

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, 11 July, 1986.

Time — 10:00 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . .

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. J. MALOWAY: Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain Resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Member for Elmwood.

MR. J. MALOWAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Ellice, that the report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs.

HON. G. DOER: Madam Speaker, I'd like to table a copy of the proposed Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg Tripartite Agreement, 1986-1991.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to table the Chief Executive Officer Compensation Contracts for the Province of Manitoba.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HON. A. MACKLING introduced, by leave, Bill No. 42, An Act to amend The Insurance Act and The Queen's Bench Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances et la Loi sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MADAM SPEAKER: Before moving to Oral Questions, I have a ruling to present to the House.

On July 8, I took under advisement a matter of privilege raised by the Honourable Member for St. Norbert, arising from the holding of a press conference by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs on

July 7, respecting amendments to The Trade Practices Inquiry Act before that bill had been introduced for Second Reading.

I have established that this bill was distributed to all MLA's on July 3, and was listed on the Order Paper for Second Reading on July 7.

I have reviewed the advice offered by members on July 8 and the applicable authorities and precedents. I believe the following should be noted:

Beauchesne (5th edition), Citation 19(3) reads:

"(3) Statements made outside the House by a member may not be used as the basis for a question of privilege."

I am satisfied that "press conference" is within the meaning of the phrase "statements made outside the House."

On November 23, 1976, Mr. Speaker Jerome of the House of Commons, in explaining a ruling on a matter of privilege, said that, ". . . it is clear that parliamentary privilege does not extend, and never has extended, to compelling a Minister or Prime Minister to make a statement in the House under any circumstances, regardless of the importance of the subject."

On June 23, 1978, the then Honourable Member for Inkster rose on a matter of privilege because a press release was issued concerning a particular bill on the same day on which that bill was distributed. In reply, the then Government House Leader stated in part:

". . . the press release, if I understand correctly, was held after the distribution of the bill. I see nothing wrong with that."

In this case, the Speaker made no ruling.

On Thursday, March 6, 1980, the then Honourable Member for St. Johns enquired, during Oral Questions, about a statement by a former president of the Manitoba Branch of the Canadian Bar Association that it (the Association) receives copies of all planned legislation from the Provincial Government. The then Attorney-General assured him in reply that no such practice was followed, and that bills were forwarded to that Association when they are tabled in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker Walding, in his ruling of June 2, 1983, on a matter of privilege relating to the simultaneous distribution of a bill and an accompanying press release, stated in part that: ". . . the matter of which he (the member raising the matter) complains may be a matter of discourtesy but it is not a matter of privilege."

When a matter of privilege is raised, the Speaker must be satisfied that it has been raised at the earliest opportunity. I am satisfied that this was done. The member raising the matter must conclude his or her remarks with a motion proposing a reparation or remedy. This was also done.

Sufficient evidence that a breach of privilege may have occurred must be presented to warrant giving the matter precedence over all other business before the House.

In view of the authorities and precedents cited, I am not satisfied that this condition has been met.

I must, therefore, rule that a prima facie case has not been established and the matter of privilege is therefore not in order.

ORAL QUESTIONS
Brandon University -
revoking of appointments

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the First Minister.

In view of the fact that accumulated surpluses from individual faculties at Brandon University are being diverted to Finance; the wrongful dismissal settlement between the Brandon University Board of Governors, and fired former President, Harold Perkins; and in view of concern expressed by faculty members that they didn't even know those surpluses even existed; and in view of the commitment of the Premier on Monday, February 13, 1984, as recorded at Page 5981 of Hansard, that if the students at Brandon University were being ill-served or are being ill-served, by way of the decision of the board to fire Dr. Perkins, there would be, and I quote, Madam Speaker, ". . . overall general policy involvement on the part of the government", will the Premier now make good on his commitment, keep his word, and involve his government by revoking the appointments of the Chairman of the Board of Governors of Brandon University and all those government-appointed members who are responsible for this badly handled fiasco?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, certainly I believe it is a responsibility of government, at any time that there is the ill-servicing of students consequent upon the decisions of the Board of Governors, whether that be Brandon University, the University of Winnipeg, or the University of Manitoba. That has certainly not been established, insofar as the case before us, that there has been any ill-service of the interests of the students at the Brandon University insofar as the information that I have.

In my visits, in fact, to Brandon University; the students certainly do not concur with the suggestion that they are more poorly served under the auspices of the present board and the president of the Brandon University, than they were under President Perkins and the then board of the Brandon University.

If the students were to judge, I think they would say the present president is providing excellent service to the university and they have not suffered because of that service by that president or this Board of Governors in the university.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, the question had nothing to do with the president of the university; it had to do with the Board of Governors. It appears, Madam Speaker, the Premier has not been listening to the exchanges between myself and the Minister of Education in this House in the last little while. Nor has he been following the matter . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a supplementary?

MR. J. McCRAE: Yes I do, Madam Speaker . . . nor has he been following the matter in the media. Will the

Premier make good on his commitment? Will he keep his word; and will he ask the Chairman of the Board of Governors to make public the terms of settlement between the Board of Governors and Dr. Perkins?

Brandon University -
surplus funds

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, the only disservice that is being done to Brandon University is the questioning by the Member for Brandon West.

Madam Speaker, yesterday the Member for Brandon West asked me about the relationship between the university Board of Governors and the professor at the university and I indicated, at that time, it was a spurious allegation. I can confirm today that it was. In fact, it is very unfortunate, Madam Speaker, and very opportunistic on the part of the Member for Brandon West. He has indicated that he has such great concern for Brandon University. It has a president now that has the confidence of the faculty and the students at Brandon University and the community and that is what is needed. The Member for Brandon West does a disservice to all of those groups, Madam Speaker, in presenting half-truths, ill-informed allegations and innuendoes that do no one any good.

Brandon University -
Board of Governors

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, I have a new question for the First Minister.

Both the First Minister and the Minister of Education seem to want to talk about the record of the new president of Brandon University. No one here or anywhere else would take issue with that. Why do both Ministers wish to deflect attention away from the record of the board of governors? Why does the Premier refuse to answer my question? What is so bad about all this that the Premier and the Minister of Education have to join in this cover-up?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the present board of governors at the Brandon University hired the present president, that even the Member for Brandon West paid tribute to the present president of Brandon University as doing a good job insofar as the Brandon University. Who appointed that president, Madam Speaker? Who insured that present president be appointed? It was the present board of the Brandon University.

So, in answer to the question to the Member for Brandon West, I think that tribute should be paid to the present board for having chosen the present president that has clearly improved the relationship; students, faculty and overall, insofar as the Brandon

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University is concerned from what it was three or four years ago.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education just indicated that people were guilty of spreading half-truths and innuendoes with respect to the settlement between the board of governors of Brandon University and the former president, Mr. Perkins.

In order to remove that cloud of doubt, in order to remove any distrust that may occur as a result of that, will the Premier ensure that the settlement between the board of governors of Brandon University and Dr. Perkins is made public?

HON. H. PAWLEY: The Minister of Education would deal with the latter part of the question. On the first part of the comment, Madam Speaker, the scurrilous comments ought to be obvious to the Leader of the Opposition; the scurrilous comments related to the insinuations, Madam Speaker . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.
The Honourable Member for Brandon West on a point of order.

MR. J. McCRAE: The First Minister, Madam Speaker, has referred to scurrilous comments from members on this side of the House, and I ask him to withdraw that.

MADAM SPEAKER: That term has been used several times this week in the House and I've not had any objection to it previously. I would remind honourable members on both sides that it is unparliamentary to cast aspersions or to impute motives to one other.
The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I would like to withdraw the comment if it is unparliamentary. I sense it is unparliamentary, and I would apologize for using that statement. I would substitute, irresponsible allegations on the part of the Member for Brandon West.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, to the member's last question, I've indicated all along that I'm not sure that keeping the information secret served any purpose and I had indicated that I would ascertain whether releasing details of the agreement would, in fact, create legal problems for either of the parties to the agreement. I had indicated that I did not have a copy of the legal agreement between the two parties. I spoke to Dr. Stewart this morning, the vice-chair, and indicated that if there were no legal obstructions, that it would certainly be, I believe at this point, advantageous to release those details. I indicate and have indicated all along, that is in the final analysis up to Brandon University and not to myself.

I do not believe, as I have indicated on other occasions, that release of this information is going to

clear the air at all. There is a settlement that is satisfactory to both parties. Obviously there is going to be need for justification for the negotiated arrangements that the settlement achieved.

So, Madam Speaker, we then get into pointing the finger, who was to blame and why did this get started. Madam Speaker, it's an unfortunate event. Brandon University Board of Governors, in their wisdom, decided that they needed a new leadership at Brandon University. They have that and acknowledged that the new leadership is achieving what everyone wants to achieve for Brandon University. I believe that is the ultimate goal, to provide good leadership at Brandon University.

Brandon University - tabling of agreement

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Minister is suggesting that he'd be prepared to have the agreement tabled if there are no legal impediments. Is he suggesting that there is anything illegal in the agreement?

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is wrong on all counts as usual.

Madam Speaker, I did not say that I would table the agreement. I indicated to members opposite that I had informed the vice-chair or the Board of Governors of Brandon University that I believe it would be in the best interest at this point to release the information if — and I reiterate 'if' — there are no legal implications in doing so that are going to further entangle Brandon University in something that has been an unfortunate part of its history over the last few years.

