

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 15, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Economic Growth Job Creation Strategy

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):

Investor confidence is down in this province according to Statistics Canada. Prairie Research polling shows consumer confidence is in decline; outmigration is the net result. Thousands of Manitobans are leaving this province because they see no future in Manitoba. The federal Government—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (1335)

Mrs. Carstairs: The province has experienced federal Government job losses in terms of base closures, VIA jobs, Immigration staff, and so on, and the private sector. The list gets longer and longer; Wescott, Springhill, Canada Packers, Campbell Soup, Ogilvie Mills, Toro, Marr's Leisure, Molson, Wardair, LynnGold, Sprague Saw Mill, 12 major plant closures since this Government took office.

Will the First Minister tell the House what is the job-creation strategy of their Government, since it is obviously the best kept secret in the entire province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I think it is unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition is so negative, time and time and time again. Not only here in this Chamber, but everywhere throughout the province she goes, she preaches doom and gloom. Then she has the audacity to go out as our ambassador to the rest of the country, and speak in Toronto, Vancouver, and everywhere they will give her a platform, Mr. Speaker, and call Manitoba a "have-not" province and preach her doom and gloom.

It is that kind of negativism that Manitobans do not want. They want pride in their province, and they are proud to be Manitobans. They are not like people who come here and always want to make this a poor-mouth province. They do not always go around telling people how bad things are. They want to have pride in their province and they believe that Manitoba is a good place to live. They talk about the quality of life. They talk about the opportunities that they see here, and they talk about the future, which is going to be very, very positive. Taxes are coming down, opportunities are rising, and those are the positive messages that other Manitobans have. It is only—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable Leader of the official Opposition.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should put on the record that the speech in which I referred to "have not" was of course the speech I was giving on Meech Lake, a position that we are now delighted that the Government of the Day has accepted in the province and on behalf of the people of the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Trade and Tourism. Is he ashamed of telling this House what the job strategy of this Government is, or has he not yet informed the Premier?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable First Minister. Order.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will never be proud to be associated with that Leader of the Opposition going anywhere in any speech and calling us a "have-not" province. She is wrong. Manitobans know she is wrong and they do not like her saying those negative things about us across the country.

The fact of the matter is that we are projected to have the second highest overall capital investment of any province in the country, 14 percent. We are projected to have a 5 percent growth rate, one of the highest growth rates in the country this year. We are projected to continue to have a growth rate above the national average next year.

The fact of the matter is that this Leader of the Opposition is so intent on preaching gloom and doom, that is all she wants to talk about. It is that kind of negative nonsense that the people of this province do not want any more from her and from her Liberal Opposition.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, you know it absolutely amazes me that this Government seems prepared to give up equalization payments, which the basis upon which we get them is our definition as a "have-not" province.

Goods and Services Tax Housing Application

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):

My question is to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Housing sales are dropping in our community, partly because of outmigration and partly because of a lack of consumer confidence. Now we learn that federal Tories are recommending that the GST be imposed on old as well as new housing stock, thus affecting 100 percent of the housing stock in Canada.

* (1340)

Will the Minister of Finance please tell this House what the position of his Government is with regard to a GST on old as well as new housing in Canada?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): First, Mr. Speaker, I think again that some of the information that the Liberal Leader has brought forward to this House is incorrect. I understand it was the Blenkarn Committee, which is a committee representing all Parties of the federal House, that has supposedly made the suggestion that housing, new and used, have some tax applied against it, but I say for the record for at least the thousandth time, that again this Government totally finds unacceptable the goods and services tax as proposed by the federal Government.

Mrs. Carstairs: In two or three years, as my colleague from Springfield (Mr. Roch) said, it might be acceptable in the Province of Manitoba according to them.

Cross-Border Trade Impact Retail Business

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): More and more Manitobans are leaving the province to do their shopping, taking the advantage of lower prices south of the border. The volume of purchases by Manitobans is having a damaging effect on the retail and tourist trade.

Will the Minister of Finance tell the House today what studies has his department undertaken to assess the impact of this across-the-border trade on the tourist and retail trade industries in this province, and what will be the further effect of the imposition of the GST?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The last part of the question, I will respond to first. Mr. Speaker, again as the province has made representation to the Blenkarn Committee, a document made public to all the people of Manitoba, the impact of the GST, if it is to come into place, into existence as has been suggested by the federal Government, would impact the economy in the Province of Manitoba to the tune of \$250 million.

Mr. Speaker, let me say with regard to other matters, tax revenues, particularly sales tax revenues, about the only way the Government has of measuring the impact on lost sales for those of our people who tend to purchase elsewhere, I indicate to the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) that those figures are holding constant.

Cross-Border Trade Manitoba Tourism Strategy

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): A new question to the Minister of Industry and Trade. Can the Minister of Industry and Trade tell us what strategies he has put in place to encourage travel in Manitoba by residents of our province, so that they will not go south of the border and shop there, thereby denying our small business of much needed revenues?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the Leader of the Liberal Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) has asked that question.

When we took office 17 months ago, a week after we took office there was a headline in The Winnipeg Sun: Manitoba 10 out of 10 in Provinces Across Canada for Tourism. Now we are No. 1.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, the national average of U.S. tourists visiting Canada up to the end of October 1989 was in the negative; in Manitoba it was plus 10.3 percent. That is the strategy.

Mrs. Carstairs: Are not statistics wonderful? I mean it was just so god-awful before that, anything was to be an improvement, but the reality is that we are still well below every single province in this nation in attracting tourism to this province.

First Ministers' Conference Education Task Force

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): At the First Ministers' meeting, the federal Government announced its desire to have a task force on education. The Premiers applauded this move. However, yesterday the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) indicated that EPF funding, which funds post-secondary education, is going to be static for next year. Talk is cheap, but education is expensive.

* (1345)

Why was this not raised at the First Ministers' meeting and why was the Prime Minister allowed to get away with vague promises of task force while adequate funding of education is not going to be met by the federal Government?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that virtually every Premier at that meeting said to the Prime Minister, that is great, we are delighted that you are going to become involved in education, and in fact we have already had some preliminary talks with various Ministers at the federal level who are going to be involved in training and other initiatives that will be undertaken by the feds on a cost-shared basis. We said, now all you have to do is put up the money because this is going to cost money. We are delighted to be a participant in it and all we need to see is your money on the table. That was said many, many times.

Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) may not have attended all of the meetings. I know that she was out consulting with a lot of other people while she was there, and she was involved probably in Jean Chretien's campaign preparations, but I can tell you that those of us who were there at the meeting did our work, and that was one of the points that we made with the Prime Minister.

South African Embassy External Affairs Intervention

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Very serious allegations have come to the public attention in the last 24 hours dealing with activity of the South African Embassy, or the allegations of activity at the South African Embassy, with two Manitobans being recruited for what appears to be a disinformation program dealing with what all Canadians I think would call a crime against humanity with the apartheid in South Africa.

My question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is, has he contacted the Minister of External Affairs about this affair? Has there been any confirmation from the Minister of External Affairs about this serious allegation in our Manitoba communities, and what can he report to the Chamber in Manitoba about the media report that we received in the last 24 hours?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I might say that I have not had an opportunity to read the various press clippings, and have been involved with Cabinet meetings, Treasury Board meetings, and various other meetings and I am not familiar with the allegations.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, my question then to the Premier is, will he apprise himself of the media reports, and second, upon being apprised by the media reports, could he reach the External Affairs Department of the federal Government to find out whether indeed they are aware of this situation?

Will the Premier then agree to report back to this Chamber about the accuracy of the statements? I think it is a very serious, serious matter to have people alleged in our community to be working on behalf of a foreign Government in promoting a regime, a constitutional regime that I think most Manitobans would find repugnant and contrary to the very nature of our democracy.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will investigate and report back.

South Africa Diplomatic Relations Withdrawal

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, there has been a political disagreement in the country of whether calling for full sanctions against South Africa would be appropriate, and withdrawal of diplomatic relations with South Africa would be appropriate. I would ask the Premier whether he has ever discussed this matter with the Minister of External Affairs, and has he recommended to the Minister of External Affairs that indeed sanctions be placed fully against South Africa, and that we withdraw diplomatic relations with the Government of South Africa to demonstrate our strong opposition against the apartheid regime in South Africa?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I cannot recall having discussed that matter with the Minister of External Affairs.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, then my question to the Premier is, would he undertake, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, in light of the publication of this activity of the South African Government in Manitoba, will he undertake on behalf of Manitobans, if there is any involvement of the South African Government with Manitobans for a disinformation program, to demonstrate our strong opposition for the Manitoba Government, to clearly call upon the federal Government to withdraw all diplomatic relations with the Government of South Africa as is presently constituted?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the question does presuppose certain conditions, and I would want to be certain that before I am advocating a policy direction to the Government of Canada that these allegations are investigated, and then we as a Government will certainly take whatever such action we believe is necessary under the circumstances.

Cross-Border Trade Food Items

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): The Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors is calling the growing trend of Canadians buying food items south of the border an economic drain of crisis proportions. Estimates run as high as \$2 million per week of Canadian dollars going into U.S. supermarkets for food items.

Can the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) provide figures as to the dollar value of food items that are being purchased by Manitobans south of the border when they are down there on short visits and bringing these food items back into Canada?

* (1350)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information available. I will investigate if the department has that information, and report back to the House.

Dairy Products

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, a quick price comparison of dairy and poultry products would indicate that what it would cost you \$100 to buy locally can be purchased for less than \$60 if you make the same purchases south of the border.

Can the Minister indicate what are the main reasons for this major price differential on these dairy and poultry products?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that the Member for Fort Garry would know the answer to that question himself. As I have no specific information at this time, I will report back to the House.

Outlook Conference Supply Management Protection

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): I have a final question to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), where I expect to get a more comprehensive answer. Can the Minister of Agriculture tell us what proposals he will be taking to the Outlook Conference next week in terms of guaranteeing the continued viability of supply management industries here in Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Findlay: In our country, supply management produces those dairy products and the poultry products that he is talking about. Supply management has been one of the very strong bases on which our agriculture is built, on which the producers are able to extract a fair return from the marketplace. They are not the kind of farmers that are going bankrupt. They are not knocking on our door for financial assistance to bail them out of difficult situations. Supply management has served the agriculture industry and the consumers well in this country through a continuous supply, through high quality products.

The consumer has to pay a certain price for that and that is the reason for the price discrepancy between the United States and Canada. The American producers are under a high level of economic stress; the Canadian producer is not.

With regard to what we are going to take to the GATT discussions, our approach and the federal Government's approach has been consistently stated that we will be at the negotiating table to protect supply management in terms of serving the domestic market of Canada.

Canada-U.S.S.R. Trade Manitoba Representation

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): The last few years Manitobans have been developing an increased interest in developing trade links with the Soviet Union. With the size of the potential market and the sizable population of Manitobans of eastern European heritage, this is perfectly understandable.

I have been recently advised the federal Government is scheduling a series of Canada-U.S.S.R. technology transfer round tables for the spring of 1990 in Montreal, Toronto and Edmonton. These round tables are supposed to have a commercial thrust to them. My question to the Minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) is, given that more and more businesspeople from Manitoba are looking to the Soviet Union as a market, why was the Manitoba location not included as a site for this series of round tables, and did this Minister raise this matter with his federal counterpart during last week's First Ministers' economic conference?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): What we do in Manitoba and have done over the past 18 months is we have met with delegations from the Ukraine, from Poland, from Russia, from Japan, from China. We have met with those trade delegations on a pro-active basis to determine specific interests to Manitoba's needs.

You can have shotgun approaches all you want and you can have round table discussions if you want, all you want. Until you get down to dealing with one product versus one supplier versus one purchaser, no economic activity happens. I think that is what we are interested in and that is what we have been doing.

* (1355)

Ottawa Lobby Office Role

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): It is evident the Minister does not know anything about this conference and there is indeed some concern. I would suggest that he subscribe to some of the federal publications that might advise him of some of the things that are happening.

My supplementary question to the same Minister is that it is evident that he did not understand that this conference was in place and did not speak to them. Then my question is, did the Ottawa office that this Government established participate in any of the discussions leading up to the site selection for these round tables which are supposed to have a commercial thrust, not simply a theoretical thrust, and if not, will one of the roles of the Ottawa office be exactly this, to assist Ministers of this Government to identify conferences that Manitoba should have participation in?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Let me say first that through this city and through this province on a regular basis come delegations dealing with the Canadian Wheat Board in terms of exchange of trade between Russia and eastern block countries. With regard to the question of the Ottawa office, Mr. Blackwood started in our employ I believe two weeks ago. One of the functions of Mr. Blackwood is to provide information and departmental contact between various ministries of our Government and the various ministries of the federal Government. That is exactly what he will be proposing to do over his term of office.

Canada-U.S.S.R. Trade Manitoba Representation

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): Mr. Speaker, it is the same Minister. Did the Minister correspond with his federal counterpart before these sites were selected, or does he regularly or in any fashion communicate with his counterpart to ensure that Manitoba is in fact represented and adequately represented at these types of conferences that are not theoretical but have a commercial thrust to them?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the Member for Seven Oaks I believe has a fixation on some particular meeting or other. We are dealing with one specific group to one, two, or three Manitoba industries. We want to actually see the trade happen. We do not want to sit around a table and just talk about it. We want to see it happen in the Province of Manitoba for the benefit of the people of Manitoba.

We have people going through this province on a regular basis dealing with specific interests in Manitoba's industry. We do that on a regular basis. We deal with them on a regular basis and we are seeing activity happen as a result of those trade missions and one-on-one contacts.

WHMIS Program Delivery

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): My question is for the Premier. The Manitoba employers have been using the Workplace Hazardous Material Information System, referred to as WHMIS, regulations for approximately two years. There have been a number of seminars to make the employers and employees aware of their responsibilities under the new regulations. Because of the criticism the Government has received in this area, they have delivered and they continue to deliver programs in this field. Can the Premier tell us how they will deliver programs to the farmers who are dealing with herbicides and pesticides, and how will they deliver programs to the industrial arts programs when they have eliminated the position which delivers that program?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

Chief Medical Officer Replacement

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, the chief occupational medical officer's position, which is required under the Act, has been vacant for more than a year. When will the Premier have this position filled?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

WHMIS Program Delivery

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, the figures from the chief medical officer's office in the province show that deaths due to industrial accidents are up. The accidents at Bonar Plastics and Repap come to mind. The reason for that is the department is completely reactionary rather than having any preventative programs. When will the Premier have those hygienist positions filled so that you can have some preventative programs delivered in this province rather than just being reactionary because of the lack of staff in that department?

* (1400)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I will take those questions as notice on behalf of the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond).

Day Care Centres Corporate Status

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My question is for the Minister of Family Services.

On July 26, three and a half months ago, the Minister promised to review the corporate status of all private child care centres in the province. This promise was prompted by revelations four months ago that many child care centres had not in fact been keeping their corporate status up to date. Some had in fact gone beyond default and were dissolved.

Mr. Speaker, the corporate dissolution of a child care centre puts at risk the mandatory insurance which those centres are required to have for the protection of parents and children, as the Minister well knows.

We have learned that there are four centres today which continue to operate in default at the Corporations Branch. Why has this Minister continued to drop the ball on this issue? Does she not understand the importance of these centres maintaining timely annual returns at the Corporations Branch so that they do not run the risk of being arbitrarily and unilaterally dissolved?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, as the Member indicates, we did a survey to make sure that all centres were covered by their corporation status and we found that some had lapsed and we reminded them to reincorporate. If the Member has some specific centres that he would mention to me I can investigate that for him. Thank you.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the Minister said she was going to investigate it three and a half months ago. She listed a number of centres, four of which today remain in default at the Corporations Branch. She knows that after two years a child care centre is liable to be dissolved. My question is, is she aware that one of these centres, the Charleswood Children's Centre is open to be dissolved on November 30 of this year? When is she going to stop doing half a job and give those assurances to the parents of this province that child care centres maintain corporate status?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Speaker, I will investigate that for the Member and bring him back information to the House.

South African Embassy CSIS Intervention

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, this question is finally for the Minister of Justice. This Minister has in the past placed an inordinate amount of confidence in CSIS. Has he been in touch with the director of CSIS today to express his concern and find out full details, which I submit is his responsibility as the chief law enforcement officer in this province, regarding subversive activities in this province in which the Government of South Africa, through its Embassy in Ottawa, apparently has been involved in against local anti-apartheid groups? If not, will he be doing it today?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The Honourable Member is asking questions relating to the issue raised in the House today by the Honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer). The Premier has undertaken to look further into this matter and I will undertake for the Honourable Member for St. James to do the same thing, to ensure that the interests of Manitobans are protected and to ensure that the information that needs to be uncovered is uncovered and that the appropriate actions are taken.

Goods and Services Tax Administration

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has said that the complexity and additional administrative costs of the new federal goods and services tax will pressure both the federal and provincial Governments to unify their collection systems. I would like to ask the Minister, will Manitoba be prepared to set up a joint federal-provincial sales tax administration after Mr. Wilson has his GST legislation passed?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, again I say, the Government is opposed to the tax.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I would assure you that all Manitobans are opposed to this tax and the New Democratic Party is leading the fight in this province against that particular tax.

An Honourable Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, is this Minister planning any co-ordination, any co-ordination whatsoever with the federal Government, such as setting up a common collection agency once the federal GST becomes law?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, there has been no dialogue as between officials. Indeed, the federal Government is not even talking to us on the goods and services tax, and let me say—why the great joy over in the Opposition benches?—on behalf of many, many businesses in this province we have tried to gain greater information as to how the goods and services tax is going to be applied. I can tell you that we are receiving absolutely no access to how this tax is going to be implemented. So there is no discussion taking place.

