit to his religion and to his family in that way. I saw him as a very humble person, with a great sense of humour, respectful of others, and bringing, as the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) has said, a collaborative, constructive approach to issues like Save Our Seine.

In short, he was an example, a role model for all of us. My wife, Brenda, and I are privileged to have known him and to have gotten

to know his wife Léona through participation in events together. We have benefited from that friendship, and I close by saying it was a life very well lived.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, my interaction with Neil Gaudry is in my capacity as critic for Seniors. He was also the critic for Seniors for the other party, and so we had some kind of commonality in the interest that we represent in the Legislature.

I would like to pay condolence and sympathy to Léona, Roger, René and Nicole and the children. It is very difficult for any one of us to be in a position when we do not know what will happen to us. No one knows anything, or anything about the future or tomorrow, for the living knoweth that they shall die and then we leave everything behind, our hate, our love, our jealousies, our envies are all left behind. We go to the great beyond to face our Maker. Therefore, while we are still here, it is I think our obligation to be true to the purpose for which we are created as we are enlightened by the Almighty One and to act accordingly, but there are so many temptations around us, so many things around us, that detract our attention and therefore all the time we have to be aware of our limitations.

I always agreed with him that we should always obey the laws, the Commandments, because those are the things that will remind us how to behave accordingly in relation to each other and to the rest of whom we represent. We are nothing here. We are like blades of grass. We see right in the morning, but in the evening it is gone and we do not know where. Therefore, it is essential that we take stock of what we have said, what we have done, how we have performed our role in life. I remember an incident when there were two brothers who were arguing who is the greatest between them and who shall sit on the right or the left of the Lord. The Lord said, he who shall be chief among you, let him be a servant; he who shall be great among you, let him serve. That is what Neil had implemented in his life: serving his constituents, serving other people the best way he understood, and if there is any meaning to public service at

all, it is it, service. That is what we try to all do in this Legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I rise to add few words of condolence to the Gaudry family on behalf of Heather and myself and the constituency of Ste. Rose.

Neil conducted himself in this House in a dignified and honourable fashion, always a pleasure to do business with. My association with Neil other than business in the House was primarily when he was working for his constituents or for other people across the province whom he considered as constituents. He always conducted himself in a manner that made him effective as a lobbyist on behalf of those for whom he wished to be heard and wished to have their case heard appropriately. He always, in my experience and I think verified by what everyone has said here today, dealt with all of us in an honourable fashion so that he gave real meaning to the term "public service" and to the term "honourable" in the way he conducted himself in this House. He will be a loss.

* (1750)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to add a few words to this motion of condolence to the Gaudry family.

As a member of the class of '88, in which Neil was one of the 25 or so of us who entered the Legislature following that general election in 1988—in fact, one of the things I am most pleased that we were able to do last spring was to have a dinner of the survivors of that class of '88, in which Neil and the member for Inkster were present, along with my colleagues on this side of the House who also came from that class. We had the opportunity to reminisce over our years together in this Legislature and all of the changes that had taken place and the ups and downs of political life.

Neil, at that dinner, was so much a pleasure to be with. He was just that way when he first entered this House. It did not matter what political stripe one carried, Neil was your friend.

I think if we had ever taken a vote in this Chamber as to which individual member was liked by all, Neil Gaudry would have been the winner of that vote by a wide and long mile. He was just that type of a person.

The last time I saw him was at the Festival du Voyageur, just within a day of his passing. I was walking into the fort, one of the buildings, the store I think it was. It was not a brutally cold night but a bit of a chilly night. The door opened and I walked in with my host and there was Neil, dressed as a voyageur. With a big hug, Darren, my friend, he said, a big hug, and I introduced him to the people we were with. He had that jovial smile and that warm, welcoming way that made everyone feel just right at home. Even those who had never met him before all of a sudden felt that they had met an old friend.

That was Neil. To his family, who joins us today, I say to them that no stronger fighter for the citizens of his constituency has served in this Legislature, and no greater advocate for the Francophone and Metis communities in our province has, in my view, sat in this Legislature. For both communities he always stood for their advancement as part of this province. He brought their issues forward. He advocated on their behalf, and he worked towards the improvement of conditions for both the Francophone and Metis communities in our province.

He was proud of both parts of his heritage and the heritage of our province, of which those communities are so much a part. He was a friend to all of us, a friend to Manitobans, a great Manitoban.

He will be greatly, greatly missed, not just by his family but I think by all of us here. If Neil can hear us today, I think we all say to him, Neil, our good friend, farewell. May you rest easy.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of parking out back where Neil used to park. For some reason our patterns of arriving at work coincided almost all of the time. So many, many mornings I would come up the steps with Neil, him coming up from one side and me from

the other. We would get out our little cards to open the back door and stand and have a few minutes conversation before the day would begin.

Always, of course, we would comment on the weather. It got to be a standard little thing as the seasons passed. We would talk about their impact on our bodies, our cars, our homes, our work, but also in those little exchanges would be the one or two little comments about the day.

So what have you got on today, Linda? Oh, well, Neil, I have got this and that. Oh, well, and I have got—whatever he was going to have. Always in those was a cheerfulness, an optimism that he would solve today's problems. Sometimes, especially towards the end, some of the day's problems were difficult as they were having difficulties internally in his party, there always was the sense that they would be resolved, they would get resolved, it would work out. That confidence and faith that people of good will could make things work ultimately in the end was very much a part of Neil Gaudry.

Neil was one very interested in education. He used to bring issues forward for discussion, always in a very constructive way. He never rose to badger in the House; he always rose when he felt it would be important that a question go on the record, so that it could be seen that the issue was raised for discussion in this Chamber and discussed with these people. But, more often than not, the questions and concerns he had, he would get them solved quietly without bringing them here. In that sense, he was extremely successful in getting issues resolved. He would go right to the decision makers and say that I need your help for my people. When he rose to criticize, it was always constructive. My colleagues have talked about how fond we were of Neil, and friendships do not develop normally that way between parties. The adversarial system makes it difficult for that to occur. With Neil, it was not difficult.

We will all miss him very much. He left a legacy of standards that are difficult for a lot of us to meet, in his gentlemanly way, a true gentleman, rarely seen and often sought in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Would honourable members please rise and remain standing to indicate their support for the motion.

A moment of silence was observed.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I believe if you canvass the House, there would be a willingness to call it six o'clock.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 26, 1999

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