The leadership of Brandon University is not in question, Madam Speaker, at this point. It is not in question in terms of the President of the University nor in my opinion in the Board of Governors.

MR. G. FILMON: My question is to the Premier. Given that the majority of appointments to the Board of Governors of Brandon University come from this government; and given that the vast majority of the funding of Brandon University comes from this government, will he not personally intercede and demand that the board release that agreement so that we will remove any innuendos, remove all the distrust and let the people of Manitoba know what that agreement provides?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, insofar as the agreement itself is concerned, I would be delighted if the board and Mr. Perkins, by way of the agreement that they entered into, could release that to the public. I, in fact, will look forward to — (Interjection) —

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Well, honourable members seem to be suggesting that former President Perkins didn't sign any agreement. That is not my understanding, Madam Speaker. This is a decision that has to be made

by the board of Brandon University, autonomous organization. Honourable members, including the Leader of the Opposition, are generally accusing the government of interfering in the affairs of universities, in the affairs of autonomous organizations.

MR. G. FILMON: No. Cover up.

HON. H. PAWLEY: I would strongly recommend, Madam Speaker, that the document be released; and take into consideration the concerns that either party to that agreement might have and therefore that is a matter that has to be dealt with by the Brandon University and Mr. Perkins.

Brandon University - Board of Governors

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Madam Speaker, I direct my question to the First Minister.

Is the board of governors at the Brandon University accountable to anybody and, if they are, to whom?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: The board of governors of the Brandon University is responsible for the management of the affairs of the university. They are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Brandon University, including, Madam Speaker, hirings, promotions, firings, agreements pertaining to the operations of the Brandon University.

MR. C. MANNES: Madam Speaker, under the parliamentary system of government, groups like the Brandon University board of governors are accountable. Is that board of governors accountable to the Minister of Education?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, we're now going full circle by way of repetitious questions. As I indicated to the Member for Brandon West in the first comment by way of questioning made in this House, if the interests of the students had been adversely affected by the operations of the board at the Brandon University, then, of course, there is accountability. That accountability is to the Government of the Province of Manitoba.

But Madam Speaker, rather than an adverse impact in the last three or four years, my information is that the quality of education, the relationship, students and faculty, has improved in the last three or four years. So how can there be a decline of quality under the present president and board of Brandon University from what there was three or four years ago? From all the soundings that I've received, there has been an improvement.

So when we talk about accountability, Madam Speaker, I am satisfied that there has been an improvement in the quality of education under this board of governors that is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Brandon University.

Brandon University - in terms of settlement, public funding

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I direct this question to the First Minister.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Education indicated in this House that no public money would be used or is being used in this settlement with Dr. Perkins.

I ask the First Minister a direct question. Is that still true?

A MEMBER: He didn't say that.

MR. H. ENNS: Yes, he said that.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, the Member for Lakeside again does a disservice to the facts in this case. Madam Speaker, I indicated several times, both in the House and outside of the House, that I had indicated to Brandon University, the chairman of the board of governors, that they should not look to the province for additional funding. That is what has been said, additional public funding.

Brandon University obviously has the obligation to manage their own affairs, they have done so, Madam Speaker, and I leave the defence of their performance to the faculty, the students and the community of Brandon University, which I believe from all reports indicates that there has been an improvement.

So, Madam Speaker, the issue that has been raised on both sides, I believe, begs the question of who should control the universities. Questions from the Member for Fort Garry and now from the Leader of the Opposition suggest that they believe that I should be the president of all three universities.

Madam Speaker, I have been asked to intervene at the University of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, I've been asked to intervene at Brandon University's affairs. Madam Speaker, there is a legitimate governing authority at Brandon University, as there is at the University of Winnipeg and the other universities in Manitoba. Madam Speaker, the obligation from the province to the universities flows through the Universities Grants Commission.

MR. H. ENNS: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Education, and I thank him for the clarification with respect to what public money is being used to clean up this settlement with Dr. Perkins.

Just for my understanding, and that of the House, the public money that is being used in this settlement, whether it's \$1 million or more, are those monies that my friend the Member for Brandon West has already referred to, the accumulated surplus reserves and the various faculties that normally would have been used to provide programs in the University of Brandon, are now being used for this settlement? Those are the public monies; that's the half million or more — we don't know what the precise figure is — but monies that were allocated to the faculties for the educational purposes of the students attending the University of Brandon are being used for this settlement, right?

HON. J. STORIE: Well, Madam Speaker, the figure quoted by the Member for Lakeside is silly. Madam Speaker, as all members of the House know and the Member for Brandon West knows, when Dr. Perkins was asked to step down, he was offered a ten-year position at Brandon University; that has not changed, so to build that into a settlement is ludicrous. Madam Speaker, if Mr. Perkins had been sent to be employed as a janitor for the next 20 years, would that have been a \$2 million settlement?

Madam Speaker, the question at Brandon University was leadership; it is leadership. Madam Speaker, there is leadership at Brandon University at the present time.

Unemployment rates - Statistics Canada

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. J. MALOWAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Employment Services.

Statistics Canada has released the national and provincial unemployment rates resulting from their labour force survey in June of 1986. Could the Minister of Employment Services tell the House the results for Manitoba?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Employment Services.

HON. L. EVANS: The results of the labour force surveys for June are extremely satisfactory. In fact, most Manitobans, I'm sure, will be very pleased with the figures that show that the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate has declined. It's the biggest decline of any province in Canada, from 8.2 percent in May to 7.3 percent in June.

In seasonally-adjusted terms, we are the second lowest in Canada, only one-tenth of a point above Ontario; but in actual terms, Madam Speaker, we're down to 6.4 percent from 7.8, for the lowest in Canada. We're the lowest in Canada in actual terms and I'm very pleased of the traditional heads of households — those people that are 25 years or over, whether they are male or female — the rate is down to 5.1 percent.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a supplementary?

MR. J. MALOWAY: A supplementary to the same Minister. Could the Minister indicate for the House some of the factors behind this strong labour market performance?

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, although the labour force survey is up very substantially, the labour force survey is up by 10,000 in June, but those employed are up even more. The employment is up by 16,000 jobs, which I think is very positive. In fact, Madam Speaker, it's the first time in Manitoba's history we have surpassed the one-half million mark. We have 502,000 people employed in Manitoba.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood with a final supplementary.

MR. J. MALOWAY: A final supplementary, Madam Speaker, to the same Minister. Could the Minister inform the House what Manitoba's youth unemployment rate was in June?

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, even though the Federal Government has cut back by millions of dollars on youth employment programs — and it's regrettable — they have cut back by millions of dollars in this province alone. Nevertheless, our youth unemployment rate is improved. Last year it was 13.9, June 1985, and we're down to 10.7 percent now, well below the Canadian average of 14.5 percent.

PET Program - evaluation study

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Education.

There is a program at Brandon University known as the Project for the Education of Native teachers, the PET Program. Could the Minister tell the House if an evaluation study has been completed on that project?

HON. J. STORIE: I will have to take that question as notice, Madam Speaker.

MR. D. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, if the Minister takes that question as notice, if he can also confirm that the evaluation study was done by Salasan Associates; and I wonder if he might make the results of that study available to the members of the House.

HON. J. STORIE: Yes, Madam Speaker, I will also take that as notice.

Disability Insurance - discrimination

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Civil Service.

The long-term disability insurance plan for Manitoba Civil Servants originally excluded those employees who developed nervous or mental disorders, and while a new contract negotiated in Spring of 1985 improved the situation, it still singled out employees with mental health problems; what are the government's plans to remedy those aspects of its long-term disability insurance plan which discriminate against those who develop serious mental health problems?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you to the member, I thank her for that question and I will take it as notice and provide her with the information.

I would also point out that we will shortly be in the review of the Estimates of the Civil Service Commission,

and we could provide a more detailed response to that question at that time also.

Eliesen, Marc - contracts

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance for finally tabling the contract with Mr. Eliesen which was entered into on October 10, 1984 between the former Minister of Energy and Mines and his Deputy Minister at that time, Mr. Eliesen; providing for a three-year contract with an basic indexed salary of \$75,000 plus a bonus of \$10,000 per year.

My question to the Minister is: would he indicate, in view of the fact that Mr. Eliesen was probably earning somewhere under \$60,000 per year at the time, what the actual increase was to Mr. Eliesen by becoming the Chairman of the Manitoba Energy Authority from his former position as Deputy Minister? Was it more than \$15,000 and, in view of the fact that it's indexed, could he indicate — contrary to the statement he provides — that his current basic salary is not \$75,000, but it is being indexed and is higher than that? What is the actual salary plus the amount of the increase he received at the time?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd just like to indicate in looking at those salaries, I hope the members look at other salaries as well. With respect to McKenzie Seeds where the salary is \$86,000 with a bonus of \$20,000; the Oil and Gas Corporation with eighty and fifteen; and, of course, there are federal comparisons such as Petrocan with over \$400,000 a year and so on. — (Interjection) — Well, Madam Speaker, I was on the telephone in fact this morning with Crown Investments staff, who assure me that Mr. Eliesen is receiving \$75,000 a year right now. He is, by far, not the highest paid executive in Manitoba, although he is one of the very most hardworking and one who has provided a lot of benefits for Manitoba and is one of the reasons why we have strong employment growth here.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I had asked the Minister what the increase was that he'd received in moving from Deputy Minister to Chairman. Was it over \$15,000 or what was the exact amount of the increase?

Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister: would he indicate to the House, in view of the fact that the agreement provides for an annual bonus of \$10,000 based on criteria established by the Minister responsible, could he indicate whether Mr. Eliesen has received the bonus of \$10,000 and will be receiving it again in the balance of the years of the contract?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Yes, I would expect that certainly up until now, as far as I'm aware, he has received a bonus; and if he continues working in the excellent fashion that he has been working up until

now, I would be one of those who would very strongly support a bonus in the future, bringing him up to a salary which is far lower than a number of our other Crown corporations at only about 25 percent of Petro-Canada, or a whole host of federal organizations, which are well over \$100,000.00.

I believe his salary is a reasonable salary, given the position. I believe that the arrangement, compared to what is happening in other areas, is not an unreasonable arrangement for the public in Manitoba and I would hope that members would take his contract in context with the contracts of others in Manitoba and the ones that have been shown to members for federal corporations.

I want to tell members as well that we contacted every province in this country and asked them for salaries of their chief executive officers, be it hydro or potash or telephones and so on. We were unable to get them. This is the only provincial government which is prepared to say to its people exactly what it is that we pay to our chief executive officers and we would encourage other provinces to do the same thing so we could have a comparison of salaries across the country, of what is paid to CEO's.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the Minister also undertook a number of weeks ago, at the time I asked him for this contract, to also table a list of personal expenses paid for by the taxpayers of Manitoba under this contract incurred by Mr. Eliesen, and he has not tabled that information.

Would he undertake to table that information in the House within a matter of a few days so that the taxpayers of Manitoba can know what additional personal expenses they are paying for Mr. Eliesen, in addition to the rental of his Volvo car at \$529 per month, in this sweetheart deal that the former Minister of Mines and Energy gave to Mr. Eliesen by increasing his salary an exorbitant amount by making him Chairman of the Energy Authority from his former position as Deputy Minister?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Madam Speaker, I just find that totally astounding, the allegation of a sweetheart deal, when the member has before him comparisons with others doing work that is nowhere near as intensive for the province or for the Federal Government, he suggests this is a sweetheart deal? It's a deal that was approved by Cabinet; it's not something that was arranged between several people.

He has the contract. The contract does not call for payment of personal expenses for Mr. Eliesen and there are no personal expenses paid for Mr. Eliesen. The only expenses paid are those which he incurs in the course of his employment with the Manitoba Energy Authority.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, would the Minister complete his undertaking of a number of weeks ago and table all of those expenses paid for, in the course of Mr. Eliesen's employment, as he suggests? Would he undertake to table them?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Madam Speaker, I did not undertake to table the expenditures incurred by Mr. Eliesen in the course of his employment and I will not

do so without tabling the expenses of all CEO's. I'm not putting him in a position different from others. The member's going on a fishing expedition. If he has some specifics he wants to raise with me, let him raise them.

Removal of sales tax

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance.

In late May, the Western Manitoba Border Towns Association met with the Minister, along with three MLA's from this side of the House. The association was requesting complete or partial removal of the sales tax on clothing, similar as to what has been done in Saskatchewan, so that they can remain competitive.

I would ask the Minister if he's made a decision on that request yet?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Here again we see the contradiction with the position of members opposite. It was just a few days ago that they were suggesting the deficit of this province was too high and that we should be looking at means of reducing the deficit. Now we're having a suggestion that we should be removing taxes which would increase the deficit of the Province of Manitoba.

So as my leader said, on Tuesday they say one thing, on Wednesday another and then another again on Friday.

In terms of this specific situation, we have met with that organization in terms of their concerns. As I indicated to that association at that time, I suggested we should do some monitoring of sales tax revenues that are resulting from sales on the articles in question for those communities; and the monitoring that we've done to date indicates that the sales tax revenues for those months, since the changes in Saskatchewan, are approximately the same as has been the case prior to that change.

MR. G. FINDLAY: I would like to ask the Minister when he'll complete that monitoring and when he'll inform the association of his final decision.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Madam Speaker, to the member, we would intend to monitor that for the next short period of time and then review the information and review what options might be available with regard to that situation and communicate that to the association and to the member communities.

Manitoba Beef Plan and National Tripartite Plan

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, yesterday the Member for Virden raised a number of questions

regarding the Beef Plan and the National Tripartite Plan, where his comparisons were inaccurate and I want to bring some information to the House.

First of all, Madam Speaker, he made the assertion that support prices were changed, both July 1 and July 3. That statement was not accurate, in that support prices are options are given to producers. The formula was working for July 1 and the options to change support prices — which is an option to producers — will be effective September 1.

Secondly, the member made comparisons between the Manitoba Beef Plan and the National Tripartite Plan, indicating that there would be less support under our plan than the National Tripartite Plan.

Madam Speaker, when comparing support levels with the Manitoba Plan and the National Tripartite Plan, care must taken to ensure that the support price applies to the same time period. Under the Manitoba Beef Plan, support prices are set in advance in a six-month period. Under the National Tripartite Plan, support prices are set for a three-month period after the end of the period. Consequently, we only have the National Tripartite Plan support price for the first quarter of 1986.

I want to indicate to my honourable friend that on September 1, and I'm going to head our plan which will be adjusted for September 1, meaning that the premiums are taken off, our support price is \$86.78 and the National Tripartite Plan for the last quarter that's already here is \$71.46, a difference, and a difference in months of over \$15 in terms of support to producers, Madam Speaker, totally inaccurate statements.

Manitoba Water Commission re high water levels on lakes

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I direct a question to the First Minister.

I'm sure the First Minister is aware of a growing amount of concern that's being expressed by a number of property owners along Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba, I might add. I know that individual members, the Minister for Municipal Affairs has met as an MLA with some of those concerns.

My question to the First Minister is: would he not consider it advisable or would he not instruct the Manitoba Water Commission, which is a body specifically set up to help sort out the sometimes opposing interests on a lake, whether or not the Manitoba Water Commission ought not to be called into hold public hearings, to hear some of the concerns of property owners about the excessively high levels of our major lakes, Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: The Member for Lakeside, in asking what I think is a very important question to many Manitobans, I have asked the Minister of Natural Resources and the department to do an evaluation of the situation pertaining to the high water levels, the impact insofar as the beaches are concerned around

Lake Winnipeg, and to provide me with a report as to reasons for impact, possible solutions, and other activity that could be undertaken by government in view of what is clearly a painful situation for many of the residents along the lake.

Remand Centre - suicides

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, yesterday I took as notice a question regarding how many suicides had occurred at the Remand Centre. Since the facility was taken over by the province in 1977, there have been five suicides that were complete, one of which was a female. There were 34 very serious attempts which required some medical attention and many, many attempts such as slashings or people about to use a noose which really we don't have a complete count. Seven of the 34 serious attempts in the past were female.

Unemployment re women

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ellice.

MR. H. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the exercise this morning. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Could you tell us, with the information revealed today on unemployment, how this affects women? Has the picture improved? Can you please give us information in that regard?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

HON. J. WASYLICIA-LEIS: Yes, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to report that in conjunction with the statistics released by the Minister responsible for Employment Services that the lowest drop was indeed among women. The unemployment rate for women is now 6.0 percent in this province, a very good improvement. Although we still have a lot more work to do, that is a 2.7 percent decrease from a year earlier, and I think, to a very great measure, attributable to the work that this government has done in the area of women's equality and our commitment to women in the workforce.

Madam Speaker, members opposite once again do not appear to be interested in the issue of women's equality. If they were a little more interested, Madam Speaker, they would urge the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his membership in a squash club that excludes women.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, order. Order please. May I remind the Honourable Minister that answers to questions should not provoke debate.

The Honourable Member for Ellice with a supplementary.

MR. H. SMITH: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Could you tell us what specific programs or

information that would account for such an improved picture with women employment?

HON. J. WASYLICIA-LEIS: Madam Speaker, there are of course many factors for the improved employment picture for women, but probably the biggest one is the deliberate efforts on the part of this government to increase employment opportunities for women, particularly women who are in the workforce and still must combine family responsibilities.

So the improved picture is a result of our Jobs Fund programs, the Single Parent Job Access Program, our very deliberate efforts to improve the day care situation, our improvements with respect to the women's resource centres, and our general attitude that working women in this province is not a phenomenon but an economic necessity.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I would like leave to make a non-political statement.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the Honourable Minister have leave? The Honourable Minister seems to have leave.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

HON. A. MACKLING: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to enjoin all colleagues of the House on both sides to take advantage of the beauty of the art display featured in the Pool of the Black Star in this building. It is a display of artistry by artists from St. James, the St. James Art Club — at least one of the artists has won national if not international reknown — a beautiful display that is refreshing to the soul. I think we could all use a little bit more of that, not only members in this House but everyone in society.

That display is there for enjoyment to the end of July, and I invite all members to join me in looking at it.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: I'd like to make a non-political statement also if I have leave.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have leave? (Agreed)

MRS. G. HAMMOND: As the Member for Kirkfield Park in sunny St. James, I, too, would like to encourage members to see the display. It is wonderful. St. James has one of the most active art groups in Winnipeg and they do wonderful works. I would encourage everyone to go and see this display.

I congratulate them for coming down to the Legislature.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ellice.

MR. H. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I would just like to add that Geoff Dixon, a well-known prominent Conservative, one of my opponents in a couple of elections, is spending his time now painting pictures and has a picture in display in the gallery.

MADAM SPEAKER: Did the honourable member have leave to make that non-political statement?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Perhaps next time, the honourable member should ask for leave before he makes it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Would you please call the Adjourned Debates on Second Reading in the order in which they appear, starting on Page 2 and continuing through to Page 4?