Alternative

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, that is an amusing switch because we were told for so many years and so many months by this Premier and this Government that all they had to do was pick up the phone and they would have immediate access to this Conservative Government. The Minister of Finance has again said he is unhappy with this particular federal

sales tax. However, would he like to see, knowing his concern about finance in this country of ours and revenues and deficits and so on, the federal Government introduce another sales tax in its place?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what it is the Member for Brandon East is asking. Is he asking for another type of sales tax other than the GST? I mean he seems to be on all sides of this issue. I am having some difficulty really understanding the essence of his question.

Let me say for the record, and we have said it on many occasions, this Government is concerned about the redundancy of the tax collection systems that will be coming into place if the Government of Canada moves unilaterally on this GST. We do not want two sets of tax collectors to walk in the doors of businesses asking them to go over their books two or three times. That is the point that we have said publicly on the record over and over again.

Parent-Child Centres Minister's Intervention

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Support services for families, such as the parent-child centres, enhance quality of life for parents and children and can prevent costly intervention of social services in the long term. The Ministers of Education (Mr. Derkach) and Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) promised these centres they would work co-operatively with them to resolve long-term funding issues. Some co-operation, Mr. Speaker—one centre is closed; the Ellice parent-child centre was closed this Friday; and the third centre will close in two weeks.

My question to the Minister of Family Services is this: what is this Minister prepared to do, if anything, to intervene and prevent an excellent community-based support service from shutting its doors?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, both my department and the Department of Education have been working with this group to try and convince the funders of those particular centres to continue their funding.

Ms. Gray: With a supplementary to the same Minister, the bridge funders have already said, no, so this department has not been able to convince them. My supplementary question to the Minister is this: is she prepared to now intervene to assist the parent-child centres from closing their doors on Friday?

Mrs. Oleson: We have indicated consistently that this was not something that was budgeted. It would have to be approved in another budget if we were going to fund these centres. I do not know where the Member thinks we should get the money. Perhaps we should take it from day care or the mentally handicapped? Where is she suggesting we get the money?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The Honourable Member for Ellice.

Ms. Gray: The Minister does not understand the issue. The bridge funders were prepared to continue funding if they had a commitment from this Government for funding for next year. It is called multiyear budgeting.

Funding Commitment

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Why has this Minister refused to give a commitment for an inner city program, a preventative program in the next fiscal year? Why has she refused to do that?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): The Member obviously does not understand the budgeting process. We have to take things before Treasury Boards for the budget and plan for next year. That budgeting process has not taken place yet.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

* (14 10)

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

Rural Development Toll Free Services

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon has the floor.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): This Government continues to pay lip-service to the idea that rural and northern residents are entitled to Government services at the same time it is closing the Government offices such as the Motor Vehicle Branch in Flin Flon, withholding the filling of positions in rural Manitoba - (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon is attempting to ask his question. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Storie: When you are only paying lip-service and the people of Manitoba know it, they get a little anxious. My question is to the Minister of Rural Development. Can the Minister explain why residents in the community of Flin Flon and other parts of northern Manitoba, when calling the 1-800 toll-free number to the Department of Rural Development, are being told that they can no longer use the toll-free service, that they must at their own expense to get Government services use a 945 number, a number that will cost them personally or their organization money? Can the Minister explain why this policy has been changed and now rural people cannot access Government services by phone without charge?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development): I am going to take that question as notice and bring the information to the Member when I know.

Justice Department Toll-Free Services

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): My second question is to the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). Can the Minister of Justice explain why when the Flin Flon Crisis Centre phones the Justice Department they are being told that they can no longer access the services of his department unless they charge their non-profit corporation a fee, when people in Winnipeg can phone any Government department at any time without that kind of cost? Is this the kind of rural development that the Minister of Justice has in mind for the people of rural and northern Manitoba? Is that justice?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Before I became Minister of Justice, it was very upsetting to me that without any plans for the future the New Democratic Party Government of the Day would remove all of the land titles services out of the Town of Boissevain, or with little thought for anyone would actually close down an RCMP detachment in a community like Reston.

I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, coming from the Honourable Member, questions like this really do not cut much ice with me or with anyone else in this province.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting response, but it is not an answer.

Rural Services Enhancement

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): The question was, will this Government change its policy and allow rural Manitobans to access Government services like the people of Winnipeg? Will they live up to their commitment to have equality of access, a fact in Manitoba, or are they going to continue to go backwards and deny rural people access to Government services? Will the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) make a commitment to the people of rural and northern Manitoba that they will be able to access these services on an equal basis?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Throughout the history of the New Democratic Government in Manitoba they closed down services. The very service he is talking about, in terms of driver testing, was closed down in communities throughout Manitoba, a policy that was developed by the New Democratic Party in Government. They closed down Land Titles Offices, they closed down RCMP detachments, they reduced services systematically in rural Manitoba. Everything that we have done has been to reverse that trend and we will continue to do that as long as we are in Government.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Would you be so kind as to call the Bills in the following order - (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Government House Leader.

Mr. McCrae: Numbers 27, 34, 42, 53, 31, 71, 72, 81, 82, 6 and the remainder as they appear on the Order Paper?

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 27—THE FISCAL STABILIZATION FUND ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 27, The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act; Loi sur le Fonds de stabilisation des recettes, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Thompson, the Honourable Member for Thompson.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I appreciate the opportunity to participate in debate on this Bill. I think it has provided an interesting comparison in terms of the views of the various Parties on this particular Bill. It is an important Bill in the sense it is essentially part of the budget that was introduced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), and has to be looked at in that context. In fact, that makes it probably one of the more important Bills this Session, in the sense that this is clearly an item which reflects the Government's budgetary policy and is not in the same category as many of the other Bills.

We have currently a significant number of Bills on the Order Paper and while some of them are significant in their own rights, most of the 84 Bills, not all of which of course are Government Bills, but most of them I think could be classified as being housekeeping Bills, Bills that bring in amendments. They perhaps do have some significant impact in terms of the Bills involved, but are not necessarily that indicative of Government policy, and that is why I found it interesting, very interesting, in listening to the debate on this, and we have had a fairly significant debate at this point in time. In fact, we have had probably over 20 Members of the Legislature speak on this Bill and I think that is pretty good.

I note, for example, that there has been a fairly even balance in terms of the number of speakers. In fact there have been speakers from all three Parties, and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the same enthusiasm that the Liberals have shown in speaking on this Bill they might also wish to do in terms of some other Bills, particularly Bill 31, which I have been told, by Liberals, it is going to be spoken to by only two Members, that is the final offer selection Bill and I find that interesting because we will be speaking, every single one of our Members will be speaking on that.

The Liberal Members talk about quality, not quantity. I would suggest they have a lot to learn about both in terms of their contributions because there was certainly no quality shown in terms of understanding Bill 31 and I will get into that when I do deal with that Bill because I think it is interesting that, while the Liberals have found the intestinal fortitude to speak on this particular

Bill, they have signalled on other Bills, other major Government Bills, that they do not want to discuss them.

I would suggest to them, though, Mr. Speaker, that in the eight years that I have been in this Legislature, and there are other Members that have been here longer than I have, that one thing that has been clear throughout that period of time is that people do not have the luxury in this House of ducking issues, and that includes the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) who I understand is planning, or at least I challenged him to a run in the constituency of Thompson, to put his mouth where his mouth is, to rephrase a statement, but we will get into that at another point in time.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that Members should realize that on important Bills the key half a dozen, or a dozen Bills in a Session, it just simply is not good enough for them to be selective and only speak on the Bills that they require, because in fact I would suggest they will be held more accountable by their constituents and by the people of this province for trying to duck debates on particular Bills. I think that is fairly important and I look forward for seeing, for example, later today, when we do get into final offer selection, if we do get into it, I realize it is down the Order Paper, where the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) completes his comments, to see the Liberals leaping to their feet trying to defend the indefensible, and that is, their position on that particular Bill, because they have been very enthusiastic on this Bill. They have been making this one of their key focal attacks on the Government and I find it interesting because I would say that the response of the Liberals to the budget, in general, has been their major political mistake as a Party in this Legislature since they have really been a fully functioning Party, even after the election.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am not too sure what Bill the Member from Thompson is speaking on and I would ask him that maybe he be somewhat relevant.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Concordia, on the same point of order.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Logic in debate and ignorance of that logic is not a point of order, for the Member for Inkster. If he cannot follow it, perhaps he should take a refresher course, not raise supercilious points of order in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), I would ask the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) to make sure that his remarks are relevant. The Honourable Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I will state this very clearly for the Member for Inkster—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Inkster is up on a new point of order. Order, please. The Honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a new point of order. According to Beauchesne's Rule No. 491 it says that all Members are Honourable, and I would ask the Leader of the third party to apologize and withdraw his last remarks that are recorded in Hansard.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Concordia, on that same point of order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly call all Honourable Members honourable, including the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). What I am questioning is his lack of logic in following a debate on a Bill that is tied to the budget, but certainly not in any way suggesting that the Member is not honourable, just a little slow perhaps.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to thank the Honourable Member for Concordia. The Honourable Member for Inkster did not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make it very clear, I am talking about the debate that took place in the budget. This Bill was a major part of the budget—in case the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has forgotten that.

I realize that the Liberals would probably like to forget what happened on the budget, and the stance they took, because I remember at the time they were full of bravado. They were going to huff and they were going to puff, and they were going to bring the Government down on the budget, except they forgot one thing. One of the basic elements of the budget was the \$61 million tax cut for families in Manitoba. You know when we listened to the budget, and we looked at the full impact of the budget we indicated quite clearly right off the bat that we had no problem supporting that.

It was something that we had been talking about ourselves. We talked about a \$58 million tax break for working families, and I realize the Liberals have some sensitivity because they have had difficulty in explaining their stand—whether it be on the fiscal stabilization fund, which is a key element of the budget, or whether it be in terms of the tax cuts. I know the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is very sensitive on this because I am sure he must have a difficult time in the north end trying to explain to people how he and his Party voted against tax breaks, voted against tax breaks for working families that would have benefited many people in his constituency.

If we have joined with the Liberal Party in huffing and puffing and blowing the Government's house down

on the budget, we would have been in the situation where those tax breaks would have not gone forward to working families. I think that would have been a tragic situation. I have said in other context, Mr. Speaker, whether it be in terms of what is happening in terms of Conawapa, in northern Manitoba, and a number of other elements.

While we are growing frustrated with this Government, and growing increasingly frustrated, we do not regret our decision to make this minority Government situation work, and particularly during the budget debate. We do not regret that at all, and the response that we have received has been exceedingly positive from Manitobans in showing what I think was a responsible attitude, something that the Liberals did not do whether it was in regard to the tax breaks that were outlined in that budget, or in regard to this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker.

You know it is interesting because the Liberals are shifted dramatically in the last six months. They had signalled at the start of this Session that they were pretty well going to try and sink the Government at each and every opportunity. I consider that irresponsible. If there is a major matter of principle that we in the New Democratic Party cannot live with in terms of the policies of this Government, yes, we will defeat the Government. That has to be made absolutely clear.

Mr. Speaker, we will not do it like the Liberal Party did out of nothing more than the political opportunism at the time. They were desperate for an election, and so they should have been. Since they had voted against tax breaks for working people, and since their agenda for Manitobans has become clearer to the people of this province they have received, I think, a negative reaction, a very strong negative reaction from people, and it has been particularly noticeable in the City of Winnipeg which has been their base since their resurrection, their phoenix-like resurrection in Manitoba just over 18 months ago. We have seen that they have shifted quite dramatically in their approach. We are seeing that in the discussion of various different departments in terms of Estimates, and we are seeing this in terms of various Bills. All of a sudden the Liberals are not talking about sinking the Government every second day. It is interesting because I think they were burned by what happened.

I want to make it very clear to the Liberals as well as the Conservatives that we are growing frustrated about the Conservative policies in a number of key areas, and that may indeed lead to the defeat of this Government. I believe they should be aware of that, they should be cognizant of the fact that we are growing increasingly concerned. We are concerned about a number of the Bills on this Order Paper. Ironically, we are the ones fighting those Bills, not the Liberals. We are dealing, Mr. Speaker—the Liberals laugh, but I want to see where they are going to stand on Bill 31, when they are actually going to get up the courage to fight it out there and explain to the people of Manitoba why they wanted to sink the Government six months ago, but when it comes to major matters of principle that affect the working people of this province they are in

there all the way with the Conservatives, in fact leading the Conservatives on their attacks on working people. I want to put the Government on notice on that. I feel they are headed down the path where we indeed may see, on a number of issues, that we in the New Democratic Party will, on a matter of principle, defeat this Government.

We will not, as the Liberals did, try and defeat the Government based on a budget where I think it was, in terms of the tax breaks at least and a number of other measures, quite a positive development for Manitobans. I think that was something that was very clear in our debate on the Budget Speech and similarly on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

It is interesting, watching the Liberals on this particular fund. They were locked into a path in basically the debate on the Budget and their approach of voting against the Budget. They were locked into a path of having to reject the Budget out of hand. They were embarrassed by the fact they were voting against the tax breaks.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

So what they have done is they have fixed a great deal of their focus in this Legislature in debate on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. They are trying to suggest that this was really the key feature of the Budget, the only feature of the Budget, and that they as a matter of principle are opposed to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. That may wash within their caucus. That may be what they are talking about in terms of this particular Bill, but one of the problems they have is that while they are on the one hand criticizing us for our position in the New Democratic Party of saying that, well, we may have some difficulties in terms of the accounting principles of this Bill, but we are not opposed to having a fund that can be accessed to deal with the needs of Manitobans.

The Liberals are trying to have it both ways. They are trying to oppose the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, yet rise daily and ask for more expenditures on this or that or the other program. That is unacceptable, absolutely unacceptable on behalf the Liberals, because that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is—and I am not using this in terms of any particular member but I am referring to the Liberal Party, that is essentially hypocrisy on the part of a political Party, to be able to stand up and oppose something like this and not deal with the consequences. I think that has been the height of irresponsibility on behalf of the Liberal Party.

I think they basically, as of the last Budget, decided that they will be against virtually any and everything that the Conservative Government does. They have been less vociferous the last number of months, interestingly enough. They will be against virtually everything unless it affects working people, in which case they will support the Conservatives, and I hope they will explain that when we reach that in debate. They have taken that particular approach, and I think it has locked them into a position that is untenable as far as the people of Manitoba are concerned because they expect better than this.

It is a difficult decision, when one looks at things responsibly, it was not an easy decision on this particular Bill. We discussed it at length. As I said, there are some flaws in the Bill and I am not suggesting that it is perfect. The one things that is clear is the fact that this, and the bottom line, is something we will not vote against because we do not wish to see the funds that will be set up in this particular fund lapse. We feel that the funds perhaps should be spent in terms of the health care needs in Manitoba, for example, education needs, job creation. We are seeing a worsening situation in Manitoba this past several months, a much worse situation.

* (1430)

I would suggest to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)—and I believe, if I remember correctly, he was very critical of the Jobs Fund when he was a critic. I know a number of them voted against it, including the Minister of Finance. I find that ironic, because there are certain parallels to a certain extent between this and the Jobs Fund. There are certain parallels, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Liberals spoke against the Jobs Fund although I do not believe they voted against it, which is another thing that the Liberals became masters of the art of doing. It was a bit easier when they only had one Member, and they had to deal internally only with their splits.

The fact is on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund I think there are parallels to the Jobs Fund, and there are parallels in the situation that we are dealing with, at the current time, because there are needs in Manitoba that need to be dealt with. There are needs that need to be dealt with. I mentioned a number of them in terms of health care, child care, art of doing. It was a bit easier when they only had one Member, and they had to deal internally only with their splits.

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Let us talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about a development in northern Manitoba the last several weeks in terms of Lynn Lake. One thing that concerns me greatly as a Northerner is the fact that at the current time this province has done very well out of mining, very well indeed. The Minister of Finance knows it. We have received, as a Government, as a provincial Legislature, substantial revenue from the revenues that come from, especially my own constituency, the nickel mine and

other successful mines in northern Manitoba, substantial amount of money.

I believe that one of the things that should have been considered in the Government's negotiations with Lynn Lake was the establishment of an enhanced mining reserve fund. We have had a mining reserve fund since the Schreyer period. I know it was very useful during the early 1980s when the mining industry was in a major slump.

I know in my own community and other communities it was used as a job creation program to build many needed community facilities, but it simply is not of the magnitude to deal with the situation that you are faced with in Lynn Lake, not of the magnitude you are dealing with in terms of the magnitude of a closure of a community.

You know whether it be through the Fiscal Stabilization Fund that we tap into revenues—particularly mining revenues because essentially it is something we are transferring over a period of years, a transferring from those mining communities that are doing well to others that are not. I would say, in my own constituency, there will be full support for using some of those mining revenues to help communities such as Lynn Lake, help them survive, and help them in terms of other opportunities.

I think that is something we need to look at and in terms of speaking on this particular Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that is something that the Minister should look at, whether it is set up as a separate fund. I believe the Fiscal Stabilization Fund could be functioning in that particular role as an enhanced mining reserve fund.

I think that is important because the sad part, with what is happening in Lynn Lake at the current time, is the fact that people are not just losing a job. In many cases people have found other jobs in other communities, but we are losing a number of things. We are losing a community, a community that has been part of Manitoba, a pioneer for northern Manitoba, since the 1940s. How can you assess the loss of a community and the feeling that goes with a community, the contribution of that community to the province? How can you assess that in dollars and cents?

In another way, there is a way you can assess the loss and that is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the loss of people's houses, in many cases their life savings. It is something we all deal with in the North. We all realize that in single industry communities times will be good and times will be tough and that perhaps some day the community will close. Who cannot in this Legislature feel for the people of Lynn Lake who are going to lose in many cases their life savings and their home?

I talked to some people from Lynn Lake who were very concerned just a week ago, in terms about the future of the community. I have talked to people who bought houses three or four days before the announcement of the closure of the mine, who have put in \$50,000, \$60,000, and \$70,000 of their life savings to purchase a house, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I would like to ask the Members in this Legislature, Members from the City of Winnipeg, the

rural Members, how they would feel, how people in their community would feel, if they were going to lose their houses, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they were going to lose their savings, and that is the essential issue we are dealing with.

You know, we have been fortunate as a province, and I think one of the essences of Government, certainly my own approach to Government, is that we should share our resources and our talents. We should have a sense that Manitoba is one community and that we all are neighbours. We are only a million people. We have a large area, but we are only a million people.

I really believe that whether it be in the City of Thompson that I represent, whether it be the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) or the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), each of us should feel for the people in those communities, and more than that, should act.

I would suggest that one way in which that could be done would be in terms of this particular fund. As I said, it could take the place of what I think would be a better proposal, and that is a mining communities reserve fund, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think it could provide the funds, and I believe the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), if he were to look at the current fiscal situation, would recognize that the provincial Treasury has done rather well this past year because of the mining industry, because of the tax increases that had taken place previously, because of a situation with the American dollar vis-a-vis the Canadian dollar, the general level with interest rates.

We have done well as a province, and one of the reasons the provincial Government was able to set up this fund is because there was in essence a surplus. I think that is important to note for the record, because some Conservative Members like to suggest that the finances of the province were not left in a sound shape. That is not true.

When one looks at the situation that we are dealing with today, they were able to have a surplus after only a year in Government, because of the actions taken by the previous Government, because of developments in the economy. It would be the mining industry or the economy generally.

I do believe that instead of simply trying to transfer that surplus over a period of time to cover future deficits to make the province's books look equally as good in other years, when in actual fact on a year-over-year basis they would not necessarily look as good, it is important that we look at the present needs of Manitobans, and I point once again to Lynn Lake.

Is there not some way that we can have this fund passed, have this fund put in place and have this fund provide resources to people in those communities? You know, I mentioned earlier the cost to the people in those communities.

Let it also be known to people in this Legislature, in case they are not aware of this, that many of the workers at Lynn Lake will not even receive the severance pay they are duly entitled to, because of the fact that the company will go into receivership. People will come

out of there with nothing. They will lose their life savings. They will lose their severance pay. They will be plucked from a community, pulled out of a community that they have made their homes in.

I have talked to people, and to think of the 20-, 30- and 40-year residents of that community, which there are, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that community has been in existence since the 1940s. It really is a horrendous situation that we are looking at.

I really feel personally for people in Lynn Lake, because having pretty well grown up in Thompson, remembering when I was in school in Thompson, remembering Lynn Lake as one of those fixtures in the North, part of the foundation of northern Manitoba, I really have a great deal of difficulty in seeing that community being closed down at this point in time, because that is essentially what will happen. There will be some people left, but the heart will be taken out of that community by the closure of that mine.

I do believe that the Government, if it had taken a different approach in negotiations, could have kept that mine open. I believe that, and I believe that the people in Lynn Lake believe that as well. Like, I know they do. That is what they have said. They have been very concerned about what the Government has failed to do in negotiations by putting different items on the table at the last minute in terms of preventing a settlement that could have kept that mine in operation.

I am very disappointed in terms of what has happened, but you know, if that has taken place, if it is something we cannot reverse, the least this Government can do is look at providing revenue from, I mentioned before, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to the people of that community, first of all in terms of providing adjustment assistance to people in that community to provide at least some sort of compensation for the losses that will take place.

Second of all, try other industry and other jobs in that community, because while it is difficult in remote northern communities to establish alternate industries, Lynn Lake does have some areas of strength in terms of tourism, for example. I believe that if they had the funding in place, if they had the funding resources, they could create jobs, not the 250 jobs that have been lost. Let nobody have the misimpression that is what I am talking about. I recognize that is not going to take place. The people of Lynn Lake recognize it is not going to take place. There are jobs, tourism, a service industry, that already exist in that community that could be expanded upon. There is an economic base there, there always will be in Lynn Lake. It will be a shadow of its former self because of the mine closure. If there is an effort built on that foundation to expand, I believe that we can see some major developments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for that community.

* (1440)

I talked about that. I want to talk in terms of the health care system for a moment, too, because I believe that there are expenditures that could be funded out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in terms of that. It is interesting, in terms of having sat through close to 30

hours now of Health Estimates with my colleague from the other Opposition Party. We both have been asking the Government a series of questions in terms of health care needs and health care funding.

You know, it is interesting because at some points in time it has been clear, although the Minister has often refused to acknowledge it, that you are dealing in any budget situation, particularly in Health, in terms of priorities. That is one of the things we are dealing with, is the priorities of this Government. I do not agree with all their priorities in terms of the health care system. While there may have been some initiatives that have been taken that have been positive, I do not agree with some of the priorities that have been shown. There are needed programs that have not been funded because they have been told, essentially, there is no money available.

The In Vitro Fertilization Program, for example, which was offered as a non-funded program from the Health Sciences Centre, starting in 1986, had to close its doors last year because the Government refused to provide funding to that program as a funded service. The interesting situation, for the Liberal Member, I said it was an unfunded program in 1986, and I believe that it should have been made a funded program to keep it going, at least for a year or two, while it was establishing itself. I believe we are in agreement, both Opposition Parties, in terms of the need to do that.

What I find ironic is if you look at what the families that were waiting for that program, the 65 people on the waiting list, 65 couples, one thing they said is they did not mind paying the fees, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all they wanted, initially at least, was support from the Government to fund the deficit which the program had incurred.

I do not think that program was given the fullest opportunity to develop. I believe it was a mistake on the part of the Government not to provide the funding. You know what the Minister did in Estimates? The Minister suggested it was a Health Sciences Centre decision to close it down. Well, technically that is correct, but who can blame the Health Sciences Centre? This program was an unfunded program, it was set up under certain budgetary assumptions that did not take place. What the Health Sciences Centre had to choose between was keeping that program open as an unfunded program and taking away from other programs in that facility, or closing it and putting those resources into other health care needs. They had to deal with those priorities, and it is not fair, it is not correct for the Minister to wash his hands of it.

Obviously, the provincial Government made the decision that they would not provide funding through the Health Services Commission for the provision of that program. I think that is something that has to be very clear on the record. You know, it is ironic again in the sense that the health budget was underspent dramatically last year. We were looking at a situation where there was underspending in that department of close to \$30 million. So, even within their own department, the approved budget, they did not spend the amount that was allotted by this Legislature.

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is something also that has to be noted for the record in terms of that

program and other needs in the health care system. It is fine for the Government to turn around and say, we do not have the resources, we do not have the money, in terms of health care, but that is not necessarily an accurate statement.

I want to talk about Family Services for a moment because essentially the same thing is being said to day care workers, to the crisis centres. I know in my constituency, the Crisis Centre, which is going through the experience of having to close its office, it has been open for 10 years and reduced services because of budgetary problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think it is important that the Government recognize that one of the frustrations that I know people in my constituency, and probably even more than most, is that people realize just how well this provincial Government has done out of the community of Thompson, out of the mining revenues and just how difficult it is to get the provincial Government to put back in some of that money into needed services. It is not fair for them to turn around and use the same old arguments that, well, we do not have the money, or else they bandy around percentage figures. I was talking to people at the Crisis Centre just yesterday, and they were saying, well, it is fine for the Conservative Government to talk about 47 percent, but how much of it is getting to the Crisis Centre in that community, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Far from that amount, far from that and the Minister knows it. It is the same thing in day care, there have been all sorts of figures bandied around in terms of how much money is going to day care, but the fact was that the day care workers received an increase of 25 cents an hour this year. That was it and they received letters.

The most incredible letter I have ever seen written by any political Leader in this province was the letter that was written to day care workers across the province. You know what that letter said, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It was written by the Premier (Mr. Filmon). It said that one of the reasons that more money could not be put into day care was because of the forest fires in northern Manitoba.

Now I was at a meeting that was called by interested parents and day care workers in my community, more than 60 people came out on a Sunday to discuss this issue because of their concern. When the representative from the Cabinet office in Thompson read this letter, I can tell you the reaction was one of amazement, people were stunned that the First Minister would try and suggest that there was a trade off between funding for day care workers and forest fires, that is absolutely unacceptable. What nonsense! Was the First Minister suggesting that day care workers should fund the forest fire prevention efforts the amount of money, they would have to go in and fight the forest fires? Was that what they were suggesting?

Well, the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) suggests that was it and I think that was the sense that people had, that they were being asked to foot the bill for that but where was the money the Minister now feels he can put into this Fiscal Stabilization Fund? Should not funding for the forest fires, if it was an unusual expense, come out of this Fiscal Stabilization Fund the Minister has set up? Why does there have to be this trade off?

I do not think people in Winnipeg would have realized it to the same extent because the forest fires did not affect people in Winnipeg, but if you are living in a community in northern Manitoba and you are a day care worker and you are told by the Premier of this province that you cannot receive a higher increase in your salary, you cannot receive more than a 25 cent increase because of the cost of fighting the forest fires, that is an insult. I do not know whether the Premier wrote that letter or somebody wrote it for him and he signed it, whether he actually supports those statements or whether he would now repudiate them, but I found that to be highly insulting and not only myself but the people who were at that meeting.

I wish there was more attention paid to just how the provincial Government is essentially speaking out of both sides of its mouth. On the one hand with the Fiscal Stabilization Fund they talk about the funds that they do have available to put away in this fund, and yet when they are faced with health care needs or needs in terms of family services or other important needs, what is their answer? Oh, well, we do not have the funds, we do not have the funds available and that simply is not true.

No one is suggesting this provincial Government has unlimited funds available but it has far more than it makes out to be. What it does when it says to various groups "we do not have the funding" is it shows its priorities because that is essentially how we have to analyze, to my mind, how any Government performs. Different Governments face different fiscal situations, different economic situations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at different periods of time and what is important is to look at the priorities that they follow, the decisions they make under each and every circumstance.

What is interesting, and I think what is the achilles heel of this Conservative Government, is the fact that while they have a fiscal situation that has dramatically improved, partly because I said the world economy, partly because of the mining situation, and partly because of the actions taken by the previous Government, they have a substantially improved fiscal situation. In dealing with people, as much as they try, they still come across as Tories in terms of dealing with the social service needs, the health care needs of this province. I know that is disappointing—

An Honourable Member: Good word.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) says "good word." Well, I do not know if it is a good word because a Tory is a Tory is a Tory except in this House when they are in a minority Government situation, they try and pretend they are anything but that. They do not want any association with their Tory colleagues in Ottawa. The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) I am sure is going to resurrect his proposal from a couple of years ago to change the name of the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba to some other name. We all remember that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, where is the Minister of Justice and the rest of them when it comes to election time? They were out there campaigning with their federal

counterparts, they were campaigning for Dorothy Dobbie in Winnipeg, they were campaigning for Jake Epp, they were campaigning for each and every one of those Conservative Members of Parliament. I defy any Member of the Conservative Caucus in this province to get up and say that they did not support the Conservative Party in the last federal election because I know they all did.

* (1450)

They all faithfully went out there, including the Premier who now likes to be tough when he is talking to Brian Mulroney, as tough as he can be. He tries to stare down Brian Mulroney, we saw it at the First Ministers' Conference. I was not exactly overly impressed because he is tough, or tries to be anyway, when he is in this Legislature. Maybe if he takes some of that and takes it out on the Prime Minister we might get somewhere but that is another question.

The fact is, where was this Premier during the last federal election? Was he out there saying, Brian Mulroney, is a disaster for Manitoba? No, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Less than a year ago he was out there arm in arm with the Prime Minister because they are Conservatives and it is the same thing provincially. We are beginning to see that history repeats itself.

This Government is trying desperately to erase the memory that people have of the Sterling Lyon era. I know it is difficult, the First Minister was a Minister in that Government, many of the front bench Members were leading Members of that Government. They are trying to erase the image of that uncaring Government, probably a Government that has the reputation of being one of the most vicious in Manitoba history. The most vicious, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I remember well what they did to health, what they did to education, what they did to job creation and the economy. You know what is happening is despite the efforts to erase that, history is beginning to repeat itself.

Has anybody been looking at the statistics in Manitoba in terms of provincial outmigration? The fact is we have net outmigration for the first time since 1980. We have a Conservative Government today, we had a Conservative Government then. There is a connection, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a very real connection. It is because this Government does not have an economic policy to deal with the situation.

I found it very entertaining yesterday. The First Minister sometimes is quite entertaining in his answers, I would not say factual, but if they do not blame the situation, as does the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), on Pierre Trudeau, they are still trying to blame the economic situation on the previous Government. Yet the facts show that we were far better off a year and a half ago and two years ago and three years ago in terms of all the lead economic indicators than we are today.

For all the efforts at creative statistics that they have gotten into, the fact is we have dropped to fourth in terms of unemployment, we have net outmigration for the first time. They can selectively try and pluck out statistics all they want, the fact is that the people of

Manitoba know that, they know that when it comes to job creation that the Tories cannot be trusted because they are Tories, because it is against their ideology and they will not move with job creation, and that is why, as much as they can put that mask on that they do at times of being a different Party, people see through that. I really believe that these are the Achilles' heels of this Government. These will be the Achilles' heels.

What will be heard across this province, I think, time and time again will be, what are their real priorities, what is their real agenda in terms of health and education and social services? Where is the economic plan? They are going to be asking questions about that.—(interjection)—Well, the Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) I think probably released the Tory agenda as much as anything else and it is probably accurate.

The only thing that the Conservatives wanted to do last time—and they thought the solution to all their problems would be to defeat the NDP, that is what the Member for Portage is suggesting. But the fact is, a year and a half later—and if the Member for Portage would look at the statistics, if he would look in his own community which has been devastated by his political Party, there has been more devastation in Portage because of the Party that he is a card carrying Member and supporter of in the last year and a half than in the entire history of that community. If he would look at that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he would realize how ridiculous the statement he made was.

Sure, they defeated the NDP Government. Well, I would say that if he was to look at it in terms of what happened, he will know what the reasons were behind that. I have discussed this at the Legislature many times, the problem was in terms of things like Autopac, and it is interesting because let the record show that I have said this to my constituents, where are the lower Autopac rates? Where are these 30 percent and 40 percent cuts in Autopac rates that people were expecting? They do not exist because that Party, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was hypocritical in the last election and remains so today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member's time has expired. Is the House ready for the question? The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that debate on Bill 27 be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 34—THE LOAN ACT, 1989

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 34, The Loan Act, 1989; Loi d'emprunt de 1989. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I am pleased to be able to join the debate on Bill 34, The Loan Act, 1989. Some of us who have been through a number of Sessions

know the intent of this Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what changes from time to time, from fiscal year to fiscal year, of course are the requirements for borrowing by a particular Government.

We have, today, before us a Bill that includes substantial borrowing authority being provided to the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board, the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, the Manitoba Telephone System, the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, the University of Manitoba, the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corporation, as well as some business support, one called the Vision Capital Fund, Industrial Opportunities Program and Manufacturing Adaptation Program.

I do not propose to talk at great length about the specific clauses of the Bill. One of the benefits of being able to speak to The Loan Act is that it gives one certain leeway in commenting on Government policy in the area of fiscal responsibility. I am going to speak at some length on the Government's approach to the management of the affairs of the Province of Manitoba and will also speak on the question of the loan authority that is being given to our Crown corporations and the money that is being set aside, supposedly for business support.

An Honourable Member: When did you last speak briefly?

Mr. Storie: I have been asked when I last spoke briefly and that was I think '69; it was '69 I spoke briefly for a minute.— (interjection)— The Member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) has it right, they were "I do" or I think it was actually "I will" but be that as it may.

I want to start by commenting on the Business Support portion of this loan authority. I have heard from several sources that the Government of Manitoba, particularly the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), has been indicating to people that the reason this Government does not prepare and put into place any business programs, have not developed an economic development initiative is because The Loan Act has not been passed.

Well, the Government may want to prepare excuses for public consumption, but I hope they are not kidding themselves. This Government has now passed two budgets, or is working on the passage of two budgets, and they have had ample opportunity to introduce business programs, new business development programs, housing programs, programs to stimulate the provincial economy, and they, not the Opposition, they, the Government, have chosen not to do anything.

* (1500)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the lack of action is symptomatic of a Government that is conceptually bankrupt. There is not one Minister on the bench that is dealing with economic affairs, the economic circumstance of this province, that has a clue.

The fact of the matter is, the Government came into power with a series of initiatives underway; the Venture Capital Program, another series of Jobs Fund related

programs that were used to stimulate the development of our economy in one way or another; the Technology Commercialization Program, the idea that we could transfer technology from our universities and our research endeavours, and transfer it over to private enterprise for the development of new ideas.

The Government, since their election in April of 1988, have consciously chosen to be a do-nothing Government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government's attitude, when it comes to economic development, so closely parallels the Lyon administration that it is frightening.

I believe Manitobans have seen the first symptoms of this paralysis on the part of this Government, the first symptoms. The figures that were released in the Free Press that related to housing, employment and outmigration of people from this province are a forerunner to serious economic problems in the Province of Manitoba.

I want to say categorically that if any Member of the Government—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want it understood very clearly if the Government of the Day or any of its Ministers, including the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) is indicating to anyone in the public that the reason the Government has not acted in introducing business support programs, industrial opportunities programs, manufacturing adaptation programs is from a lack of their own. They have the power and the authority as executive Government to do as they see fit for the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government cannot use as an excuse the inability of this Government to complete its legislative agenda. It would be digressing to say that if the Government has failed to move its agenda forward, the legislative agenda forward, it is also a fact that the Government has to take responsibility for that.

They have continued to add legislation to our legislative package in a piecemeal fashion. They are the authors of their own fate when it comes to the circumstances of the Legislature as we find it today. The Government should not be using this excuse, and anytime people phone me or talk to me about the Government's lack of economic initiative I place the blame squarely where it belongs, with the Government of the Day and their attitude to—their laissez-faire attitude has been used in this Chamber before when it comes to economic development.

The Government has failed. The past 18 months, the past almost 20 months now, have been depressing ones for many regions of the province. The depression is no deeper than in northern Manitoba where we had a series of mine closures, where programs like the previous Community Places Program, which supported community activity, the building of infrastructure in our communities, has been virtually decimated.