ADJOURNED DEBATE ON SECOND READING

BILL 4 — THE FAMILY FARM PROTECTION ACT

MADAM SPEAKER: Adjourned Debates on Second Reading, on the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Bill No. 4.

The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm privileged to add my thoughts and concerns with respect to Bill 4, The Family Farm Protection Act.

Madam Speaker, I think we can acknowledge at the outset that all of us recognize there is trouble on the farm. I hasten to add that it's not just on the farms of Manitoba. That can be said regrettably for those engaged in agriculture right across this country, indeed across this continent if one listens to some of the reports from south of the border, and so it is not, by any means, unique to Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, one would like to think then that it's very natural when we recognize a difficulty — some call it a crisis situation — that there should be an effort to respond in a kind of unanimous way. Certainly, Madam Speaker, this Chamber, no matter how we divide ourselves from time to time on political grounds, has shown our ability to do so.

When our province, very often particularly latterly because of the protection afforded to the City of Winnipeg residents by that visionary work done by a previous Conservative administration in building the Red River Floodway around the city, it is rural Manitoba and agricultural Manitoba, particularly the Red River Valley that suffers regrettably at least once a decade from a very serious flood.

Madam Speaker, I cannot recall in a situation, where under those circumstances that while we may quibble

with some of the details as to whatever governments of the day have to approach to resolve and help out with those difficulties, but there is a general non-partisan, all partisan support to help resolve that crisis.

Madam Speaker, I say the same thing about when agriculture is hit by severe drought, the last one being in the year '81, and again innovative programs action had to be taken by this Legislative Assembly. And again, Madam Speaker, I think the records will show, the Journals of the House will show, that there always could be expected to be some differences in some small detail. But again there was a unanimity expressed in this Chamber to try to resolve that issue.

Madam Speaker, I point that out to the present Minister of Agriculture and to the present government that is bringing in Bill 4, the fact that that is not the case with Bill 4 ought to be of serious concern to this Minister and to this government.

Madam Speaker, opposition to this bill is mounting daily despite the apparent contradiction that's contained in the title of the bill, The Family Farm Protection Act. Who of us does not want to see the family farm protected? And surely the Conservative Opposition need not be lectured about our concern about family farms; but we are opposing this bill and we are not alone in opposing this bill. I'm making these remarks and I'm making them more so to some of the non-agricultural members opposite.

When I say the Conservative Party and the Conservative Association in this House is opposing this bill, allow me just very briefly to at least be a little more specific about what that opposition amounts to. It firstly amounts to two former Ministers of Agriculture that have served the Province of Manitoba. It amounts to individual people, like my colleague, the Member for Morris, who has a very impressive set of credentials academically, practically and is actively farming today in the Red River Valley.

I might just read into the record that we are talking about a person who was a graduate from the University of Manitoba in '73, has a Master of Science degree in Agriculture Economics, a former board member of the Manitoba Marketing Council, of the Western Grain Standard Committee and a member of the Canadian Grains Council Committee on grading. It's not Pat Mooney I'll tell you. That is just one of the members in Opposition that having perused a bill and having listened to the agriculture community, is now standing in his seat opposed to this bill.

Madam Speaker, our group and our Opposition can be extremely proud of . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

MR. H. ENNS: . . . the Honourable Member for Virden, another practising farmer, now our chief critic on agriculture, has also completed, among other things, his Master's Degree at the University of Manitoba, received his Doctorate from the University of Illinois, continued with past Doctorate Research through a National Research Council of Canada Fellowship, and from '70-77 was professor of the Faculty of Agriculture here at the University of Manitoba, and is today a practising farmer.

Madam Speaker, he is too modest, we should be calling him doctor, rightly so we should be calling him

Doc Findlay. But I am not saying this, I can say this about my friend, the Member for Pembina, and I can say this about my colleague, the former Minister of Agriculture, whom I already mentioned, the Member for Arthur.

I want to assure everybody, most of all my leader that I am not now running for the leadership of my party in any event, what I'm saying is, the members opposite, the government, ought to take note of the kind of Opposition, the quality of the Opposition that is being mounted from the Opposition side, from the Conservative side, on this very important matter, Madam Speaker.

I know it's sometimes lost, it is expected that in this Chamber in a political sense, the Opposition will always oppose whatever the government proposes. That of course isn't true, Madam Speaker. Journals of this House indicate that 60 or 70 percent, 80 percent of the bills presented in this Chamber by a government are very often supported by members of the Opposition.

But when we see a wrong measure being introduced, when we see a measure as in this instance, something to help to protect the family farm, and it is going to do just the opposite, and it's going to be harmful to the family farm, then we speak up and we speak up loudly. Madam Speaker, that of course is not the only opposition, that is the opposition that you would expect a vigilant opposition party to bring and we are the front line troops in this opposition battle, and it's going to be a battle on this bill.

We have already heard and we will not be deterred by the kind of cheap and easy politics that this government likes to make out of it, but certainly the private lending institutions, credit unions and the banks and it doesn't stop there — it doesn't stop there at all — it also means the farm implement dealer, it means the seed supplier, it means the chemical and herbicide supplier, all of these people, Madam Speaker, have a reason to be concerned about this bill because in the way this bill fundamentally interferes in the normal market practice that over the years farmers have become to rely on, to carry out their business. Madam Speaker, that of course is the real concern of the Opposition.

How can I make you totally aware of the fact that our decision to oppose this bill was probably one of the more difficult decisions that this Opposition has had to make during this Session so far. Madam Speaker, we take the responsibility of representing rural Manitoba very seriously. The fact that we have been graced, privileged, with a past number of elections to have had the privilege of support, having had the rule of support in such an overwhelming manner as we do, it then is of course extremely important that we act in the interests of rural Manitobans, in this case farmers. And we see a measure, that we do not think is in the interests of a vast majority of farmers in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Information supplied by the Minister himself in introducing the bill, information supplied by the Member for Virden when he spoke to the bill indicate, that while we may quarrel a little again with the precise figures or percentages, we do share generally the basic information that's been provided to us from various sources, from private lending institutions, by the Minister, by our own Opposition spokespersons who

have spoken to this bill today. We recognize that there are indeed some 25 percent of the farmers in some difficulty.

Some credit institutions say that of that 25 percent only four to five percent are in serious difficulty; the kind that this bill is meant to deal with. Farms that may be seeing and have experienced foreclosure, regrettable as that is.

Madam Speaker, when you look at the actual figures of some 1,000 or 15,000 commercial farms that we have in the province, and we look at the rate of bankruptcies that we've experienced during these difficult times, it would tend to support the lower end of these figures. Actual bankruptcies that have occurred amount to one-half of one percent that have experienced the full brunt of the crisis in agriculture to the point of having to go to foreclosure and having lost their lands and having lost their farms.

Madam Speaker, that is the scale of the problem. There is a saying, "One hard case makes poor law". One should never try to make law because of one or two bad individual situations. I think that general rule applies very much to Bill No. 4 before us because 45 percent of our farmers do not require credit. Even though they are having difficult times because of low international commodity prices, 45 percent of our farmers are good managers; are not in trouble; do not require this bill and are not regularly using any credit.

We are then left with some 55 percent of Manitoba farmers that do use credit; that's a majority — 55 percent of the farmers, regularly as a tool of modern agriculture — go to their banks, go to the public institutions — whether it's the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, the Federal Credit Corporation — go to their credit unions or whatever source of credit, to borrow money from time to time.

Of those 55 percent, Madam Speaker, if you accept the Minister's figures, 5 percent are in trouble. Of that 5 percent, 1 to 2 percent might fail. Madam Speaker, 1 or 2 percent failing is reason for concern because it helps little to the person that is facing destruction of his life's work and savings, whatever percentage group he's in. For that reason, Madam Speaker, we would have liked to have worked with the Minister in bringing about some measure of legislative protection that could be helpful.

Instead we are forced to consider a bill that is going to be harmful to that 55 percent of farmers that use credit.

HON. B. URUSKI: Why?

MR. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, the Minister asks, "Why"? Madam Speaker, the Minister can do all he wants or close his eyes to the reality. The truth of the matter is that if you interfere, through heavy-hand of legislation in the private sector, you cannot predict, nor is it in your hands to control, how the private sector will respond. We have some indication as to how they've responded in Saskatchewan. The cost of credit has gone up and there's been a very substantial withdrawal of access to credit, Madam Speaker.

I don't have — and I know that we're often lectured because we don't — the research material as actively researched into the scale and depth that it would be

helpful to have, so we have to rely on the figures and the statements made by different institutions who have experienced a similar situation or similar bill.

Madam Speaker, the private lending institutions that have — again I'll use whatever figure the Minister wants me to use — \$1 billion out in credit to Manitoba farmers or more; those people who are providing that credit have said to this minister, have said to this government, if you pass Bill No. 4, we will have to charge those farmers that take that credit from us more — half a percentage point, a percentage point, whatever it is. Is it the intention; is it the will of this government, at a time when farmers are on their backs; they are fighting against unfair international competition, to add more costs to them? Is that what we're doing? That's what you're doing with Bill No. 4.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, we have heard nothing from this government or from this Minister that they are prepared — and I speak to the former Minister of Finance — that this government is prepared to fill the gap, if there should be a 20, 25 or 30 percent withdrawal of available farm credit from the private sector. Is this government prepared to add that to the capital borrowings of this province at this time, or should we even be put in that position? Madam Speaker, I think it's the height of folly. Our finances, surely in a non-partisan way, we can agree that we are in difficulty.