I believe the last release from the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) indicated that there were two projects approved in remote northern Manitoba. Well, that is a dismal record. It reflects the program changes that were made to the guidelines back in 1988. It reflects the lack of interest

on the part of the Government in developing our communities, in recognizing the differences between northern communities and some southern communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is only one of the many reasons for the emotional state of many Northerners. There is a depression setting in. There is a degree of uncertainty and frustration that is almost palpable. People are disappointed, they are anxious about their futures and why should they not be. This Government has chosen not to be involved, not to get itself involved, in supporting mining communities throughout the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Community of Sherridon, which believed for a brief period of time in 1988 that they had a future, that there were 140 people that were going to be employed, that there was new opportunity, new hope for their community, had those hopes dashed.

It would be unfair of me to say the Government was entirely to blame. Clearly the company, Pioneer Metals, has to bear some of the responsibility. In fairness, the price of gold has dropped considerably since the project was first conceived.

The fact of the matter is, the Government did not intervene. It did not use its considerable expertise in the Department of Energy and Mines. It did not use its considerable expertise in Manitoba Mineral Resources. It used none of its economic power. It did not tap into the Mining Community Reserve Fund. It did not support, in principle, the Mining Community Development Fund, and it left the community to die a quick and painful death.

Only a few months later, Tartan Lake, another project north of Flin Flon, was closed without the Government lifting a finger to attempt to resolve its problems, to see if it could provide some assistance in one way or another. Again, we saw the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) sitting comfortably on his hands while my constituents lost jobs and while their families' futures were jeopardized with apparently no consideration for -(interjection)- Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs chirping again from his seat, "we did nothing."

The Member may not recall, in March of 1988 when the Government, in partnership with HBM&S, chose to invest 49 percent in Callinan mine development to secure the ore reserves for the Flin Flon operation. The Government of the Day did that.

What did this Government do? Did it follow through with that commitment? Did it follow through and say, yes we are going to be a partner with HBM&S, we are going to benefit with them, we are going to support them in the tough times? No they bailed out. It cost the Province of Manitoba literally millions of dollars in the process. What they have done is abandoned the North. They abandoned the community of Sherridon. They abandoned the miners at Tartan Lake, and now they have abandoned Lynn Lake.

There are some things that need to be put on the record. The First Minister continued to rise in this House and said, "this is the most generous offer, we have offered \$24 million to this company."

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I offered you a million dollars for your house it would sound very generous, but when we learned that one of the conditions of you accepting that offer was you gave me your children, no amount of money would be good enough, and that is what the Government did.

It said, on the one hand, we are offering the money, and underneath there were conditions that were so onerous and so unacceptable that the deal could never be done, the company said as much, the mayor of the community said as much, and the president of the local steelworkers said as much, as well. Those are the facts.

Every time the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stands up and says he did his best, he makes a mockery of the truth, he makes a mockery of the truth, because the Government never intended to salvage those negotiations. It was a public relations effort, and as the public relations effort, even that was a failure, because the people of northern Manitoba have not been fooled. They have not been misled by the real intentions of the Government.

When you have a community the size of Lynn Lake experiencing a disastrous loss of jobs, the loss of the single reason for its being in essence, obviously you can understand why many Northerners living in communities that depend for their survival on a single industry, and in most cases mining, you can understand why there is a certain degree of paranoia about the present circumstances therein and about the motives, the intentions and their prospects when it comes to dealing with this Government.

* (1510)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is one glaring absence in this Loan Act and, of course, that would be some support, some additional loan authority for Manitoba Mineral Resources, so that they might act more quickly in the event of opportunities arising in the communities that have already been devastated, so that they might act expeditiously should there be other exploration opportunities, mine development opportunities that avail themselves in the near future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is only part of the message. Today when I raised the question of service to northern Manitoba, to rural Manitoba, what did we get from the Government? We got excuses. The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) did not stand up when I said my constituents in northern Manitoba cannot phone his department for service. They are being told they cannot use a toll-free line, which they have had access to in the past for many years. They are being told no. The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) did not stand up as I honestly expected him to, and say, I am sorry, that is clearly not right, every Manitoban should have equal access to Government services.

He should have stood in his place and said, that Government policy will be changed, I will not be a part of a Government who denies equal access to services to one part of the province versus another. No, he stood in this House and made excuses, that is what he did. He made excuses for his Government's actions. He made excuses for the fact that even his own constituents

in Brandon will not have access to services in his department on an equal basis. He made excuses, and the First Minister did the same thing, and the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), interestingly enough, had the common sense to rise and say, I will look into it.

Perhaps that tells us something about what the Minister knows is going on in his department, but at least, on the surface, he said I care by saying I will look into it. The other two respondees did not show any concern.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is more galling and perhaps more frightening for the people in rural and northern Manitoba is that many of the Members on the front bench are representing rural Manitobans. If they do not believe they have a right to access on an equal basis then what hope is there for them ever achieving that again? It is extremely frightening -(interjection)- I am sorry, the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) may want to add some remarks on this Bill, and I would be more than happy to listen to him if he so desires. I think it is a serious issue. I hope the Member for St. James does as well.

An Honourable Member: What is more than happy? Ecstatic?

Mr. Storie: Yes, more than happy is ecstatic. I would be ecstatic if the Member for St. James would put some remarks on the record so we might know where the Liberals stand, because we do not get an opportunity to know where the Liberals stand on many, many issues. We are not certain whether that is because they do not have a position, or they have not fully developed it, or they are reluctant to stand up, and they are a little shy and they do not want to share it with the House.

The Member for St. James, I do not think, is particularly shy. I have not—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. James, on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am thrilled to hear the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) speak on this Bill. In fact many Members of our caucus have already spoken on it, and I would hope that he has already taken note of those comments made from this side of the House. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon has the floor.

Mr. Storie: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I recognize that several Members of the Liberal Caucus have spoken on The Loan Act, not more than three or four.

What I wanted specifically from the Liberals was a position on the question of access to Government services, that is the most specific one.- (interjection)- The Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) said, from his seat, yes. I certainly hope that his fellow caucus Members share the same point of view.

The indifference of this Government does not end there. It would be nice to think those were only some isolated examples, the changes to community places, which have closed the door for many northern communities in accessing funds from the lottery revenue, the policy that I have just discussed in terms of accessing Government services. It goes much deeper than that.

This Government promised in 1988 in its election platform that it would develop a rural and a northern economic development strategy. It has become increasingly obvious that they have no policy. There is no one within the Government who is developing, in any strategic sense, an economic plan for northern Manitoba. It cannot even deal with the crisis in any appropriate way. It has been a miserable failure every time it has faced a crisis in northern Manitoba. All of that leads many Northerners to worry, to wonder about their future, the stability of their communities, the security of their jobs. It is distressing, to say the least.

I can tell you from my perspective something good that is happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All of this reminds the people of northern Manitoba once again why they turfed out the Sterling Lyon Government in 1981. I can tell you that feeling is building in the North again that it is time to get the Conservative Government, that two years is two years too much already.

The figures that were bandied about the Chamber yesterday, when it came to the economic performance of the province, lead me to conclude that this Government is indeed on a slippery slope that is going to lead them to an economic and political doomsday in the not too distant future.

An Honourable Member: What about Portage?

Mr. Storie: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am reminded by one of my colleagues in the Opposition that Portage is also one of those communities that is probably feeling the same sentiments that many northern communities are feeling. The fact is that Portage la Prairie has been devastated by the indifference of Conservative Governments and the apologist they have for a Member, an apologist for a federal Government that has cut them off at the knees, an apologist for a provincial government that has no initiative, has no incentive, supported free trade, which is undermining the food processing industry and will undermine it for the next 20 years. Their sentiments probably right now are similar to those of many Northerners.

I did not want to dwell on only the negative. There is even more negative when it comes to the treatment, the economic, the business, community of this province have received from Conservative Governments, and here I include both the provincial and the federal Government. The treatment they have received is also going to be devastating.

Just as an aside, I recently had a chance to kibitz with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and tell him that the economic picture of this province was worsening very much quicker than even I had imagined it was possible under a Tory Government.

The fact is that when you start driving down the main arteries of the City of Winnipeg, you quickly start to see the number of, for sale, foreclosure, signs in the windows. When the small business sector starts to hurt, the economic performance of the province changes dramatically. It changes quickly, and it changes for the worse. The fact of the matter is that the Conservative Government simply have not recognized this problem.

That leads me back to The Loan Act and the fact that the Government of the Day is currently using, as an excuse for its inaction, the fact that The Loan Act has not been passed. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is absolutely and totally without foundation. The Government can proceed with its programs, with its executive power, without reference to The Loan Act. We in the New Democratic Party believe they should be.

The fact of the matter is that things are not going to get easier for the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst). The future is going to become increasingly difficult for several reasons. Number 1, we continue with a high interest-rate policy in our country. Interest rates again continued to creep up, and while small business can maintain, can support, a high interest-policy periodically, over the long term in the normal course of business fluctuations it becomes a fatal element. It is having an impact. Number 2, at a time when the hotel industry for example, and the restaurant industry to some extent, are suffering because of the drain of revenue, the drain of business to points across the border, when that same industry is faced with the prospect of a 9 percent tax on their service industry, when they are faced with the prospect of increasing competition, as I say, from across the border, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hotels in rural Manitoba are in serious jeopardy. Many of the hotels and even the larger hotels in Winnipeg are also facing difficult times.

* (1520)

I am not saying this from my own depth of knowledge on this question, I rely on people like Dennis Smith from the Food and Restaurant Association, John Reed, the Manitoba Hotel Association and Mr. Gershman who is the manager of the Charterhouse, I believe. People in the industry are crying out for some relief. That is only one sector that is being hard hit by economic policies of Conservatives, whether they be federal or provincial.

We would like to as well talk about the loan that is being provided to Manitoba Hydro. Here is another example of the inability of the Conservative Government, and in this case the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), to come to grips with economic policy. Now I recognize that the Conservative Government has a fundamental problem dealing with export of our hydro-electric power. For some reason,

the Tories in Alberta understand that if you have a resource that you can export, that you can exploit, you should do it in a strategic and thoughtful and planned way.

I am not going to give too much credit to Alberta, because I think they have abandoned that thoughtfulness. I think the current Premier of Alberta has lost his perspective on how that resource should be managed for Alberta's benefit. I want to say that in Manitoba, when the NDP were in power and the sale to Northern States Power was negotiated, and for the Minister of Energy and Mines' information for about the fourth time, the construction of Limestone was not commenced prior to the sale. The sale triggered the construction which is the logical sequence, the sale triggered the construction early -(interjection)-

The Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) says "exactly." That is because of the timing of the sale. The fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the Liberals who are anti-Limestone, anti-Hydro development, fail to recognize that, despite the fact that it was commenced early, perhaps a year and a half early, the fact is that the cost of Limestone was about one-half of what it was supposed to be.

An Honourable Member: That shows how poor your forecasting was.

Mr. Storie: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the management skills were that the previous Government had estimated the cost would be \$2 billion to \$3 billion -(interjection)- No, absolutely not. The cost was going to be \$2.7 billion, it came in at \$1.5 billion. The fact of the matter is that the Liberals also are a little touchy on the subject of Hydro development, because they do not know what side they are on.

The New Democrats know what side they are on. The hydro resource is a resource that belongs to the province, and it should be exploited in a planned and deliberate way. It is a renewable resource, unlike the resource that Alberta is dealing with. I cannot understand the Liberal and Tory logic when it comes to marketing a commodity like hydro, because once you establish a market, once you develop your market niche, particularly when we are talking about sales the size of the Northern States Power deal, the Upper Mississippi Power Group sale or the sale to Ontario Hydro, you are establishing a tremendous presence in a market that is not going to disappear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I digress. I know that it would be important for me to provide an economic lesson on resource management to the Liberals, but I did not think that I would have to provide one for the Tories, the Conservative Government. This Government was so ingrained, its opposition to export and Hydro development so ingrained that they cannot manage negotiations for export of power. The current sale to Ontario, which has been approved by the Ontario Hydro Board, is a very, very lucrative sale for Manitoba. This Government is now churning, because they know if they negotiate the sale, if they conclude the sale, Cabinet signs the deal, signs off the deal, they will have effectively changed their position.

They will be following a Hydro development strategy which was developed by New Democrats, implemented by New Democrats through the 1970s and through the Pawley administration from 1981 to 1988. That is what they will be doing. They will be reversing their position, they will be coming to the conclusion that the export of our resource, the export of power, can be profitable for people of Manitoba, can be beneficial to the ratepayers of Manitoba Hydro, can be beneficial to the province in economic terms throughout the province.

They have a problem with it. It does not make any sense. Their hidebound opposition to it does not make any sense. The Liberals are going to try and play both sides of this. Therefore, if they are against it, they are with us. They are against it, but the people are not going to be fooled.

The people of Manitoba remember what the Leader of the Opposition called Limestone. She called it Lemonstone without knowing anything about the facts. She opposed the action of the Limestone Training Employment Agency, the most successful training and employment program in the country, and perhaps in the world, and acknowledged by many sources outside of Canada. The Liberals of course opposed that. They do not understand resource development in the least.

I want to move on to the Government's position on Manitoba Hydro. This sale is extremely important to Manitoba. I expect, despite the unwillingness of the Government to come to grips with their own position on Hydro development, that the interests of Ontario Hydro are going to outweigh—the insistence of Ontario Hydro perhaps—the reluctance of the Government to act in a responsible way.

Ontario Hydro and the Minister responsible back in August of this year told me that Ontario Hydro wanted this sale. It is important to them. They have very few alternatives when it comes to providing energy at this scale. The Ontario Government wants it, and they will be persistent enough to ensure that Manitobans achieve a sale. Whether it will be as good a deal as it could have been is open to question. If you have a Government negotiating from a position of weakness, if you have a Government negotiating from a position of uncertainty, it is difficult to see how we are going to get the best deal we could have got. I believe that the deal will be signed, will be concluded, will be consummated, in the very near future.

This Government has failed on a second count. Not only in their lack of willingness to conclude this deal and get on with economic development in the province, but they failed to recognize the very real impact a project of this size can have on the provincial economy. They fail to recognize the potential for developing, training and employing people who currently are not trained and are not employed. The largest, the most important reason for that lack is the geographic reality of the Province of Manitoba. There are literally thousands of people living in small northern communities, remote communities, who have never had access to training opportunities, who seldom get access to the kinds of construction projects that the Conawapa construction project would represent.

The Government has blown it. There is an agreement between Manitoba Hydro and the Allied Hydro Council

which has already been negotiated. I respect the collective bargaining process and did not ask the Minister responsible for Energy and Mines, the Minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Neufeld), to get involved after the fact and amend the negotiations. I think it is lamentable, it is regrettable, it is distressing, that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro did not get involved. I can understand no logical reason for his lack of involvement other than he has distanced himself from Manitoba Hydro issues altogether, other than he does not understand the importance of resigning this collective agreement. I do not understand that, but the deed is done. The collective agreement has been signed.

My question to the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro is, what is he going to do now? What is he going to do to ensure that the progress that was made on the renegotiations of the Allied Hydro Council agreement with Manitoba Hydro, the development that was done, the improvements that were made, to create opportunities for northern people? What is he going to now to ensure that those opportunities exist?

* (1530)

I believe that our strategy of making improvements through the bargaining process was the correct one. Now, the Government has boxed itself into a corner. They have signed the collective agreement which we all have to respect, the Government has to respect, and certainly New Democrats respect. It still has an obligation to the people of northern Manitoba. It has an obligation to the Metis in Wabowden. It has an obligation to the status Indians, the people who live on the Nelson House Reserve, the Pukatawakan Reserve, the Cross Lake Reserve, the Norway House Reserve, and many others in northern Manitoba.

How is it now going to ensure that there are improved quotas and targets for the employment and training of Northerners? The Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Derkach) has gone and eliminated, emasculated the Limestone Training and Employment Agency. He has taken—

An Honourable Member: He has destroyed it.

Mr. Storie: The Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) says he has destroyed it and he is quite right. In effect, he has taken away its independence, its ability to act on very short notice. He has taken away its ability to respond to emerging situations both in terms of training and employment. We are going to suffer in northern Manitoba because of it.

I do not want to simply say that this is an issue for northern Manitoba. The development of a hydro project has significant repercussions throughout Manitoba's economy. When we say, and with some pride, that the Limestone construction project represented, excuse me—when we say Manitoba received approximately 80 percent of the value of contracts and goods and services supplied in employment to Manitobans that reflects a tremendous benefit to all of Manitoba.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Many manufacturers, Dominion Bridge and hundreds of other companies located in Winnipeg, employed

trades people as a result of the project at Limestone. It is not clear that the Government has done any thinking when it comes to making sure that Manitoba content is a priority in the new construction project. It is not clear that they have done any thinking in terms of how they are going to arrange the contracts, the thousands and thousands of contracts that are going to be left by Manitoba Hydro, to ensure that small business has an opportunity to take advantage of this major project.

We are talking in the range of \$5 billion worth of investment by a Crown corporation in the development of our resources, some \$3.5 billion, or a little less than \$3.5 billion in the construction of the project on the Nelson River, and an additional \$1.5 billion or so in the construction of an additional transmission line.

Unless the Government does some thinking about how Manitobans are going to take advantage of this, we will end up exporting most of those corporate dollars being spent to other parts of the world. It would be a tragedy if that were allowed to happen. We have no reason to be confident, we have no reason to be convinced that this Government is going to act in our interests.

I say that because to date they have failed miserably when it comes to their responsibility to protect the employment and training interests of the people of the province and when it comes to the whole negotiations of a very important project for the people of Manitoba.

I want to move from the question of the economy for a minute. I believe that we are in extremely dismal shape. We are in that shape because of a lack of a collective vision on the part of the Government in terms of what Manitoba could be.

We know what the statistics are in terms of employment, unemployment, housing, et cetera. There is another area where the Government has been paying a great deal of lip-service, but actually has produced very little, and that is in the area of the environment. There is a line in the 1989 Loan Act that deals with the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation. The Government continues to say, and some of its Members continue to shout across the floor, that the NDP did not accomplish much in its seven years in terms of the environment.

I am the first one to admit we did not do enough, but one of the things that we did do was establish the Hazardous Waste Management Corporation. A publicly owned corporation, a corporation that had sole responsibility at that time for developing a plan to deal with wastes, to deal with the management of waste in our society. This Government, despite supporting the establishment of the corporation at the time, because the Conservative Opposition voted with us recognizing the importance of this kind of entity in dealing with this problem on a rational and holistic basis, supported it. Now we have, for political reasons and only political reasons, the Government subverting the activity of the Hazardous Waste Management Corporation. We have the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), and the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) supporting the establishment of a group to compete, in effect, with

the dollars that should be made available for the consistent and rational treatment of waste in the province.

Mr. Speaker, my time has expired. There are many, many other areas in this Act which need to be addressed and I leave that to some of my colleagues and the Liberal Opposition and some of my other colleagues.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), that debate on Bill 34 be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 42—THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), Bill No. 42, The Residential Tenancies Act; Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for The Pas. (Agreed) The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): I am pleased today to be able to put a few of my thoughts—hopefully it will be helpful to the Bill—on the record.

On this side of the House, the official Opposition welcomes this much needed Bill to clean up some of the chaos that has existed in the housing matters between tenants and landlords, not only in its principle place of problems, that is the City of Winnipeg, but from one end of this province to another. We note that this is a Bill that will impact on many, many Manitobans. It impacts on one of the basic necessities of life. Affecting housing in turn affects the quality, not only of living, but all other conditions that would bring self-esteem and some feeling of comfort to people. It will allow even the newer generations, the youngsters, to grow up with dignity, particularly in the underprivileged portions of this province.

It began as a study in 1985 where the previous administration came forward with some 130 recommendations. We would hardly believe that this administration that was in power at that time had a social conscience to see all that degradation around them and not do anything about it and sit on the Bill. As usual the NDP, who always professes to be a Party for the people and for the social conscience, say, well, when we were brought down we were just going to bring the Bill into power. We were just going to implement it. Of course, they always use that excuse.

* (1540)

They do not realize that it was no mistake or a freak of nature that they were brought down. It was their own bungling and ineptitude that caused them to lose one Member, not call a by-election, and then not pay any attention to one of their most respected Members probably in the whole Party, namely, the previous

Member of the Legislature for St. Vital. That was their demise. I do not really believe that if they had stayed in power that we would have seen a similar Bill come forward. I think it would have been like everything else, many, many more months before it ever came into being.

We are pleased that with prodding from the various advocacy groups, and particularly prodding from this Party, that the new Minister has seen fit to bring in this comprehensive and wide-ranging Bill. There are some things that we would like to see changed. We would like to see some amendments, and we will look forward to doing that in committee.

On the other hand, I think that we should be thankful that the Bill is in the House now. We can have an opportunity to discuss it and proceed, and if possible, make sure that it is a Bill that will stand in good stead in housing in Manitoba.

I would like to make it clear that in meetings, and in our experience, that this type of legislation with real teeth in it is not intended for the majority of landlords and tenants in this province. It is the very small minority that cause most of the problems. I think we understand that most landlords and tenants are very responsible. I know the NDP would not agree with that in as far as landlords are concerned, perhaps. We do know that even the vast majority of landlords in this province do care about the welfare of their tenants, try to make things as comfortable as they can for them, and make sure that tenants do get value for their housing dollars.

My first real experience with the deplorable conditions in housing was as a member of City Council studying housing on the Planning Committee. At that time we had the opportunity to take several trips with the administration and visit all types of accommodations, mostly in the northern part of the City of Winnipeg. It was just astounding the conditions that we did run across. What was more astounding was the lack of teeth that the city administrators had to correct the wrongs that were very evident there.

It was no wonder we saw so much vandalism and neglect by landlords. Vandalism, that is by tenants, and neglect by landlords of making conditions very unhealthy and certainly very unsafe. The reason for a lot of that was the lack of teeth and the lack of swift justice when offences did occur.

You had people coming before the city in By-law Court, which was not really a court, it was only a dingy committee room. It had no appearance of a courtroom, very informal, and no official judge. People would be charged with a very serious housing offence and they would appear there. It was more of a delaying tactic and perhaps a joke than anything else, but they would be charged with an offence. There would be delay after delay in the form of remands and whatever.

After several months or indeed years there would be a guilty verdict. What would happen is that the guilty landlord, in this particular case, would be charged with a nominal slap on the hand, a small fine \$25, \$50, which meant nothing. One of the odd things about this was that it really did not bring a solution because the fine

was the end of the matter. There was no order to actually correct the wrong. Once the fine was paid the wrong could continue. What we had was the inspectors go back and go through the whole procedure again. It was very costly for the city, and we really did not get the housing fixed that was cited in those particular cases.

I think that this Bill under the Residential Tenancies Commission goes a long way. As we have experienced it may have some flaws in it, and perhaps we can detect those flaws now and in committee, but I think it is a move in the right direction in that there will be speedy justice. Complaints that heretofore took months and even virtually years will be able to be concluded very, very quickly. We think that part of the legislation is good. We commend that the Minister has brought that in. It certainly is something that I recognize is well overdue and needed, not only in the City of Winnipeg, but in all of Manitoba.

One of the things that I am concerned about in housing is the move that we have had away from using Core Area Initiative money to put it where it was originally intended, where it was doing the most good. That was in upgrading housing, training and education in underprivileged areas.

As our Deputy Leader has said, I think people tend to take that money to build monuments upon themselves, which really have become white elephants like the North Portage Development, and not all, but some of the developments in The Forks and other areas of Winnipeg.

I would like to see the Minister, if he could, use his influence to get back to projects like we saw when he himself was on City Council. That was the redevelopment in the Point Douglas Area. Almost miracles were made in restructuring that area and redeveloping it.

We all know that if we start a little bit of redevelopment in an area it sort of catches on and we see much more of it. One neighbour will continue and on and on until in just a few short years we see a much better community than we have heretofore.

The reverse is true, and that is any area of Winnipeg. If we let houses deteriorate, then what we find is that the only buyers who will come along will be buyers who will rent the property out. We all know in the city that when you get one or two or three rental properties on that street you will find that the whole district will go in that direction. It is like cancer, we get a decay in the whole area.

One of the things that I hope the Minister has addressed is that when we do order repairs and rejuvenation of houses, that a lot of those houses will be the types that people on very low incomes and social assistance occupy. Obviously the repairs will increase the costs to those people who are on low incomes and social assistance.

Already we see a situation where day after day we have people phone us. There are either one or two children and they need accommodation. They are on social assistance and maybe they are paying in the area of \$400 or \$425 in rent. If anybody has any

experience in the City of Winnipeg, it is very, very minimal housing for that kind of money, even if you had just one child, never mind two or more.

When they approach welfare, they say that they should be living in a house for \$255.00. Often they say for \$255 it should be furnished with the service. Some of them even say that it should provide the heat and light for it.

* (1550)

That we should have such a regulation in Manitoba is absolutely ludicrous. I do not know whether Members of the Government have taken trips into the underprivileged areas of Manitoba, and particularly Winnipeg, and seen what you can get for \$400 a month, particularly if you want the services to go along with it. It becomes absurd when they say that it should have some furnishings as well.

I think that what happens in these cases is in fact that the people choose to live in at least a house that is halfway sanitary and safe. So they dig into their food allowance to make up for that shortfall. As a consequence we have people who are undernourished, which contributes to our health problems and increases our health expenditures in this province, increases our taxes and not only that. As I have said before, we waste education dollars sending 60 percent of the children in the core area of Winnipeg to school on empty stomachs.

The Minister should listen to something like that. She has not been able to absorb it before, but I think she should be cognizant. I think she should sit down and talk to these people, even talk to the organization. I noticed at the meeting of MAPO the other night, the Government did not see fit again for many, many times to even be concerned with their problem. If you do not get down and mix with the people and understand their problems, you cannot sit in this ivory tower and find solutions. That is the case of what we have in this Government today.

I address this—and I am getting a little off track, but I address it to the Minister because I think it is important that we have some provision. I hope he has talked to the Minister to see that when these regulations come into force, when rents do increase, because the rent regulations do allow increases when capital and upkeep are put on residential properties, there will be an automatic increase in social allowance payments for housing for them. So people who are now paying \$255 in \$400 accommodation do not have to dig further into their food bill to make up this shortfall.

I am a little disappointed, as my colleague for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has pointed out, that it did not provide for condition reports, which many landlords and tenants use in this province, and cut down to a great degree the disputes between those parties.

My colleague has—and I congratulate him for introducing Bill No. 2 very early on to bring this to debate and, hopefully, fruition. I think it would be wise for the Government to look at making such reports mandatory to bring about speedy resolves of disputes

between landlords and tenants on the condition of rental properties, particularly when their tenancy is up and they are vacated.

I think it is noteworthy and speaks well of the Member for Inkster that in introducing this Bill No. 2 it seemed to be the instrument to prod the Government into action for the overall Bill. I think in that respect it was most worthwhile.

There are provisions in the Bill for a new way of handling security deposits. As we all know, the largest complaint that the Rentalsman gets is on the way that security deposits are handled. The method addressed here in regard to trust funds will probably be more effective than what we have now.

I want to touch a little bit on rent controls. We have had quite a bit of problems I know in my area on rent control. I think the Government has responded to this on our request, and that is to let people know more and more that they can complain and protest their increases even if there has been no upkeep on the premises on a year-to-year basis.

It is expected by landlords that there will be at least minimum upkeep on properties. I hope that when this new office is established there will be adequate facilities for many renters who have difficulty, whether they be Northerners or new Canadians or even people who are indigenous to Manitoba, long-time residents who are part of that very large number of illiterates in this province who have difficulty understanding and reading tenancy and other agreements, that there will be sufficient facilities in the office of the Residential Tenancy Commission and that they can be given all the assistance, not only when the documents are being made out but also if any misunderstanding or any dispute arises. I think that although the Bill does not address it specifically and understanding that it is a province-wide Bill naturally, I wanted to make note of comments earlier and re-emphasize them on the rental accommodations which is the principal type of accommodations in northern Manitoba and the condition they are in.

We are appalled to hear from the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) of the CMHC and MHRC properties that are run down, dilapidated, unhealthy. The predominance of that kind of accommodation in the North, and particularly on reserves where there are examples given and we know this as well that are overcrowded, a preponderance of living accommodations as well as being overcrowded do not have proper indoor washroom, sewer and water conditions, and as well the people suffer through very poor heating conditions, low amperage, little or no insulation in their homes. This in spite of the fact that it is in the North where our electricity comes from but yet the majority of our Northerners are suffering from a lack of electrical installations in their homes.

I would like to see this Government through their housing policies have a program of work incentives so that Natives, particularly on the reserves and in northern Manitoba, get the opportunity to have the pride of ownership in homes and therefore have some more incentive to keep them in more healthy and comfortable conditions.

I think that we talked here about public housing and that is what it is. I think that one of the moves that the Government could make would be to see that public housing would set the benchmark or the target for what housing should be. When we see public housing in this province, it is shoddy and dilapidated, it does not set a good example for the private sector.

I would like to say again, Mr. Speaker, that we look forward to addressing this Bill in committee. We have waited a long time for the Bill, much longer than we should have because of neglect by the previous administration. We want to look at it thoroughly. We want to make sure it is right. We want to make sure that it does what it is intended to do, to speed the settlements of disputes between landlords and tenants. We would like to see that some justice comes into the industry for both tenants and landlords because we feel that only with affordable and healthy and safe homes can we even begin to think of a just society in Manitoba. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed this matter will remain standing in name of the Honourable Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak). The Honourable Member for The Pas.

* (1600)

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to Bill 42. I think it has been previously stated by the Member who spoke on this Bill. This is probably one of the most important pieces of legislation that is coming before the House in this Session.

I think it is extremely important that we address some of the needs that exist in this area because I think everyone in society is entitled to have a place to live and to sleep. I think that some of the changes that are coming forward in this Bill are going to make it more appropriate or more easy for those people to receive that. I think there has been quite a bit of criticism on the New Democrats by the Liberals in this Legislature about the length of time that it took to bring this legislation forward, and they continued to speak about the New Democrats just about being ready to present this legislation when they were defeated.

I think that they should be aware of the length of time that it took for us when we were in Government to strike a committee and get out and meet with all of the people who are involved with the important issue of housing. I think the Member for Osborne who was the Minister responsible for the legislation that was designed when we were in Government did an excellent job getting out and meeting with all of the people who are affected by the housing in this province.

I know that when there was a committee struck to deal with the housing issue, there was representation from the landlords in this province and their association and their organizations. There was also an opportunity for the tenants and the housing activists to participate in a review that was going on, talking about the White Paper, and also from the people from MHRC and other Government agencies who are connected with the

housing problems. I think that they took very seriously some of the issues that are facing the housing industry, and I think that many of these individuals come forward with recommendations to improve the housing Act.

I know that it was a lengthy process and it took a lot of time. It took approximately a year and a half for them to deal with all of the issues that were facing the Minister who was dealing with this Act. I know that there was a lot of hard work and a lot of discussions that were not that easy because there are different viewpoints being expressed from the side of the landlords and the side of the tenants, and I know that, when you start dealing with the landlords, there are many landlords—I would say probably the majority of the landlords are fairer when they go and administer the housing needs to meet the housing needs of the people in the province. But I guess the legislation is necessary for those landlords that do not treat their tenants in a fair way.

I think that the discussions that were taking place were, in many instances, very difficult. I know that when the Paper came back to caucus, within our caucus, there were many different viewpoints on how some of the issues should be addressed. I know that there were many differences of opinion on how we should be addressing some of those issues, but in the final analysis I think that we came up with an Act that would have been addressing the needs of the people in the Province of Manitoba. I know that there is a difference in approach from some of the tenants and landlords, but I think in the end, after a year and a half, we came up with a consensus on how we should be addressing some of the issues that are out there in the Province of Manitoba dealing with housing.

I think the committee at that time came up with a 139 recommendations of changes that should be taking place in the Act. I think there was consensus reached in practically all of the issues that were raised, and think that sometimes there has to be give-and-take at any time that you are going through a process of that sort. No one side is going to win all of the arguments of the day, nor should one side be the loser on every issue that is brought up. I think that the process was carried out. I think it was a fair process and I think they had completed the work that they were dealing with in 1987. We were preparing to bring that legislation forward in 1988, but unfortunately we were interrupted.

I guess there was a moment in the political history of Manitoba which interrupted the legislation that we were trying to bring forward to make Manitoba a better place for not only the tenants in Manitoba, but I think that Act that was being brought forward would also have Manitoba a better place for the landlords. I know that the work was completed and they were beginning to draft a legislation because the legislation had been dealt with by caucus and, once the consensus was reached, there was again that some further discussions from caucus because there are some people from different geographic locations who have different needs to address in the area of housing.

I know that I as a Northerner represent different needs in the area of housing than people from the City of Winnipeg or Brandon or larger centres like Dauphin.

I know that even within my own constituency, the needs are much different from the town of The Pas itself and some other parts of the constituency when you come to dealing with their remote housing needs about the Treaty people in the Province of Manitoba and also the Metis people in the Province of Manitoba. There were many problems that were brought forward to the committee, and I think that after the internal discussions dealing with them I think that the drafting that was brought forward with the Act finally came up with over 100 pages and 150 clauses that were developed for introduction in the 1988 year.

I know that the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has brought forward some legislation. I am not sure why he brought it forward maybe it was brought forward to make the Minister move a little quicker on dealing with this Act. I think that at this time Bill No. 2 should probably be withdrawn because I think there is not much substance to that Bill, and I do not think it addresses many of the needs of either the landlords or the tenants even though the Liberal Members have got up one after the other and congratulated the Member for Inkster for the excellent job he had done in bringing this forward. I think that it was really not developed. There was no consultation whatsoever.

They took it from the little understanding that he has, and I think it could be true for any one of us if we tried to draft legislation from our own experience, it would be very narrow in the approach that we were bringing to a Bill. I think that there was no consultation, that it was done with the Liberal Bill before it was brought forward, Bill No. 2. I think that the Member for Inkster would probably do the House a favour by withdrawing that Bill at this time. That is not saying that this legislation that we are dealing with presently has all the answers.

I think that there is a different approach to the approach that was taken by the New Democrats when we were in Government, and I guess that is understandable. We do have different philosophical approaches to most issues that come to this House, and it would be no different from when you are addressing the needs in housing. We will be bringing forward many recommendations during the committee stage when we are addressing the housing needs. I think that our critic responsible for Housing has prepared a long list of recommendations that we will be addressing during the committee stage.

* (1610)

I think that there was an effort by the Member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme), who is the Minister for Housing now, to come up with a Bill that would address most of the needs in the housing industry. As I said previously, there is a different philosophical approach. He is answering to different people than we are, and certainly there would be a different approach taken when addressing some of the legislation here.

I had the experience of dealing with some of the difficulties that Manitoba Housing and Renewal deals with when they deal with the issue of housing. During our years in Government, some difficulty arose in the

Valley View Trailer Court just outside of the Town of The Pas, which supplies a facility for over 100 trailers in the town. There was a dispute over the paying of taxes between the owner of the Valley View Trailer Court and the LGD of Consol. Because of the dispute there was a large number of people affected. They tried to come up with an agreement of how they could address that, and there was an agreement at one time that they would put the rent into a trust fund. It deteriorated to the point where it went into the courts to resolve this issue, and there was an agreement that this money would be placed into trust. When the courts decided which side would be the winners in this dispute, then they would distribute the collected rents to the appropriate people.