This government, in five successive Budgets, has plunged Manitoba deep into debt to the point that our credit rating has dropped three times in the last three years; so the public understands every time the credit rating drops, it costs us more money to borrow. This is the same government that's going to go to the borrowers in New York and Tokyo in the next fiscal year for over \$1 billion; billion two, billion five, one-and-one-half billion dollars. They will decide in New York at what rate we can get that money.

Madam Speaker, it is scandalous when you think that this government, which is collecting an extra \$250 million in taxes from the people of Manitoba this year; one out of every three of those dollars is not hiring a single teacher, not paying for a single nurse in a hospital, not building a single mile of road, not helping the farmers at all; it's just going to pay interest. That's the kind of situation we're in now and you guys shrug your shoulders and say we don't have to worry about it.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, one question to the Member for Lakeside. If, in fact, the province's credit rating is so poor as the member suggests, then why, in heaven's name, are the rates charged by MACC three-quarters to 1.5 percent lower than the Federal Farm Credit Corporation's consistency on all loans?

MR. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, there is only one reason. It is because federal finances are in that worse a shape. That's because you've had a Liberal and NDP-supported government there for twenty of the last four years. At least in Manitoba, you've had Conservative administrations that were fiscally responsible for its first few years. — (Interjection) — Oh yes.

Madam Speaker, let them have fun with that if they wish. The truth of the matter is, will the former Minister of Finance deny that the kind of money the province is now being forced to pay out to service the debt,

and what brought us into the subject matter is. I would assume, if an action taken by this government by this minister will cause private lending institutions to back away from farm credit, the public institutions better be in a position to pick up the difference. I don't believe we have had any indication from this government that that is the case.

I don't think that the present Minister of Finance is particularly prepared to give MACC an additional \$200 million two or three years down the line because if the Royal Bank decides to withdraw — and we can call the Royal Bank all the mean names we want — or the Bank of Montreal, or the Bank of Commerce. We can say that's blackmail but there are not too many of us that are that long in the tooth that go back to those days. I certainly wasn't in the business of requiring credit in farming those days.

But the last time that government seriously intervened in a normal market flow of credit was, of course, during the Thirties. When the situation was of such crisis proportions that numerous jurisdictions brought in various types of moratorium legislation, and to some extent, it helped resolve part of the farm crisis at that time; perhaps it meant that more families that would have otherwise lost their land were able to retain title and ownership to the land. But what did it also mean? It meant the absolute and complete withdrawal of the private sector from lending any farmer any money, and that took 30 years to overcome. It wasn't until the late Fifties and until the Sixties when a great Canadian by the name of John Diefenbaker was back at the helm of this country and where agriculture had once again some voice that the private lending institutions, through various encouragements by governments, once again reentered the farm lending business, the farm economy.

Well, Madam Speaker, this is a historical fact and can be documented by just a cursory reading of how agricultural credit has been available or not available to farmers in Manitoba. So, Madam Speaker, that ought to cause us tremendous concern that the possibility of this bill, and I don't have to be definitive, you know — why tinker, why take the chance? — if the possibility of this bill is going to hurt more farmers than it helps, then surely this is not the intent of this government.

Furthermore, if this bill could impose substantially additional financial costs on the government which they have yet to calculate, then, Madam Speaker, surely they ought to think twice. Well, Madam Speaker, I believe that for these and other reasons, and perhaps one of the best other reasons is I hear comments from the other side — let's do nothing.

Well, Madam Speaker, my colleague, the Member for Virden, outlined very specifically that there were areas of this bill that we could support. We want to help shield the farmer in that desperate moment of need to the largest extent possible, would like to support the idea of a peer group helping him arbitrate the difficulties. Even more so, Madam Speaker, while this bill is progressing through our Chamber, of course, we have an attended federal bill that is past the House of Commons — (Interjection) — well, Madam Speaker, the Minister says it's not adequate, and it may well not be adequate.

But is it our purpose to confuse the farmers of Manitoba by adding the multiplication of bills and boards and arbitration bodies? Should we not be

working to make the national bill a better bill? Very often, Madam Speaker, these members opposite, who by and large are of a centrist philosophy toward government, call for a greater national universality in programs of assistance and programs designed to help various peoples in need.

Madam Speaker, we're dealing with a national problem, the problems of farmers not just in Manitoba but across this country. If there are deficiencies in the federal bill, then let's make it a better bill or pressure and do things that we can to make it a better bill. Madam Speaker, we are advising this government, we are advising this Minister, that it's a bad bill and it's going to hurt more farmers than it will help.

I'll be very specific. It's going to hurt me more; I'm one of those 55 percent of the farmers that has regrettably relied on farm credit. This bill will cost me more dollars; this bill will cost me an extra \$2,000 a year with its facets. My banker has already told me it will. Now that's a case where 55 percent of the farmers, Madam Speaker — (Interjection) — well, the credit union is the same; it has to be. — (Interjection) — no, no. Madam Speaker, the Attorney-General says it creates something — lending rates are entirely, or to a large extent, predicated on the risk. If you increase the risk, which we're doing with Bill 4, if we're increasing the risk about the person that from whom we have borrowed the money, then the cost goes up. It's just that simple, Madam Speaker.

This bill increases the risk for the lender to get his money back on behalf of the depositors and any prudent institution, credit union, bank, who will have to factor in that risk, and the outcome is whatever marginal increase it is but will be an increase, and that increase is being passed on to all farmers. Madam Speaker, that is why we are going to be able to take this bill throughout the length and breadth of the Province of Manitoba and farmers are going to understand it.

The Minister should take little comfort from the initial support that he had received from the Keystone group or the CAP group that indicated some support for this bill. Madam Speaker, a careful reading of that support statement specifically singled out the areas of the bill that they do not support, the areas that the bill has relegated the courts too much jurisdiction to interfere with the normal process of credit granting in the Province of Manitoba.

So, Madam Speaker, I appeal to those other heads. I realize this Minister from time to time has brought legislation into this Chamber that has upon scrutiny become so defective that he himself has found the need to withdraw it. Madam Speaker, it's not just this Minister. I can recall another Minister of Agriculture in the Seventies that brought in a much vaunted farm implement bill in the dying days of the Session. That bill was so fraught with difficulties that it had some 54 amendments to it before we got it out of committee stage. We virtually had to rewrite the bill, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, why is it so difficult then for this government not to take the advice that is being given? By what I can honestly claim, pretty sound experts in agriculture on this side of the House — leave aside for a moment their political affiliation, but look at the kind of practising experience, backgrounds, education in economics, in agriculture that is represented on this

side of the House when we oppose this bill — add that to the other opposition that's growing in the community, Madam Speaker; then I would surely ask you to reconsider the bill.

Well, Madam Speaker, I had made up my mind that I was going to be a nice guy, Mr. Clean, and not impute motives to anybody which, of course, in this Chamber is always a questionable parliamentary tactic, but because I know that there is a reason why this bill is here, and that grieved me, it's a cynical reason, this bill is here, it has nothing to do and has no concern for farmers.

We can readily demonstrate that this bill will hurt farmers. This bill is directed strictly for the consumption of the urban seats in Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba. This bill is directed for those people that go to the Hollywood movies and that see the hardships on the farms or that from time to time see the foreclosure tragedy that is played out on their T.V. screens.

And so this government wants, in a cynical way, to buy that understanding not from farmers; you're not going to get it from farmers. They're not going to get it from farmers because this bill is hurting farmers, but they want the constituents in Logan, in Fort Rouge and in Radisson and all those people that think that this is a caring and understanding government, because the plight of farmers has been so severe it has even permeated the urban environment, and this government wants to be perceived to be doing something for farmers in this urban setting in its urban support base.

Madam Speaker, if this bill was only that, was just window dressing, we wouldn't be opposing it; let them do their little game. The tragedy about it is while they're doing that little game, they are hurting the very people they want to protect, the family farm. They are costing 55 percent of the farmers more money to get their credit. They are interfering and going to make it more difficult for the family farm to survive.

Madam Speaker, we are going to oppose this bill. This bill is going to be opposed right down the line and could well delay the procedures of this House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, it was not my intent initially to speak on this bill, but having heard, and without privilege, the speech of the Honourable Member for Lakeside, I am constrained to say at least something in reply to what I think is a significant distortion of facts in respect to this government's position not only in respect to this bill but this government's position in respect to the protection of agriculture in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member for Lakeside, in his concluding remarks, displayed the kind of cynical attitude which I find repugnant to this Chamber, to suggest that a government is launching some legislation for purely political purposes. That is shocking. In effect, he's saying there's no basis for belief that the legislation is necessarily in the interest of the parties that are being protected. That is the most cynical argument I've ever heard addressed in this House on a piece of legislation.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, C. Santos, in the Chair.)

What is the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of this government in respect to the assistance to agriculture since we came to power? We came into power and there was no money provided; the money had run out for hog stabilization. We pumped in the money immediately. We established a Beef Stabilization Program in this province that's the envy of others across Canada, a program that is still far superior to what is being developed from Ottawa and the comparisons were made in respect to the particular benefits as recently as this morning in this Chamber.

This is a government, that when interest rates were in the double digit range, brought in legislation to assist farmers who were in difficulty. All of those efforts received, if not faint praise and damned by such by the Opposition, or they were given passing cynical support.