Unfortunately there was some further disruption of service, and it became necessary for the rentalsperson to become involved. I have to tell the Minister that the person who became involved in resolving that dispute was I believe a gentleman by the name of Roger Barsy who did an excellent job of working on behalf of the tenants in the Valley View Trailer Court. Therefore they were able to accommodate the people in the trailer court until such time as that dispute was resolved. Eventually the dispute did become resolved and the taxes are being paid for the services that are being supplied by the LGD of Consol. I do not think that there is any further dispute.

If there had not been a rentalsperson in place to deal with disputes like that then the services for the people residing in the Valley View Trailer Court would have had their water cut off, their refuse would not have been picked up, and I know that it would have led to a lot of people being disrupted.

Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned earlier that I believe this is one of the most important pieces of legislation that is coming before us this Session. I know there are several other pieces of legislation that are important. I think that when you deal with Workers Compensation, there are some issues that Act has opened up. There are some areas that we need to address. They also are very important to injured workers in Manitoba, but I think when you are dealing with a basic principle of the needs of every Manitoban to have shelter, I think that you are dealing with one of the most important areas affecting the people of Manitoba.

We all require housing of one sort or another. There are some people who are fortunate and own their own homes. Therefore they are not faced with some of the difficulties of having to deal with landlords. As I mentioned previously, it does not mean that all landlords do not treat their tenants in a fair way. There are the exceptions. I think that it is necessary to pass legislation because of the people who are not being treated in a fair way.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that the circumstances, which make it necessary for people to have their housing disrupted—there needs to be legislation which the people can go to in order to have those changes addressed.

I was a tenant for a very short period in my life, and that was because I just at one stage could not afford

to buy a home. I had five children so I knew that it was very difficult to rent a house with five children. Most people, it scared them off. When you told them you had five children, it just scared the people off.

I know that in one particular instance I rented a home in The Pas, and I know that there was less damage in that house when there were seven people occupying it than there is in many instances when only two people are occupying it. I treated that home as though it was my own. I did all of the necessary maintenance work. I did all the repairs on the furnace and whatever was required. I treated it as if it was my own home.

In spite of that, my rent increased by an amount that I did not feel was fair. They claimed that there was an increase in the costs associated with owning a house, and so he had to increase the payments. So when he went to the point where he was selling the home, I did not feel that it would be of a sufficient size to make an investment in that home on my own for my own home because of the size of my family.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

I then started looking for a larger home and, as I said before, I had difficulty finding another home that would accommodate my family. So that is when I made the decision that I would build my own home, and I know that there were many people, on the railroad who were working at that time, looked at me in a strange way and said, how can a person with five children working on the railway look at investing \$23,500 for a home? It was a four bedroom home with attached garage. I thought it was a pretty fancy home, more than I thought I would ever own. At that time I took the step and put a deposit on the home, and then I had cold feet. I tried to back out of it, but then I was going to lose my deposit so I was forced to go ahead and carry through with the deal. As it turned out it has been probably the best investment I ever made because it -(interjection)- and I think it is probably the best investment that anyone can make if they are in a position to invest in real estate.

Not only are you in charge of your own facilities that are required for your family, but I think that you have much more security, and also it will increase in value. So you are always a winner when it comes to real estate.

I think what we are talking about here are the people who cannot afford to have their own home, and then there are a lot of people who by choice decide not to go into their own home. It is important that we are able to deliver proper housing for the people who choose not to build their own home, but choose to remain tenants.

Then there are circumstances where the secure and affordable shelter is not available. We all seek and deserve—it is not possible for people to get this type of housing for one reason or another. That situation is most likely to arise with regard to shelters that are of the rented type, rather than the owned type, and that is why it is so important that we have legislation.

We also must have policies and programs that will provide protection in places for both the landlord and

the tenants. There are three areas of concern, or three areas that sort of serve as the foundation for any type of legislation or Government activity that would be involved in this area. I think that those areas must reflect and respond to the way in which our rental housing market is structured and operated. We must acknowledge there are certain basic principles that we must address in that area, and we want to address certain objectives.

First, the Government policy must identify basic, affordable, safe, and healthy housing as a universal right for all Manitobans. Each and every one of us is entitled to secure shelter, no matter what our social or economic situation might be at a certain time in our life. Each and every Manitoban deserves affordable and adequate housing, no matter where they live in any province, in the Province of Manitoba, or in the Dominion of Canada.

* (1620)

If we accept that first principle, at the same time we must accept the responsibility that flows with those principles. The responsibility is that to provide such housing through public housing programs, where it is needed, and to set the framework for the provisions of private-sector housing where that approach is more suitable.

I think that in the constituency of The Pas we have many examples of where the public housing has been provided for people in need. I know that the Kelsey Housing Estate, when I was a tenant in the town of The Pas, at that time there was a housing meeting where they were proposing to build over 100 units in one area of the Town of The Pas. I spoke against that proposal at that time, not because I am opposed to public housing, I am supportive in every way, but I just think that large congestion of housing in a very small area is going to lead to difficulties later on. That has proven to be so.

I think that if the houses had been dispersed throughout the community in fourplexes or duplexes, or even single unit-housing, then I think that the people who are living in that housing would have taken much more pride and they would have looked after the housing units to a much better degree than they do when there is over 150 units in one area. I think there is just too big a concentration of housing in a small area and that leads to vandalism.

I know that we, when Mr. Bucklaschuk was the Minister responsible for Housing, provided a program for the Kelsey Housing Estate. There was also the department of Family Services, Community Services at that time, provided the funds for a staff person, because there were no facilities for the people in that housing for recreation of any kind. So they hired a person to look after the recreational activities of the children and provided a room in the house where there were many activities carried out for children. Then the vandalism dropped down a great degree.

It shows that it was a heck of a good investment on the part of Community Services to provide that program. I think it was a good investment on behalf

of MHRC to provide the facility for those people to meet. The children participated to a great degree. There were not only programs carried out in that rental suite, but because of the fact that there was a person to provide for their recreation they took them out on many functions throughout the community. They had a swimming program, and got them involved in hockey, soccer and baseball, which made it possible for those children to be active. I think it is important to continue that program.

I know that there is an evaluation going on right now. I would hope that the Minister of Housing and also the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) would look very favourably on the request that is before their committee at this time. If it has not been dealt with to this stage, I would encourage them to provide the funding for that continued program. I think it has served a very useful purpose. I know that it has eliminated a lot of the vandalism that was previously carried out by the children living in that Kelsey Housing Estate because they had nothing to do. Therefore, that was a program that was well served.

Another premise or supposition we must address when we are dealing with respect to Government activities is that not all are necessarily equal in the area of landlord and tenant relationships. As a matter of fact, in the absence of legislation it is most likely that there will be very little equality between the two at all. If there were no legislation, it would be the landlords who would indeed be the lords and it would be the tenants who would be their subjects. I think there are examples of where that happened in the early days. I think that since The Landlord and Tenant Act has come in, it has been reflected by many people in this House how you could relate that to almost a feudal system where the landlord had all the cards in his hands and it was up to the tenant to just fall in and follow his rules because he was the one that was in place. Once that Landlord and Tenant Act came in there was a social policy developed and legislation that determined that it was more than just economics that dictated in whose hands the power would lie. I think that has made it a much fairer Act when it dealt with that area.

Some of the things that we had addressed—Mr. Deputy Speaker, how much time have I got left?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Approximately 15 minutes remaining.

An Honourable Member: Well we are not doing anything; we might as well go about something that is important.

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) always has some words of wisdom for everybody.

An Honourable Member: Well, that is right. It is about time you started to say something sensible.

Mr. Harapiak: It is only the Member for Portage la Prairie who feels he has got all the answers for everyone. It is unfortunate he does not just get up there and share

them with us. He has a lot of advice to give sitting in his seat, but unfortunately when it comes to getting up and speaking something, all he normally does is chastise people and does not share some of that wisdom with us. I think he always passes himself off as a very astute businessman. Maybe he should share some of the experiences he has had. Maybe by this time he should be a good businessman because you learn from your mistakes, and I guess the Member for Portage la Prairie has had an opportunity to experience a few mistakes.

So he has had an opportunity to experience - (interjection)- well the Member for Portage la Prairie as usual has said that the only person who has had any experience is someone who has been involved in the business world. I can tell the Member for Portage la Prairie there are many areas of life that one can get involved in and make a contribution to society without having been a businessman. I guess if you want to draw on his experience then I guess that we should all have an opportunity at going broke in business because then it makes us all the more wiser. I do not think it is necessary for us to go through that.

One of the areas that we were involved in when we were in Government was dealing with the development of housing policy in northern Manitoba. I know the needs in northern Manitoba are unique. The people there are dealing with issues that are much different than what urbanites deal with. I think that both the Manitoba Metis Federation and the northern NDP Caucus Members have a very good working relationship. We are working towards a policy which would have addressed the needs of—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am having difficulty speaking here because the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) and the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) are having a debate right in front of me, so I wonder if they could move it to a different location.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we were dealing with the housing needs of Northerners there were many suggestions that came forward which showed that there is a different need for housing in northern Manitoba than there is in the city. The houses are quite often designed to be air tight. I think that you have to take into consideration some of the different ways of life of Northerners. I know that when we go to visit some of the houses that were supplied by MHRC that quite often the vapour barrier that has been put into those homes for one reason works out to be detrimental to the people who are residing in those houses because of the fact that people in northern Manitoba traditionally boil a lot of their foods and always have a tea pot boiling on their stove because of the fact that they are very hospitable and when somebody drops by they will very quickly put on a pot of tea for you and make you very welcome in their home. I have had that experience in many of the Native people's homes in northern Manitoba.

When I have discussed this with northern people they felt that they needed a different type of housing to address that need. That is why we were pleased to when we were Government under Mr. Mackling who was the Minister responsible for housing at that time—

An Honourable Member: Al never made any mistakes, he did not do anything.

* (1630)

Mr. Harapiak: Well, the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) is once again all wise and has answers for every situation that comes up. It is unfortunate that he feels this way because I think he has not demonstrated that he has all the answers.

Anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the community of Easterville there was a home built with all local materials. They took into consideration some of the needs in northern Manitoba and it was built by people from Easterville. They supplied not only the materials but also they supplied the labour. I can tell you that the people in that community were proud of the product that they came up with. We had an opportunity to go up there with Mr. Mackling when he was Minister responsible for housing. I, as the MLA for the area, went up and viewed that house. I think it was an example of what we can use to build the houses in northern Manitoba. It was designed to meet some of the needs of Native people. At a later date that home was purchased by a person from Grand Rapids, Esaw Sinclair, who had that house moved to Grand Rapids. I know that he is very pleased with the structure and the design of that home. I am sure that when some future housing conference is held that they can take some of the learning experience of those people from Easterville gathered during that process. I think that they can come and give some of us a lesson of what should be included in a house when building in the North.

I guess I have also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, been partial to a log home. I have had the opportunity to build one of my own at Rocky Lake. I know that people will argue that they are not as efficient when it comes to retaining heat and I know that they do not have as high an R rating, but I think for that style of home where the people do use a lot of water in their homes that a log home is suitable for that purpose. I know that there are a lot of Native people who have log homes and are very happy with the type of housing that supplies. I would hope that whenever there is a housing conference set up to deal with difficulties of meeting the needs of Northerners and northern housing that there is an opportunity to evaluate how log homes can meet that need. In speaking to the northern people, most of the supplies that are required to build a home in northern Manitoba is right in their vicinity. I know that would be something that could be looked at in a very positive way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many other areas that we need to address and you are talking about relationships between landlords and tenants and who should be given more power when dealing with the living conditions. I know that I mentioned in the past that the landlords must lose some of their historical power over their tenants.

The other concern that is out there is that we should shape our housing legislation if it is to meet both the needs of the good landlords and the good tenants. I know there are some instances where the tenants have abused an apartment and I know that there are difficulties when you are faced with a tenant that does

a lot of damage to an apartment and I know that a lot of expense is faced by a tenant, so it needs to address the needs of both the landlords and tenants and I think when you are drafting legislation you have to take into consideration that there are good and bad landlords and there are good and bad tenants. So I think it would be fair to say that the legislation has to go to some point where you are addressing the needs of both sides.

I am sure that most people will agree that the good landlords and tenants outnumber the bad landlords and tenants, but I think the legislation has to go and address the needs for both sides in that area.-(interjection)- Pardon me? The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) chose to pose a question. I am not sure what it is, but I think that he should go back to the legislation that he brought forward, Bill No. 2, and I think that we addressed that in our comments earlier.

Many of the people have talked about that and I think that the mistake the Member for Inkster made is the fact that he did not go out and consult with people, he was just drawing on his own experience. As I mentioned earlier, if any one of us was drawing on our own experience I think it would be very narrow, so I think that is why it was necessary to go out and have the consultative process that we did when we were drawing up the legislation in 1987, and that process took a year and a half. But if the Member for Inkster drew on the experience that he has had, I am not sure if it is an experience as a landlord or a tenant, but I think it was very, very narrow and I think that it needs to be expanded. I think that this legislation that was brought forward by the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) addresses that but, as I said earlier, it does not address all of the needs and we will be bringing forward many recommendations during committee stage to make improvements to the Act that is before us right now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that it is time that we address some of the needs in legislation. I think that legislation must protect tenants against landlords. However, as I mentioned before, there may be many who are negligent in keeping their buildings in good repair. We must address that need for the people who are coming forward with legislation.

We also must provide for effective measures to repair unsafe and unhealthy accommodations as soon as they are recovered. I think that this will have to be some of the recommendations by some of the amendments that will be brought forward during the legislation.

We also must reduce the disputes over the return of security deposits to a greater protection of those deposits. I know that this is an area that many tenants are faced with, and I think that this must be strengthened in this Act. We must reduce those same disputes by ensuring common evaluation of any conditions that might affect their return. I know quite often that there is not a proper evaluation done. How much time have I got? Two minutes. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think we must streamline that dispute resolution process so that where the differences are unavoidable, they at least be dealt with in a fair and a quick manner.

We must ensure that both landlords and tenants understand their rights and obligations to increase education and provisions of information, and I know that the Minister will take the opportunity to make sure that information is available to all people.

We must increase the compliance with the legislation through appropriate and speedy prosecution when it is required, and we must allow for fair rents and fair returns on investment on an ongoing basis. I know that it is not fair for the landlord to be making an investment. If they are not getting a return on their dollars then it will not be very long before those funds dry up, and then we are faced with a much greater problem than we are at now.

* (1640)

We will be presenting many amendments when we address the commission. I think we must ensure that the Chief Commissioner is fairly appointed and is fully accountable. I think that in this instance we are looking at the method of appointment. We must be sure that maybe the Legislature has a role to play in that and also the term of office and a procedure for removal if there is any reason for removal of the position.

In all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that this is a great improvement on this Act that was brought forward, but as I mentioned before we will be bringing forward amendments to make sure that it is an Act that is fair to both the landlords and the tenants and I know that we will be bringing those amendments forward during the committee stage which will help improve this Act. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a change to the committees for tomorrow.

I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Findlay for Manness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed? (Agreed)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too, have a committee change.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Niakwa (Mr. Herold Driedger), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Springfield (Mr. Roch) for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski); and Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed? (Agreed)

BILL NO. 42—THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT (Cont'd)

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Deputy Speaker, was The Residential Tenancies Act left standing in someone's name? I just have not been able to locate it on the Order Paper.

If it is open, I move, seconded by the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), that the debate be adjourned on Bill No. 42, The Residential Tenancies Act.

MOTION presented and carried.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

BILL NO. 53—THE ENERGY RATE STABILIZATION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 53. The Energy Rate Stabilization Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la stabilisation des emprunts d'Hydro-Manitoba à l'étranger, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Merci, Monsieur Chairman, le président. Mr. Speaker, the history of this and the necessity of this particular Bill lies in the history of it. The former Tory Government led by Sterling Lyon made an initiative to freeze hydro rates for a five-year period on the hoped for belief that it would stimulate industrial growth and economic development in the Province of Manitoba.

Unfortunately, inadvertently, what happened was that Hydro, who was forced to capitalize and borrow money for projects, had to go offshore at extremely high interest rates, thereby causing undue drains on the reserves.

The Government of the Day moved in and suggested that it was unfair to keep putting Hydro in the hole and began to absorb those debts, thereby providing a hidden tax on the consumption of hydro to the ratepayers. This Bill is a method of amending that fundamental accounting flaw and directing the debt back to the Hydro corporation for clear identification, and unfortunately payment through the hydro bills and the consumption by the ratepayers.

I could spend some time chatting about the false philosophy of stimulating economic development, the poorly conceived and even less so thought through programs by the Lyon Government that caused this problem, and the continuance by the very unbusiness like and inadequate NDP Government.

It is my opinion that this Bill that has been introduced by the Minister of Finance is a step in the right direction, that it is a necessary legislation to help identify the real costs to consumers and to put Hydro in a position of being totally responsible for their debts. The maneuver to bring the debt into Canadian dollars and the investments by the HydroBonds to raise money is another step in the right direction.

I have very little difficulty with what I consider a housekeeping amendment that needs to be done, and I would urge that it be passed onto the committee. Thank you.

Mr. Jerrie Storie (Flin Flon): This Bill, as is indicated by my colleague from St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) is an interesting piece of legislation. One of the most

interesting aspects of it is that we are here today dealing with the second phase of the Energy Rate Stabilization Program, specifically because the previous Conservative Government in a move that was called by observers, at the time, the most opportunistic use of a Crown corporation in the history of Manitoba. That is the context in which this debate should take place.

In 1979 when Don Craik, the then Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro introduced this legislation, he did so with the hope, and it was a faint hope, that (a) this legislation would cost the taxpayers of Manitoba \$100 million approximately, and that is the figure that he used at the time. The \$100 million he said represented the cost of the province adopting the difference between the exchange rates that Manitoba or the cost of borrowing that Manitoba Hydro experienced if it borrowed in Canadian denominations versus the cost that it was going to incur with currencies that fluctuate against the Canadian dollar.

* (1650)

We know in hindsight that Mr. Craik and the Government of the Day, Sterling Lyon's Government, was wildly optimistic when it forecast a \$100 million cost, that the net cost, not to the province, notwithstanding the fact that The Energy Rate Stabilization Act was amended in 1987 and the rate freeze was not allowed to continue for the full five years that had originally been envisaged, the fact of the matter is that the cost is more like \$300 million.

But I think what is more disconcerting was the presumption of the then Lyon Government that somehow, by assuming this risk as the quid pro quo for requiring Manitoba Hydro to freeze the rate, that somehow they were saving taxpayers' money. Mr. Speaker, there was only a transference of responsibility from Manitoba Hydro ratepayers to the Province of Manitoba. At the time it was said that was an ill-conceived, ill-thought-out plan, and it had very little merit. It certainly was an obvious and blatant example of interference in the operation of a Crown. I will talk about the consequences of that particular policy in a minute.

I want to talk about the other reason why it was introduced according to the previous Government, and Mr. Craik in particular. The Government of the Day believed that a five-year hydro rate freeze, or at least this was the information they provided for public consumption, they believed that this five-year freeze would spur economic development. They believed that the stability of hydro rates would create a tremendous incentive for businesses to come to Manitoba, be attracted to Manitoba, establish in Manitoba.

Unfortunately, what we saw was completely the reverse. In fact, Manitoba businesses closed in record numbers, Manitobans left the province in record numbers, not unlike what is happening under the Filmon Government. Some 39,000 people left the province because the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is here, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is here and the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) is here. They left the province because very quickly, after the election

of a Conservative Government, people get the message, there is no hope. Remember, the New Democratic Party Leader (Mr. Doer) reminded the Conservative Government earlier today that when the Conservatives were in Government the joke was, will the last person leaving Manitoba please turn out the lights? The same thing is happening again. Conservative policy, Conservative times are tough times.

The fact of the matter is that this is the irony of this Legislature dealing with The Energy Rate Stabilization Act amendment, that it is a typical example of failed Tory policy. It was ill-conceived. It was doomed to failure, and it is Tory policy that failed. Not only did it end up costing Manitoba taxpayers—and the Member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) is shaking his head because he does not know anything about this issue—the fact of the matter is—

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), on a point of order.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, they decided to start turning the lights out in 1969.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister does not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Storie: Have a point of order? He does not have a clue. Mr. Speaker, 1969 to 1977 was the unprecedented growth in Manitoba, unprecedented—1973 was the last time this province enjoyed a surplus budget. It enjoyed a tremendous growth in the services to the people of Manitoba. So the Member for Riel, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), as usual does not have his facts right, and he simply cannot accept the fact that the Energy Rate Stabilization Program was a dismal failure.

The Member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) would have us believe that the Conservatives are such good managers. I will remind him in case he has forgotten that when Mr. Craik, the Minister responsible for Hydro introduced the Bill, he said it would cost taxpayers \$100 million over the five years the rate freeze was in effect. We were faced with the task of telling Manitobans the truth that the Hydro rate freeze was jeopardizing the financial stability of Hydro, that the stabilization program was costing taxpayers money, that the reserves of Manitoba Hydro were being depleted, because they had no way, Mr. Speaker, to compensate for the fact that their hydro rates were frozen. They could not access additional revenue, either to maintain their reserves or operate their corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Neufeld), who is an accountant, would have never countenanced that kind of policy. I know that the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) today, who is a responsible individual, would never have allowed this Government to—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, I know that it comes as some shock for the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) to find me agreeing with him and calling him a responsible Member, but I know that in private conversations we have discussed the relative merits of The Energy Rate Stabilization Act. I think we both agree on this, that had we both been involved at that time, things might have been different, because neither one of us believed that the Energy Rate Stabilization Program was a good idea. It was not good for Manitoba Hydro, and in the final analysis it was not good for the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we have several other issues that need to be dealt with when it comes to this Act, because it is all very well for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)—or I believe it was the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that introduced this Bill. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Rossmere asks whether I agree with Bill 53, and the answer is the Energy Rate Stabilization Program should be ended. The fact is that the previous Government ended Phase 1 of the Stabilization Program by relieving the taxpayers of Manitoba of the costs of the exchange on U.S. denominations debt, but the further road has to be travelled, and that is the elimination of the provincial responsibility for debt that is in other denominations, more particularly the yen and the Swiss franc.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we believe that may be necessary, but what has not happened to date is that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro nor the Minister of Finance has had the political will or the fortitude to tell Manitobans what this amendment is going to cost them. The Minister of Energy and Mines is sitting there pondering right now whether he should stand up and tell the truth, because the cost of this amendment is going to be significant. In 1987, when the first energy rate stabilization amendment was passed in this Legislature, the additional cost to Manitoba Hydro ratepayers was 4.7 percent. Now, I do not know what has changed in terms of the exchange rates between the franc and the yen and the Canadian dollar, but I believe that Manitoba Hydro ratepayers are in for a rate shock.

I see that my time is limited, but I know that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro will want to come clean with the ratepayers of Manitoba Hydro, he will want to come clean with the taxpayers of this province and he will want to tell us what this Energy Rate Stabilization Act has cost the Province of Manitoba, what it has cost taxpayers. He will want to tell the ratepayers of Manitoba Hydro what the removal of this stabilization program is going to be to the ratepayers, are they looking at an additional 5 percent or 10 percent rate increase in the coming year, because of the ending of this support from the Province of Manitoba? Mr. Speaker, we need to know those details.

* (1700)

When the Minister of Finance—and I did read the Minister of Finance's remarks when he introduced this legislation—did not deal at all with the very thorny

question of who is going to pay for rectifying this foolish, ill-considered Tory policy, who is going to pay—the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) he says, oh, he is complaining, because here is another example of failed Tory policy, just one in a long list of failed Tory policies from a failing, failing Government.

I had mentioned earlier in another context the consternation that is being felt across the province with the direction that this Government is taking the province. It is going to be magnified immeasurably when the people of Manitoba find out that the Minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Neufeld) is going to tack another 5 or 10 or 12 percent onto their hydro bill when this Bill is passed.

The fact is that once Manitoba Hydro assumes responsibility there is going to be a cost. I have not been able to fix the number yet, and of course that is going to be determined by the exchange rates over a period of time. It is going to cost each and every hydro consumer a tremendous amount extra this year because this Government is finally coming to grips with the error they made in 1979 when they introduced the Energy Rates Stabilization Program.

It is unfortunate, and I have some sympathy with the Minister of Energy and Mines, the Minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Neufeld). It was not his Act. The Minister of Energy and Mines was not in this Chamber. He was not part of the Government in 1979 when this Act was introduced. He is now having to clean up the abuse of an important Crown corporation, and an abuse of the taxpayers of Manitoba.

As I said, the Tory good managers in the Lyon Government—and we are reminded that the then Premier, the defeated Premier, sat on the board of the Canadian Commercial Bank as it went bankrupt and destroyed the lives of thousands and thousands of people—suggested that the cost to the taxpayers would be some \$100 million when in fact it was over \$300 million, and that was not carrying the Energy Rates Stabilization Program through the full term of the proposed rate freeze.

This Bill is going to receive the approval of the Legislature. It is going to receive the approval because it is a recognition on the part of the Government that they have in fact erred. The previous policy was a failure. It is irresponsible to ask the taxpayers of Manitoba to pick up the cost that should be attributable to individual ratepayers and to businesses and to individuals.

It is an awful price that the people of Manitoba now have to pay, the price of significant rate fluctuations, because the Conservative Government of the Day, the Lyon Government, decided to play politics with the Crown corporation, decided to play politics with the pricing of our hydro in complete violation of The Manitoba Hydro Act which talked about passing on the true costs of producing and distributing electricity in the province. That was their mandate. The Conservative Government decided to interfere, to manipulate a Crown corporation simply for its own politic purposes.

It is quite ironic that of course only some years later when the NDP Government was introducing legislation

to amend The Energy Rates Stabilization Act that we had all kinds of concerns being expressed for the ratepayers. Concern over the fact that the rates were going to have to increase to account for this lack of emendation of this support program.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. I am interrupting the proceedings according to the rules. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 24 minutes remaining.

IN SESSION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Hour.

ORDERS FOR RETURN, ADDRESSES FOR PAPERS REFERRED FOR DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: On the motion of the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), Address for Papers, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. NO. 20—ABORIGINAL TREATY RIGHTS

Mr. Speaker: Resolution No. 20, the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), that

WHEREAS the assimilationist policy introduced by the 1969 Jean Chrétien White Paper is alive and well in 1989; and

WHEREAS the change to funding for Native post-secondary education which came into effect April 1, 1989, is another way the successive federal Governments have systematically undermined the Treaty rights of First Nations people; and

WHEREAS post-secondary education is a Treaty right; and

WHEREAS the federal Government has a legal and moral responsibility to provide post-secondary funding to all First Nations students; and

WHEREAS the capping of post-secondary education funding is a direct attack on Treaty rights to education; and

WHEREAS the excuse that such cutbacks are necessary for reasons of fiscal restraint are both

unfair and financially irresponsible, as the changes will result in fewer students completing their education and higher unemployment; and

WHEREAS on most reserves the unemployment rate is 10 times the rate of urban centres; and

WHEREAS to suggest that these students can easily find employment to cover tuition and living expenses for schools, often hundreds of miles away, is totally unrealistic; and

WHEREAS aboriginal people gave up their rights to land and resources in return for federal guarantees in areas such as education; and

WHEREAS the federal Government seems to have no understanding of the true costs of living in northern and remote areas of this country; and

WHEREAS it is time that aboriginal people were given the opportunity to become partners in the affairs of this country; and

WHEREAS by using the term "deficit reduction" to justify cutbacks, the federal Government is offloading their responsibilities to the first peoples of this country; and

WHEREAS both under the Trudeau administration and the current Mulroney administration, there have been repeated attempts to avoid paying for programs obliged by Treaties; and

WHEREAS these cuts are detrimental to the move towards local control of education and access to post-secondary education for aboriginal people; and

WHEREAS the key to addressing the social and economic conditions that aboriginal people face is to improve access to education and job opportunities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record as supporting the aboriginal people in obtaining recognition and implementation of their Treaty rights, which include education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly further go on record as opposing the changes to financing of Native students by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly direct the Clerk to forward copies of this Resolution to the Minister of Indian Affairs.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Harper: Maybe you could give me a guide as to how long I have time on this?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member will get a two-minute warning light.

* (1710)

Mr. Harper: This is a very important issue we are dealing with. That is the right to education, and it is a very important right that we have always expressed to the federal Government.

Over the years successive Governments have tried to extinguish the rights of aboriginal people in this country. We just went through a number of constitutional conferences with the First Ministers on aboriginal rights and we did not get very far in defining some of those Treaty and aboriginal rights. If we had the opportunity to discuss many of those Treaty rights, one of them would have been the right to education. It is mentioned in the Treaties that the Indian people will be provided education on reserves, as promised by the Government people at the time which represented the Queen. There is some debate as to what education to the extent of funding that will be made available to the Indian people.

The department of Indian Affairs has insisted that the right to education does not go beyond Grade 12. In a sense what they are saying is that Treaty Indians would not get any funding if they were to go to universities or other post-secondary institutions. I believe the Treaties should be interpreted more liberally for modern day situations. The needs of the Indian people to go to school—and it seems to me that when we talk about Treaty rights the Governments have a way of trying to limit or define those rights, so that their obligations would not be financially great. Education is expensive and it would cost to put many students through universities to become well qualified to function within society, and to become part of this country which we call Canada.

It is very important that we get that recognition and also get the federal Government to implement the Treaty rights and especially recognize that education will be funded beyond Grade 12. If the federal Government is interpreting very narrowly what is contained in the Treaties, it must also be prepared to interpret the Treaties narrowly for the Government. Water, oil and gas were never mentioned in Treaties. It seems to me that those rights still belong to the aboriginal people.

What I am trying to say is that on one hand you are interpreting the Treaties narrowly, but on the other hand for the benefit of the Government, you are interpreting the Treaties very broadly to include those items I just mentioned as part of the Treaty-making agreement.

I try to emphasize that the right to education is a request by aboriginal people, not as a handout. I make that point very strongly because Indian people give the land and the resources to the Government in exchange for certain benefits. It is not a handout in the sense that Governments are giving us free education. That is not the case at all.

The federal Government would like the general public to view these rights as being paid by the taxpayers. That is not the case we are trying to make. We believe that the rights of the aboriginal people to education should be funded through the resources and lands that we have given to the federal Government, not as revenue that has been collected by the taxpayers—I mean by the Government through the taxpaying systems in this country.

We believe that the rights to education have been paid for. That is the difference. We want to make sure that we are not dwindling the coffers of federal Government at the expense of other social programs, but rather that these be paid for through the resources that have been made by Governments.

(Mr. Harold Gillehammer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I hope that this resolution will be passed today. I have not talked to my House Leader about approaching the other Parties about passing this resolution because the Minister of Indian Affairs will be attending a conference at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs next week. I was advised by one of the staff of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs that it would be welcome if we had passed this Resolution in the House so that it will give a greater weight to the post-secondary issue which has been going on for some time, demonstrating and fasting.

When we talk about these Treaty rights, I often feel that the rights have not been fully implemented or fully defined, such as education. We often find ourselves on the sidelines watching what the federal Government, and provincial Governments are doing. I was very disappointed that the First Minister of this province, when he attended the First Ministers' Conference, did not bring up the issue of post-secondary education, especially the aboriginal people in this country. The federal Government is gradually offloading its responsibilities onto the provincial Governments, and we are picking up the cost as a provincial Government.

If we look at the social conditions on reserves, many of these people are moving into the city to get, hopefully, job opportunities and education opportunities. Over the last while, we have lost many of the cost sharing programs in the Province of Manitoba, particularly, the Northern Development Agreement. We have had BUNTEP, the Brandon University Teachers Education Program, from which a number of teachers have graduated. We have the Northern Nursing Program, the Social Work Program. We had introduced some of these programs through the Human Development Section of the NDA and, hopefully, those programs will continue.

I had asked the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) how the negotiations were going with the Northern Development Agreement. I feel that agreement has been done away with, and we have to come up with a new set of negotiations to write an ongoing human development and training programs. We have also had here in Manitoba a number of other programs that were funded through Limestone Training Agency, they have changed that to the Northern Training Agency, now. We had proposed, too, that we would develop the northern university in the North and, as a matter of fact, it was part of our platform in the last election.

If we look at the spending of the dollars in the North through NDA, through Limestone, through entering university in the North, or through New Careers. We have spent over \$20 million annually for some of these training programs. We could conceivably set up a northern university. Not necessarily a physical structure,

but a program that can be delivered in many of the reserves, either through on-site or as there is technology available, that could be done mainly in the reserves. That was the concept that we were looking at.

This university concept could be set up in a way that the northern and the Native communities would have a greater say as to what is needed in the North. Also, many of the people would not have to leave their communities. That is why I asked the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) to see what he has done or the progress of these negotiations, whether you had maintained some of these programs. As a matter of fact, some of these programs, I do not think, will be renegotiated or would come about again.

* (1720)

The federal Government is going to be cutting back on post-secondary programs through EPF, Established Program Financing, and that is the word that we are getting. Federal Government is going to be coming back. The share that the province usually has will dribble from the assistance that we get from the federal Government.

I could not get away when I mentioned that have always been left out in the cold when we debate about aboriginal issues and we have been left out in the cold. As I mentioned before, we could not protect our interests, and we could not protect our Treaty rights. We were never part of the democratic process of Canada until very recently, less than 30 years ago.

Often when policies, legislation were created by Members of Parliament we were not consulted because we did not have a say. As a result of that legislation, the courts always ruled in favour, of course, of Government, always against Native people. That situation has gradually turned around and we began to have some influence in changing policy and regulations and statutes recognizing the aboriginal rights. We need to define the rights of aboriginal people like education, to understand what it exactly means.

We have a constitutional crisis right now and we are again left out in the cold, from an aboriginal perspective. It is ironic because we welcomed people from Europe. They were welcome guests at our home. They seem to have taken our home and build a foundation without giving us any kind of recognition and left us out in the cold. They say that only two nations, two people have developed this home. These two nations are squabbling as to who are the original founders of this country. Yet, they are neatly settled in within the confines of the home that we had welcomed them in and then they kick you out of your own house. It is ironic in that sense.

Hopefully, that situation will be recognized by the First Ministers of this country that we were the first citizens of this land. We hope that the rights of aboriginal people, as promised by the federal Governments, will be upheld. Education is a key to that success so that we can start building our own communities, building our own young people, and become part of this country and not necessarily be a social drain on dollars, but be part of the process of this country.

I conclude: I hope the Members will pass this resolution, although I had not advised anyone of that,

but I hope this resolution will be passed today. I leave it up to the Members to see if that is possible.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): Let me first of all, rise to speak today to say to the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) that each time he speaks, he speaks with the conviction of a Member who truly wants to better the way of life for the aboriginal people which he represents. I have to be quite straightforward with him, as well, it is unfortunate that he has not been able, over the past few years, to get the support of his Party to carry out some of the convictions and the commitments that he, himself, has to the aboriginal people.

I will not dwell a long time on this but, again, have to tell the Member that he should clearly take a look around and see truly who is supporting the aboriginal people, who did in fact give the aboriginal people the right to vote and who, in this particular last year and a half, compared to the six years that he was sitting with the Government, what has actually taken place to support his community. I would be less than responsible if I did not remind the Member of that.

Let me just add, this Government made it very clear to the federal Government by letter to the former Minister of Native Affairs at the rally that was held, I believe it was last December and I could table the letter—

An Honourable Member: It did not even happen in your brief to the First Ministers' meeting, do not be dishonest.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Speaker, we again have the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) and the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) who probably are about to jeopardize the support that the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) was going to get in passage of this resolution, but because they want to play politics, they will probably blow, for the Member for Rupertsland, the support in this House because of their irresponsible carrying on for their own political benefit. Let me warn them of that right now.