I've waited to hear the Member for Lakeside stand up for Manitoba farmers against the banks, but I didn't hear it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I didn't hear the Member for Lakeside tell me that he had talked to scores of farmers in his constituency about the needs for farm protection. No, I didn't hear that. I didn't hear that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I didn't hear that he had convened a meeting of his constituents to review the bill. What he said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that he talked to his banker. He talked to his banker, and his banker had warned him that his loan might have to be increased if this legislation is passed. So that's the kind of self-interest that the Member for Lakeside has argued in this Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the retiring president of the Folk Festival, in referring to the Opposition, had some words, and I think the farmers of Manitoba, in reflecting on the position of the Conservative Party in Manitoba in respect to this bill, will have words to say. They'll have a couple of words to say and they won't be "let's dance" either.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all we're hearing from the Opposition, if we're hearing any suggestions at all, is either do nothing and praise the banks, and pray to the banks for help, or sit quietly and if you speak at all, praise the initiative of the Federal Government in its plans. What are its plans? A lot of farmers in Canada are wondering about the plans of the Federal Government, when they hear about the Federal Government planning for a transitional assistance program for farmers to get out of agriculture. Millions of dollars will be provided to pick up the wreckage as farmers have to leave the land.

That's what the Federal Government is planning, a Federal Government that sees the United States and Europe locked in a struggle for dominance of grain marketing, and a Federal Government that's doing nothing to protect western agriculture, a Federal Government that claims it's doing such a great thing for western agriculture by paying back to farmers, farmers' money that's paid into stabilization. Members of the Opposition think, oh, the Federal Government's done a great deal in paying back the farmers their own money.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't use the kind of words in this Chamber that I feel farmers would like to use in describing the attitude of a political party in this province, that is turning its back on the farmers of this province.

All this bill is going to do — it's not going to put the banks out of business; it's not going to foreclose on the banks. — (Interjection) — The Leader of the Opposition says it's going to put the farmers out of business. Your federal party has said that they're really going to do nothing; that farmers have to go under and we're going to help them pick up the wreckage; that's what we're going to do; we're not going to get engaged to fight the battles of the farmers on the international market; we're not going to do that; we're going to let the farmers go under.

Why is that happening? Why is that tough, cynical attitude of the Federal Government, a Federal Tory Government happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I'll tell you why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because at one stage, we had the emergence of a leader for the federal Conservative Party where there was some hope that with a small number of seats from Quebec, having security of the Conservative Party in Western Canada, the Conservative Party of Canada would be able to elect a party in Ottawa that once again would protect the interests of Western Canada, a rebirth of the hoped-for dynamics of the Diefenbaker years. That's what the Conservative Party for Western Canada was voting for when they voted for Brian Mulroney. They had some apprehension about another Easterner, so they got rid of Joe Clark because they thought at least Mulroney would get enough votes in Quebec, enough MP's from Quebec that the Conservative Party would be firmly ensconced in Ottawa for generations to come. That was the rationale; that was the bargain that Conservative farmers in Western Canada made with history.

What has happened? What happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the Conservatives picked up on the demise of the Liberal Party in Quebec and a massive number of Members of Parliament were voted into office from Quebec, for the Conservative Party. That shifted the political balance of power and now a Conservative Government in Ottawa is turning its back on western Canadian farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that isn't just my view. That is the view of farmers across Canada, Premiers across Canada who have said to their Federal Government, western agriculture, the grains industry, is in serious difficulty. We implore you, this isn't a New Democrat, a Democratic Socialist, a flaming radical talking. This is what Grant Devine said. This is what Getty said. Let's get \$800 million paid into Western Canada to support the problem. — (Interjection) — The Member for Morris is saying they won't let us down. Yes, they won't let us down. That's what the Federal Government is saying to the farmers that are going to be bankrupt and driven out of agriculture. We won't let you down. We'll give you some relief. We're going to have an insurance fund for you. When you see a government making that kind of preparation, you know what their plans are all about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What we are saying in this bill is that the banks have to exercise responsibility. They have to take care and not put people off the land, not foreclose on those people, unless or until there is no other way to reorganize or find assistance for those farmers. That's what this bill is all about. And honourable members complain that that is draconian; that's going to hurt the banks; that's going to hurt the farmers?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to hear honourable members opposite stand up for Manitoba farmers and quit apologizing for the banks, because that's all we've heard thus far is an apologia for the banking system. It's high time that members opposite stood up for the rights of individual farmers in this country, individual farmers who are becoming increasingly desperate, because there's no question about the kind of cost-squeeze farmers are in today.

MR. H. ENNS: Well, you're adding to the squeeze, Alvin, and you know it.

HON. A. MACKLING: Well the Honourable Member for Lakeside says that I am adding to the squeeze. I'll tell you that there'll be farmers in his constituency will want to squeeze the Honourable Member for Lakeside, but it won't be an affection of love.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a concern on this side for individual farmers in Manitoba. We demonstrated that. Our Minister of Agriculture stood up to the banking industry and said, look, let's reduce interest rates to farmers in Manitoba. He called upon the Federal Government. He called upon every provincial government to emulate the leadership of this government and this Minister of Agriculture and bring down the costs of money to farmers, the costs that they have to lay out for chemicals, for fertilizer, for rental of land, for all of the heavy cash flow that farmers are faced with, particularly the grain farmer.

And what happened? The Federal Government turned a deaf ear. The banking system wouldn't listen. No one would listen, but we reduced, we wrote off millions of dollars of the interest we were entitled to under our lending arrangements with MACC. That is leadership, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That shows that we put our pocketbook where our heart was. But what do we have opposite? We have criticism that we're going to hurt the farmer by doing it. It's all just a bunch of pith and nonsense.

A MEMBER: Pith?

HON. A. MACKLING: Yes, pith and nonsense. It's all kind of fluffy, hollow core. There's no substance — (Interjection) — well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, honourable members are a little concerned that the word might be unparliamentary. I'll tell you that there is not much pith opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a very hollow core we have over there. And I would like to see, at least before this debate is concluded on this bill, a member over there stand up and say, I'm going to break ranks because I think that what we have decided over here on our side is nonsense. I am going to stand up for Manitoba farmers, and I am going to agree to give this legislation a chance to continue to help farmers in Manitoba.

For those reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I live in hope that at least one member of the Opposition will have some feeling for the protection of his farmer constituents, and defy the kind of blind allegiance that exists to federal Conservative policy decisions which are going to ruin western agriculture in this country.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move, seconded by the Member for La Verendrye that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 5 — AN ACT TO AMEND THE TRADE PRACTICES INQUIRY ACT

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the The Honourable Mr. Mackling, Bill No. 5, An Act to amend The Trade Practices Inquiry Act, standing in the name of Mr. McCrae.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Brandon West took the adjournment on this bill on my behalf. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to be brief on this particular legislation. I don't believe there is cause for spending a great deal of time debating the legislation. Firstly, in and of itself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a rather short bill. I think it could be most easily described as a sham, as a pure, political gesture completely lacking in justification, and not in the best interests of the province and the people of Manitoba.

As we review this legislation, I think we have to review it in the context of the circumstances that Manitoba finds itself today throughout the period even of this year, in bringing in a Budget and receiving a report from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business evaluating our province today.

(Madam Speaker, M. Phillips, in the Chair)

In listening to credit rating agencies and the judgments that they have placed upon this province, we know that the Province of Manitoba has had and will have a problem attracting new investors, new businesses. This legislation in effect, Madam Speaker, gives a Minister and Cabinet the authority to proceed on public witch hunts at its own whim and at its own decision. Virtually no other jurisdiction in this country of ours gives this kind of power to a Minister and to Cabinet to politically intervene on a circumstance without having to demonstrate to anybody or justify to anybody the reasons why or the need for such intervention.

Madam Speaker, it's so unusual that the Minister — the Minister, as a matter of fact, who has just finished speaking on another piece of legislation, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs — took great pains at the news conference in introducing the legislation to assure members of the media and the public that it wouldn't likely be used. He just sees it as a fail-safe measure and he says that in all likelihood, this kind of legislation wouldn't be used because of the kind of power it places in the hands of a Minister and Cabinet.

Well, if that's the case, then why are we being asked to pass the legislation? Why do we need this so-called club, this Sword of Damocles over the head of businesses in this province of ours, if the Minister and the government don't believe that it should be necessary to use it?

Madam Speaker, the intent of this legislation is, as the Minister said in his introductory remarks, to broaden the potential usage of the act. At the present time, four

or more members of the public have to make a complaint and that complaint obviously has to be seen to have substance to give prima facie evidence of a concern about price fixing and about irregularities in the marketplace in fixing. Four or more members of the public have to publicly make a complaint about this under the circumstances of the act to cause the government to review and to get into the procedure. That's what exists today.

But, Madam Speaker, we know that even without these changes the government can set up inquiries, the government did set up an inquiry as a result of an election promise. Professor Nicolaou was asked to enter into an investigation, an inquiry into gasoline pricing in Manitoba as a result of a very ill-considered promise — although perhaps politically wise — but ill-considered promise by the Premier during the recent election campaign.

Madam Speaker, the other evidence that I think is important to consider with respect to the necessity for this bill is that the act as it exists, the one that requires four or more people to lodge a complaint about assumed price fixing or irregularities in pricing in the marketplace, that act has not been used for this particular purpose in the past 10 years. There has not been an instance in which people have come forward and said that they allege that there would be price fixing and that they require the government to intervene, to stop the marketplace from acting in a collusive manner.

I might say, Madam Speaker, that there certainly have been allegations, implications, innuendoes on behalf of members of this government in the past. We heard, for instance, the Member for Thompson say publicly that he felt there was improper pricing in gasoline at the retail level in the North. And after the former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs instituted an inquiry — an inquiry that lasted more than a year — the conclusion was that there was nothing substantive to the allegation; and that indeed, Madam Speaker, there was valid reason why the price differential in the North and that indeed the government was not prepared to act on the rationale that they'd done.

MR. S. ASHTON: Read the report.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, Madam Speaker, the Member from Thompson says, read the report. Well tell me then what the government did as a result of the inquiry? Did they go in and regulate the prices? No, they did not. Did they go in and charge the companies with any irregularity or any wrongful action? No, they did not. They simply did the report to try and save face for the Member for Thompson.

Well, Madam Speaker, this is now taking it a step further. We are changing legislation to try and save face politically for the Premier of this province, who made as I say, an ill-considered promise during the course of the election campaign, that he, personally, would intervene to regulate and reduce prices of gasoline at the retail level throughout the Province of Manitoba. It was an absolutely ridiculous statement. It was a statement that was made without fact, without consideration and concern; it was made for purely political purposes.

He has shown to have been foolish in making that statement, to have been irresponsible. He has been embarrassed throughout the province by all of the machinations that this government has gone through in an attempt to save face for their Premier. They first called one individual to make to make a public inquiry. That individual said that he couldn't report soon enough to meet the Premier's political timetable. So they then appointed at the very last hour Professor Nicolaou, who was given a weekend to do his investigation into the matter. His investigation, which has not been made public, interim investigation to come within the April 1st political deadline of the Premier was said by the former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, to indicate that he recommended the government regulate the retail price of gasoline, but Cabinet decided not to proceed with that endeavour. Then he was asked to do a further, more comprehensive study that would take place over a period of time, which he's now working on.

Then we had the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology say at their News Conference that they were going to sell gasoline at the retail level from government Highways Department pumps, to try and control the pricing in that level. All of these machinations that have made the government look like the Keystone cops in falling over themselves to try and make the Premier look good and save face for him. Now, Madam Speaker, all of the people of Manitoba are expected, and particularly all the members of this House, are expected to be drawn into this charade and to pass legislation to put in place, to legalize the opportunity of the government to cause this kind of an investigation to take place so that all of us will now be a party to saving face for the Premier, who made a foolish promise and who has lost his entire credibility as a result of many of the things, but particularly that action that he took during the election campaign.

Well, Madam Speaker, this act is being put in place purely to pull the Premier's fat out of the fire, but that is not the kind of reason why anybody should be asked to pass legislation. Surely we must have greater justification. Surely we must have some indication that there is a public interest and a need for us to proceed with legislation. Surely we don't need to simply paper this Legislature and encumber all of the people of this province with legislation on a whim, on a foolish promise by the Premier, on saving face for the Premier of this province. Surely we need more justification than that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I've spoken about the actions during the election campaign and if this act had existed during that recent election campaign, the Premier, rather than simply making a stupid and misleading promise that he would control and regulate gasoline and reduce gasoline prices in this province, would have embarked on an elaborate hoax of causing an investigation through his Minister and Cabinet, of causing an inquiry into gasoline pricing to give the impression that they were indeed acting on this, and acting immediately and with . . . Well, that isn't the kind of reason why we ought to pass legislation. We don't need to turn this government into an opportunity to have to cause an elaborate hoax to exist for the people of Manitoba as part of electioneering or as part of anything else.

Madam Speaker, it would have been a pure political manoeuvre, admittedly so was the promise, but that pure political manoeuvre would have gone into, as I say, an elaborate mechanism of inquiry to try and give the impression that they were indeed acting upon some perceived irregularity, some perceived collusive action, some perceived price fixing on behalf of gasoline companies in these particular cases.

Well, Madam Speaker, we know that Petro-Canada, which was roundly supported by this administration of NDP, Petro-Canada is part of that whole network that they are suggesting is price fixing and collusively acting in the marketplace and they, too, obviously must be very disappointed that even Petro-Canada's actions, as a window on the oil industry, has a control and an influence on gasoline pricing, Petro-Canada isn't able to reduce gasoline prices in Canada.

There are reasons why, Madam Speaker, because one of the major influences in gasoline pricing is the very action of this government in putting nine cents a litre on gasoline for provincial taxes — one of the highest levels of provincial taxes in the entire country — being put on by this administration and that, Madam Speaker, is where the problem lies, and all of the taxes that they place upon everybody in the marketplace.

Madam Speaker, we're looking at a situation in which they are wanting to draw us into justifying, by legislation, an intrusion into the marketplace where there is no prima facie evidence that exists that we should. Now, this is a direct parallel to what happened in 1981 at the federal level. There was an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* on Wednesday, June 18th of this year, that talked about the results of the five-year investigation into oil company practices in this country, and it flowed from accusations that were made at that time by Robert Bertrand, who had been the director of the company's branch, I believe it was, at the federal level, who in 1981 produced the so-called Green Books, the Green Books that alleged that there were massive rip-offs taking place in the oil industry in Canada. The Director of Combines Investigation he was.

Mr. Bertrand said at that time that he had a report that documents the greatest rip-off in Canadian history. Sorry, those are Ed Broadbent's words, and I'll correct that. Ed Broadbent, NDP Leader, cried that the report of the Director of Combines Investigation documents the greatest rip-off in Canadian history, an alleged \$12 billion overcharging of Canadian consumers between 1958 and 1973.

Dismissing the view that these charges should be aired before the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission, Mr. Broadbent demanded that the Minister call in the heads of the oil companies responsible and say to them, we, the Government of Canada, want you to roll back a few more cents to make up for the 25 years of gouging. In other words, he was saying sentence first and verdict afterwards. Instantly the alleged \$12 billion rip-off became a convenient political fact according to this editorial for Mr. Broadbent.

Madam Speaker, the government then said, well, before we sentence the oil companies and pronounce verdict on them, we'd better have a complete inquiry and a public forum to do it. So the federal commission responsible for all of this, the Restrictive Trades Prices Commission, conducted a five-year investigation to try and prove the allegations that had been accepted as

fact by Mr. Broadbent, that had been set out as his example of rip-offs throughout the oil industry. They set out and appointed the commission to a length five-year investigation.

Their conclusions said a variety of things. They had 200 witnesses, 200 days of hearings, thousands of documents. They had an exhaustive and an exhausting investigation into these allegations. The conclusions of the report say, in part, there was no proof placed before the commission that Canadian petroleum companies overcharged consumers by 12 billion or that indeed any measurable excess costs were passed on in any significant degree between 1958 and 1973, says the chairman.

That, Madam Speaker, is the kind of thing that is done when you have a non-partisan inquiry, not politically motivated, not done by a leader of a New Democratic Party, be he in Parliament in Ottawa or in the Manitoba Legislature, making false allegations, making irresponsible statements for political purposes. That is because a neutral commission of inquiry was set up to give people the opportunity that they get in any court in this land to have evidence in fact placed before them in a calm, rational and reasonable fashion and to allow people the opportunity legally to have their rights in this country.

That commission of inquiry came to that conclusion, Madam Speaker. But it goes further. Charge after charge is dismissed, according to the editorial. The commission found no evidence of collusion in any sector of the industry. The commission rejects the need for more regulation of pipelines. Supply arrangements between competing refineries do not give rise to competition problems that require general prohibitions or advance approvals. Practices with gasoline retailers have not had anti-competitive consequences.

This government was suggesting that the retailers were the problem, that they were going to get in at the retail level with their own gasoline pumps in their own highways department yards, and they were going to cut them out of their margins and get involved to try and reduce the price of gasoline.

Further, the editorial states, Madam Speaker, the inconsistencies and generalities in Mr. Bertrand's report should have alerted careful readers that there were serious problems with the director's calculations of an overcharge. That's what the commission said. But there apparently were no careful readers. There were only opportunistic politicians, suspicious consumers and the oil companies, apparently valid objects of any affront to natural justice.

A MEMBER: What editorial was that?

MR. G. FILMON: This is Wednesday, June 18, 1986, the *Globe and Mail*.

There is no pride surely in the explanation that this is the way our system works. Madam Speaker, I know that by reading this very information onto the record, I am going to be subject to the taunts, the challenges and the misrepresentation of members opposite of my position. They are going to say that I am out simply defending oil companies. Madam Speaker, I am reading into the record information that was obtained by a five-year investigation of a neutral tribunal that was placed

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on the editorial page of the Globe and Mail, one of our largest and most respected newspapers in the country, and I hold no grief or candle for the oil companies or any other large corporation because, firstly, I don't think they need to be defended. I think they're large enough and they have enough influence and enough economic authority of their own to make their own defences. I don't have to defend them and I won't defend them, Madam Speaker. They are large and powerful enough to occupy their space in this economy.

Despite the fact, Madam Speaker, that the private corporations, many of them large, provide tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of jobs in this country of our ours, despite the fact that they pay all of the taxes that are required of them, whether they be income taxes, payroll taxes, sales taxes or anything else, I won't bring myself to defend them or to justify them because I know that they are big enough and powerful enough to defend themselves.

But I am quoting from an objectively written editorial that states what could happen when you give power such as this to a government to create a political inquiry and make a political decision on what it perceives to be wrong in the marketplace without even having to justify it by virtue of obtaining a complaint from the people of this province.