I was just about to say, that it was not an oversight on the part of our Premier; the Premier is clearly on record. His Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), and I, as the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs, have made it very clear to the federal Government as to what our position is.

Our participation, with the Member for Rupertsland in the fasting activities he put on, show that the people of this country support him. Do not let the Leader of the New Democratic Party or the Member for the Pas blow this opportunity for the Member for Rupertsland. I support the Member for Rupertsland and the Native people. If the Leader of the third Party in this House wants to play cheap politics, he will pay the price. We will lay it on his head that he blew the support for his Member for Rupertsland.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gilleshammer): A point of order? The Member for Concordia, on a point of order.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): The Member for Arthur unfortunately continues to deal with serious matters, talking about the past six years and this six years, and then ascribes motives to certain Members of this Chamber. If he believes in the principle he should pass the resolution; if he does not, he should act accordingly. He should deal with the principles of the proposals, not deal in partisan political comments on these very important issues. The record is clear in terms of the Premier's presentation to the Prime Minister. The record will be clear today in terms of the position of the Member for Arthur.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gilleshammer): The Member does not have a point of order. The Honourable Minister for Northern and Native Affairs.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Speaker, it is the Leader of the New Democratic Party who is trying to play politics with a serious issue. I just indicated clearly to him what he is trying to accomplish here, will not be accomplished if he tries to continue to play the cheap political politics that he and the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) are playing.

The Member for Rupertsland is very serious, and our Party is very serious about supporting him. I am pointing out to him the lack of support that he got from the New Democratic Party when he was the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs. It is a disaster what they have done for him and his people, and they know it.

Let me say that the Member may not have support from the New Democratic Party House Leader to move this and advance it. It would be my intention today to recommend to this House to do so, and he would have our support. Again, I warn the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) that if he wants to play the games, then he is going to infuriate some of the Members here to say that the Member for Concordia in fact blew it for the Member for Rupertsland as he has done in the past.

I want to continue on with the resolution itself. I clearly think the Member has put forward a reasonable case. I say that seriously. Some of the WHEREASes could be debated and some of the technicalities of them. One would not want to go by without touching on them briefly. I will do so, but not in a derogatory way, not in a way that would reflect on the Member for Rupertsland, but would just point out that there has to be some clearer definition given—and this I am trying to say in support of—as to the Treaty rights as they relate to post-secondary education and the interpretation of it.

Education was guaranteed in the Treaty rights. There may not have been reference to post-secondary education at that time. Let us ask the question: when those Treaties were signed, how much post-secondary

education was there available? Who really realized that we were going to advance into a world of the technology change that we have advanced into, whether it is computers, whether it is science and technology within the medical field?

* (1730)

The demands and the needs are there for educating of the aboriginal people in all walks of life, in management, in the sciences and everywhere else, and they should be given full and open opportunity to participate. I say this very seriously. We are far better as a nation, as taxpayers, to support the educational systems and education of the aboriginal people than to continue to perpetuate the unemployment, the disastrous unemployment levels that they are looking at, to perpetuate the welfare system that many find themselves so dependent on. Switching to drugs and alcohol for some of the young people to try and forget some of the situations that they are in is not the way to go.

Education is clearly the way to go. Advanced education and investment in education will pay everyone, not only the aboriginal people who this is particularly targeted at, but all of society. The full participation in education and advancement of the opportunities have to be part of the total picture of this province and in this country.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let me further say that in looking at the resolution, and I will deal specifically with the THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly go on record as supporting their aboriginal people in obtaining the recognition and implementation of their Treaty rights, which include education—very supportable. I think that there is a strong feeling, as we expect the federal Government to carry out the responsibilities of other activities on the reserves in this province, that the Treaty rights that are upheld there, the educational Treaty right, is probably more important when it comes to what the communities are faced with. There is a limitation to the lands:

We do not have the land claim settled at this point, but they are not talking a lot of acres. A lot of the Native people find they have to move out of their communities to enhance their way of life and to participate in the bigger part of society. They are restricted to certain land bases which again I think is extremely unfortunate, but it is part of the rights that were signed and part of the situation we have to deal with.

The second THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Assembly further go on record as opposing the changes to financing of Native students by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, just further reiterates that support of the first RESOLVED. Then of course the other one is that this Assembly direct the Clerk to forward copies of this resolution to the Minister of Indian Affairs.

Well, the Member makes a good point. The Minister is going to be in town next week, and if the Member—and I plan to have a short meeting with Mr. Cadieux if this resolution is passed by that time—he and I would

be more than prepared to clearly indicate to the Minister an opportunity for the Member to present it to him if the time could be made available. I think that is the kind of support we have to show on this kind of resolution. I have no difficulty, as I said earlier, in having this pass this afternoon.

Let me say as well, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I would hope the Member, in putting this forward, is doing it as he has been doing many things over the past while, that is, showing an interest in the community which he represents and not doing it based on political motivation, but doing it again in the best interests of his community. I take it as such. I seriously do, that he is presenting this to the House with the feeling of total commitment to his constituents.

I would like to just further close my comments, Mr. Acting Speaker, by putting a couple of things on the record to clearly show to the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) and those Members of his Party that may be interested in some of the progress that has been made over the past few months as it relates to the aboriginal people and the northern communities. I am proud to say we have seen substantial progress as it relates to the negotiations on the Northern Flood Agreement with the five northern bands, something that was not able to be accomplished previously under the New Democratic Party, a major commitment of funds and substantial advancements in relationships between the parties involved. I seriously hope at some point that there can be a conclusion to that agreement.

Mr. Acting Speaker, recently my colleague, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), provided for and in conjunction with the Department of Northern and Native Affairs some \$500,000 for the next two years to develop and work towards recreation in northern Manitoba, not just for Treaty Indians, but for our communities working in combination and co-ordination with the northern communities.

I want to point out as well—and, Mr. Acting Speaker, let me say, that has been well received by the communities of northern Manitoba, directed at the young people towards education and activities that would hope to encourage them away from the use of drugs and alcohol and provide them with a better basis for which to enter the world.

I have to say as well that we are committed to landline hydro services to some of the northeast communities, of which that Member was unable to provide. I am not able today to make any firm announcements, but I want to again indicate that positive negotiations and discussions are taking place. Mr. Acting Speaker, again a positive move.

Something that I feel very good about—because far too long we have seen the benefits of Manitoba Hydro. The development of the hydro generating stations present job opportunities. The selling of hydro to the United States has been the big thing of the previous administration, but at the same time we are doing all of this there are people living in substandard conditions in those northern communities with that power being generated probably less than 100 miles

away, and we expect them as Manitobans to generate their power from diesel fuel for electricity. I do not believe in today's society that those communities should be expected to continue in those substandard conditions. So I say, we are committed to improving the conditions.

My colleague, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), in his recent announcements and work in northern Manitoba when it comes to the implementation and installation of the kidney dialysis machine in Thompson, again a commitment to the northern community of which the Native community depend heavily on is the Thompson Hospital and the central service for the kidney services.

What did it mean before there was a kidney dialysis machine in Thompson? It meant that those individuals had to fly, spend the money to fly to Winnipeg to spend a day or two, and fly back. They were in an airplane or in transportation most of the time, when they were not on the dialysis machine. Again, taking to those people a medical service that is extremely important to them.

Another area that is extremely important and I feel very good about, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the work that we have done on the Urban Native Strategy. There are not a lot of easy answers, but I think we have a process, and we have a start, a mechanism, in place to deal with some of the issues and some of the concerns of our Native community that are forced for job seeking, for other reasons to move to the City of Winnipeg and/or other urban centres to try to co-ordinate the services that they rightfully should get and expect when they come to the city or to another urban centre.

We have a commitment to deal openly and responsibly with them, and I say this sincerely that, my friend and colleague, the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), has not been overly critical. I say he has been very fair and open with requests and honest with us. I would hope that we are able to see this pass before six o'clock tonight so that the Member has in fact in his possession, when the Minister comes to town, a resolution of this Legislature supporting the educational support for the Native community in this province. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to put on record the Liberal Party's support for the intent and purpose of this resolution, which has been introduced by the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper). I listened with interest and with a good deal of attention to the remarks of the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) because I found his remarks also very sympathetic to the intent of the resolution, and it is the intent of the resolution that we really need to focus on, and that I would like to lend our support to.

* (1740)

There is, embodied in the purpose of the resolution, a cry, -(interjection)- thank you, I was looking for a word—a plea for the education, a plea for the ability of the first people of this country to take a very important place in how the affairs of this country are ordered,

how the affairs of this country are conducted, and also to have a meaningful participation in all aspects of those affairs, not just in the receipt of largesse when it is provided, but also in the earning of the materials, earning of the economic activity, earning of part and parcel of the decision-making process, and allowing full participation in everything that makes this country the great country that it is.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as was referenced by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) there are aspects of the resolution, particularly in the WHEREASes, where perhaps we might not all speak with the same degree of conviction, and read with the same degree of conviction, because we do not speak with the same degree of frustration.

When I read through those WHEREASes I actually read a litany of frustration, a litany, a complaint, a statement of a loss, a statement of a people that has lost its place, that has lost its pride in being able to state to the world, we are, we have, we are doing. They still feel that they must—and this is borne out once again, and again, and again by the fact that resolutions like this must be put onto the Order Paper; that resolutions like this must be brought forward and they still feel they have to state their case over, and over, and over again, that they can take, before they can actually receive what is rightfully theirs, full and equal and meaningful participation in the affairs of the state.

What I see in the need for this resolution is not just focusing on the one aspect, which in this case is the cutbacks in the post-secondary education funding, in the changes of the rules in the post-secondary education funding, but actually that this is the one target that is being focused on, but it actually reflects an entire systemic barrier to the meaningful involvement of the Native people in the affairs of this country.

The purpose of education, the purpose of training, is for people to be able to conduct their affairs, to conduct their community affairs, to conduct the province's affairs, or the country's affairs, in ways in which everybody's opinions, everybody's statements, are accepted at face value; that we do not automatically take a look at the person who makes the statement and make a value judgment, and that we do not take a look at the person who is making the statement and end up with a stereotypical response.

I give as an example, and it is an education example for the edification of the Members present, that in my former incarnation as a teacher I did spend many years in the Winnipeg School Division teaching high school. Now the programs that I was teaching were the occupational entrance courses, at the time, now called O4 courses, and I found when I first started—and I walked into the program completely naive as to the realities of the world, completely naive as to the fact that there seemed to be some sort of systemic demonstration of what was happening in the school system in my classroom. I thought, when I stepped into the classroom as in any other case, that if I have 20 people in the classroom that it would be a sprinkling of all members of society in the classroom. There would be representatives of all groups in society, because the program is designed to work with people, children, and

students who have difficulty. I should not find 100 percent enrollment representing one particular group of society; the aboriginal people. I should not find that. That is statistically impossible, if this was to reflect the population of that group within the overall society.

I began to focus in on this kind of a problem, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I noticed that this did not just happen one year, this happened year, after year, after year. I asked the question of other classrooms, and I found it was happening in those classrooms year after year after year.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Not only was it happening in classrooms, there were entire schools where if you took a look at the program delivery, this was not program delivery for post-secondary education, this was not program delivery to get students to graduate to be able to compete at the university level but, no, this was program delivery to get people out of the system as quickly as possible.

That to me, Mr. Speaker, is a systemic barrier and that to me is an example of the problem that is being addressed specifically by this resolution. The fact that the federal Government, in its attempt at either deficit reduction or in its attempt to balance its books differently or in its attempt to change its priorities, is actually offloading its responsibilities.

If we take a look at some other aspects of programs funded by joint funding or by federal funding, programs out of the Northern Development Agreement, we find that programs which are now funded through the Northern Development Agreement, programs that are taking students in right now in the 1989-1990 student year, find that there is no commitment to renegotiating this agreement, that there is no indication this agreement will be signed. The fact that these kids are in the program, the students are in the program, what is going to happen them?

By accepting them into the program you have the implicit promise that program will continue. That means if the federal Government is renegeing on their responsibility, those costs involved for those students and those programs will have to be picked up by the provincial Government. That once again is a way that the federal Government, for whatever motive it has, is doing exactly what the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) has stated, it is moving away from its Treaty obligations, from its Treaty responsibilities.

In that respect I feel that we can send nothing better than a clear signal to the Minister responsible federally that this House is dead square or foursquare against the concept of its renegeing on its responsibilities.

We need to do more than just simply send a signal that they are going to provide money, because just providing money for a program is not sufficient. We need to do more. We need to actually change some of the systemic barriers that have been built in, so that graduates who can get into the post-secondary education programs, that graduates of the post-secondary education programs can actually end up having a meaningful position in employment within society at large.

I should not have to go looking for members of the Native community when I walk down the street. I should be able to find them in every shop, in every place of employment in proportion to the numbers that they represent in society. I should see them at management, I should be able to see them at the service level, I should be able to see them as owners of shops, I should be able to see them as doctors, as lawyers, but I do not, Mr. Speaker, and I find that reprehensible.

That is the purpose of what these programs are to do. They are to give the people the training and the education for meaningful economic participation, and "meaningful" here, although the word itself says it all, often needs to be defined. I define it by seeing people in the place where I do business, and I find that does not happen.

I go back to my classroom experience. I found the students not throughout the school, I found them in my classroom. That meant that they were segregated, that meant that they were in a single program, and that to me is reprehensible.

* (1750)

That is what the thrust of this resolution is directed at although it does not state it categorically. The resolution calls for the support and recognition of the Treaty rights which include education and that basically the post-secondary education cutbacks, as they have been indicated from the federal Government, need to be examined very, very carefully and changed to reflect the reality of what we expect those programs and those funds to do, and that is to bring the aboriginal people up to a level of education and training where those people, when they have the choice, can make that choice as to how they wish to participate in society.

Whether they wish to follow a traditional path or whether they wish to join full in with mainstream society and compete as the rest of us compete for jobs and things like that, that is a choice they should be able to have and should be able to make. Right now that choice does not exist. People still find, as I, that we must look, and I still have to do that, I still have to look, go on a hunt to find the aboriginal people as they affect my life directly. That is not something that we should have to do.

Mr. Speaker, I realize my time is fast running to an end. I too wish to once more underscore our Party's support for the principle of this resolution. As the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) said, we should be able to pass this on as a passed resolution so that the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) can go to the Assembly with this document and lend weight to his words to say that the Assembly of Manitoba speaks with one voice when we say meaningful education and training for full meaningful economic participation. Thank you.

Mr. Parker Burrell (Swan River): I am just going to add a few brief comments so we will have time to pass this Bill before six. I want to congratulate the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) on this resolution. I do not see any problem in supporting it. I remember not

very long ago, we had the gallery filled up here with aboriginal and Native people and everyone in this Assembly supported a similar resolution for the post-secondary education.

Education is a lot different today than it was at the time the Treaty was signed. The education was a lot different, the people are a lot different, and I would urge the Member for Rupertsland to maybe forge ahead with his leadership and start thinking about maybe rethinking all the old Treaties, bringing them more into line. I am sure the change is going to come in the future. I would like to see the Native people initiate the change instead of protesting about the post-secondary education. Maybe they should be putting more teeth into it and coming forward with the leadership to initiate some of the changes.

I know that aboriginal hunting rights are a big issue in my area. A lot of people feel that if the Treaty people are allowed to hunt at will the way things are now and particularly with the night hunting, I would have to mention that because I had a constituent shot a couple of weeks ago, the only one that voted for me in that particular area.- (interjection)- That is true.

The unemployment rate is dreadful. You cannot combat unemployment by cutting off post-secondary education. We must increase the education and we must also increase the training capacity. I think that Native plumbers would be a very, very reasonable thing. Plumbers to me represent a lot of money. Doctors and plumbers are pretty well in the same category - (interjection)- true.

I would like to point out No. 10 on the resolution, WHEREAS it is time the aboriginal people were given the opportunity to become equal partners in the affairs of this country. That is what I was referring to when I said these old Treaties should be looked at, reshaped and so on. I do not believe our aboriginal people belong on reserves unless they so choose to do so. I know people do not refer to them as "reserves" any more. They refer to them as remote northern communities. I refer to them as places without too much opportunity. I think that maybe the time has come for the Native and aboriginal peoples to come into the mainstream.

With those few brief comments, I want to congratulate the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) again on the resolution, and I certainly cannot see any problem in passing it. As I mentioned before, it was not too long ago that this Assembly was filled in the gallery and all political Parties and all Members as far as I am concerned were very supportive of this resolution. Thank you very much.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? The hour being 6 p.m., this House now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

An Honourable Member: No, Mr. Speaker, there is no leave to call it six o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: There was no leave?

An Honourable Member: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the House has been adjourned—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I understood that I thought there had been leave -(interjection)- there is no leave? No, okay. The Honourable Acting Government House Leader then.

Mr. Downey: If the House has been adjourned, then it has been adjourned and I will support your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No, that is fine. I did not hear that there was not leave to adjourn the House, so then we will just carry on.

The Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), on a point of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I guess maybe I have learnt that one should never assume, but we were wanting to support this resolution and see that it does pass. For that reason and that sole reason, we had

another Member that did want to speak on that resolution. We had agreed not to put up another speaker so it would facilitate its passage.

I, Mr. Speaker, would not want to see the next resolution come forward because the Honourable Member for St. Vital's (Mr. Rose) resolution is the next one and, out of respect for that fact, I would ask that we adhere to the original comment that you had made and that it be adjourned.

If the Minister for Seniors (Mr. Downey) does want to proceed, I am willing to introduce the resolution on the Member's behalf.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the House does need leave in order to call it six o'clock before the hour being six. There has not been leave. I misunderstood that there was not leave, so we shall carry on. The Honourable Acting Government House Leader.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Inkster has explained it fairly well and we will agree to call it six o'clock if Members -inaudible-

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? (Agreed) The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).