At least the current act requires four or more people to come forward and lodge a complaint in a formal sense before the government can take action. This act is saying the government is going to be the judge, the investigator, the jury and the decision-maker and is going to do it all regardless of justification. They are going to have the powers that we would have in any authoritarian state almost anywhere in this world of ours, Madam Speaker. They are going to put them in the hands of that Minister and his Cabinet.

Madam Speaker, the final concluding paragraph of this editorial states, with respect to the investigation, it makes a comment on the effect of the legislators in Parliament, the irresponsible ones who demanded this inquiry and who convicted the oil companies before they even had an investigation. It says about the members of Parliament, and I'll quote, "Frequently, as much damage, distortion and cost of a serious and long-term nature is inflicted on the operation of markets and on the public by government programs as by any private sector conduct that contravenes the competition laws."

So they are saying that Parliament and government, intervening by way of their own legislative authority, create more damage than the marketplace does in all of its practices. Madam Speaker, that is why I say that this legislation is completely unwarranted, completely unjustified, and does nothing more than put political powers in the hands of this Minister and this government to cause political investigations for their own purposes, and to save the face of the Premier when he makes a foolish promise.

Madam Speaker, there is a general rule, a general understanding in all Legislatures that you don't pass legislation, you don't create laws if you don't have an indication that they are needed; that there is a demand for them; that there is a definite lack of these laws; and that this void has to be filled. You don't do that, because you don't want to put in the hands of some

foolish government in future the power to act in a way that is not in the public interest. You don't want to totally encumber all of the lives of our people. Isn't that the kind of system that we are fighting for, the democratic system that says, it's the people who are important. It's not the government who hamstring the people, who ties their hands, who completely puts its own powers over top of them, we don't want to do that. We want to allow as much liberty, as much freedom to act, as much opportunity for individualism as we possibly can.

But this law flies in the face of that, because it gives unfettered power without justification to a Minister and his government to proceed with an investigation with no justification, not even the requirement of four citizens of this province to come forward and ask for an inquiry or an investigation. Nothing of that is required. Just a political decision on behalf of a Minister is all that's required.

Madam Speaker, it is ludicrous for this Minister to say, we will be very cautious in using this power. We hope not to have to use it. All those sorts of justifying statements that he made are absolutely foolish. If he can't justify the need for the legislation, he should not be introducing it and asking this House to pass it, Madam Speaker. That's the bottom line. That's the consideration that the people of this province should expect of their legislators.

Madam Speaker, this legislation would allow this administration, or any other, to go on a fishing expedition at any time that it senses that there'd be political mileage out of going on that fishing expedition. They don't have to justify it. They don't have to come before any public body. They don't even have to have public outcry to cause them to do it, anybody creating and giving a prima facie case. Madam Speaker, it's unwarranted. It's ignorant for a government to ask for this power when it can't justify the need for the power, when it can't show on any circumstance why it would intend to use it.

Madam Speaker, I want to mention that this power isn't only to be used for dealing with oil companies or gasoline companies. That happens to be right now the topic that most easily engenders public outcry, most easily brings the government into a position of being able to agree with or pick a fight with somebody for good purposes. We've seen legislators in the past who always, when backed into a corner, would pick a fight with the railways, the CPR. People would get up and rail against the CPR because they knew it was good politics.

We saw earlier today, just a few moments ago, this Minister rail away against the banks, because he knows that they are good targets, that they are convenient patsies that he can make political mileage on. He didn't once mention the credit unions in the same breath as the banks, because he didn't want to take a risk of alienating the grass roots financial institutions who have exactly the same concerns and who are in exactly the same position as the banks. He wants to rail against the convenient target that he thinks will bring him political credit.

That is the reason why this kind of legislation is dangerous — dangerous — because it not only allows him to get up and make political speeches, it allows him to order a Commission of Inquiry and to regulate

prices based on a Commission of Inquiry that would act at his political behest. Madam Speaker, it's bad legislation from a bad government.

This Legislature should not be used to pass legislation to legitimize political witch hunts, and that's precisely what we're being asked to do with this legislation. This Legislature should not be used as a vehicle to save face for an embarrassed Premier, and that's exactly what this legislation is being used for, Madam Speaker.

Surely, there must be some reason to justify legislation, to justify giving this unfettered power to this Minister and a Cabinet. Madam Speaker, at least in the past, we required four people to lodge a formal complaint. In our system of law, Madam Speaker — (Interjection) — well, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs says he's disappointed in me. I'm embarrassed for his sake that he will go to these lengths to try and save face for his Premier. I'm embarrassed that he would contravene democratic principles to try and save political face for his Premier, Madam Speaker, because in our system of law in democracy, surely you need to have a prima facie case in order to proceed with making a charge against somebody on a formal basis.

Surely you need to have a prima facie case. Surely you need to have reasonable and probable grounds, Madam Speaker. That's a term that's used throughout our system of law, reasonable and probable grounds. This Minister, all he has to do is believe in his own distorted mind that something is definite, and he can set forth a kind of an investigation. Surely, Madam Speaker, we still believe that people are innocent until proven guilty. You don't lay charges and cause commissions of investigation without having some valid evidence that a problem exists.

Madam Speaker, we will not be a party to this sham. We will not be a party to this exercise in political face-saving for the Premier. We will not be adding to the burden of regulation and red tape that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has already criticized and said is the worst in the country for the pure political purposes of this administration.

Madam Speaker, we will be voting against this bill because we believe that it is unwarranted. We believe that it brings in powers that are unnecessary. Madam Speaker, we believe that it's bad legislation and, whether it's applied to bread, whether it's applied to clothing, whether it's applied to furniture manufacturers, whether it's applied to any commodities in this province, we believe that there's an onus on government to justify its actions before it proceeds. That onus exists in the present legislation. That onus is now going to be removed for the want of putting in massive unfettered powers for this Minister and his Cabinet, and it's not justified. It's not warranted, and we will not support it.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. G. DUCHARME: Madam Speaker, I wish to move adjournment of debate, seconded by the Member for La Verendrye.

MOTION presented and carried.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs, Bill No. 11,

standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Stand.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation, Bill No. 17, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Stand.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs, Bill No. 18, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Stand.

BILL NO. 22 — THE AGRICULTURAL CREDIT CORPORATION ACT

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Bill No. 22, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I would like to have a few minutes to comment on this bill and then recommend that it move to committee.

This is the Farm Start Program that the government introduced during the campaign period and it's another option under the MACC lending authority to obtain long-term mortgages at rates below the going market for young farmers. We cannot disagree with any reasonable program that will help young farmers obtain credit or mortgage credit at below market rates.

I have some concerns regarding this bill and I would like to put them on the record at this time. The first question I have on the bill is: does the young farmer have to attempt to receive mortgage credit from all other sources before he qualifies under this program? I believe that needs to be clarified.

Another point: will MACC set the interest rates by regulation or will the interest rate be arrived at by negotiation between the lender and the purchaser? My recommendation is that the interest rate be negotiated between the vendor and the purchaser.

I noticed in the Minister's press release that a 3 percent concession was needed in order for a young farmer to qualify under this program. I believe this may very well be too high and recommend that consideration be given that the minimum interest rate concession be more in the line of 1 percent to 2 percent. Certainly in many father/son transactions, interest rate concessions will be much less than this; in fact, I can see some instances where the interest rate concession may be as far down as zero percent interest.

No matter what the agreed-upon interest rate is between vendor and purchaser, the young farmer purchasing the land or the farm or the assets of a retiring farmer, should still be eligible for the maximum Young Farmer Rebate of 4 percent under other MACC programs. For example, I'll give you one instance that can easily happen. If interest rate concession in the purchase under the Farm Start Program is 1.5 percent,

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I believe that young farmer should then qualify for an additional 2.5 percent interest rebate under the Young Farmer Program, so he's not discriminated against by taking this program as opposed to another program that exists under MACC.

I would also like the Minister to give further consideration to increasing the Young Farmer Rebate Program under MACC, from \$50,000 to \$100,000.00.

I do not agree with the requirement in the Minister's comments of June 11, and I quote, "That the guarantee will not become effective following the purchaser's default until the vendor has himself taken all reasonable measures and procedures to enforce collection." I believe that is wrong. I believe if that is left in place, it will effectively destroy the guarantee program that the Minister is bringing in by this bill. I have talked to the Minister on this point and he's agreed that this should be removed from the bill; if it is removed, I'm prepared to support the bill wholeheartedly and recommend that it move to committee.

I would also like to have the Minister give us some explanation, in committee, about the need to change the annual year-end report, from the end of June to the end of September. I would like some reasons as to why that is so.

Basically, I believe that this bill has a useful purpose to serve in the MACC lending program, and recommend that it move to committee at this time.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for Virden for his comments and I wish to reconfirm our discussions on the matter of having the vendor exercise all options available before the corporation operates the guarantee. That was an aspect that was in discussion and we see the difficulties with that in terms of making sure that the guarantee does the work we had intended it to do. Our intent, as he indicated, is not to have those provisions, or the corporation will exercise those levers and not place that burden on the vendor.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments. The technical questions dealing with the report, I'll have staff provide that information and when the bill is in committee, we'll deal with it then. Thank you.

QUESTION put; MOTION carried.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: In view of the fact that I don't think we're prepared to discuss any further bills today, I wonder if the House would like to call it 12:30.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House to call it 12:30? (Agreed)

The hour being 12:30 then, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. Monday.