



Second Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

LIB - Liberal; ND - New Democrat; PC - Progressive Conservative

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIB
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	ND
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	ND
CARR, James	Crescentwood	LIB
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIB
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	ND
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	LIB
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	ND
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	ND
DOER, Gary	Concordia	ND
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIB
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	ND
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	ND
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	ND
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIB
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	ND
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	ND
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	LIB
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	ND
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	ND
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	ND
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	ND
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	ND
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	ND
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	ND
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	ND
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	ND

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 26, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling the Annual Report for 1989-90 for the Film Classification Board, and a copy of Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for Estimates for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, and the Manitoba Status of Women.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this morning from the Gimli High School thirty-five Grade 11 students. They are under the direction of Mr. Johanson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Education System Strategic Plan Public Consultations

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, today the government released I guess what could be called one of the thinnest documents on the education system and training system in the province of Manitoba, the so-called Strategic Plan for 1991-96.

It is ironic but not coincidental, I would suggest, that the government release this document after a budget which basically assaulted the education system in this province. Whether it was in the public school system and the universities, the community colleges, the ACCESS programs, unprecedented cutbacks and reductions in education services took place in the last carnage in the provincial budget.

The document in the press release, Mr. Speaker, mentions that the so-called plan provides the department with a framework for effective and efficient planning. We have heard from parents, students and teachers, partners in the education system that they have absolutely no input with this government. This government does not listen to them.

I would ask the government: How would the parents, teachers and students plug into this document, and how would they plug into the document the strategic framework to reverse the direction of education that this government is heading the province of Manitoba in?

* (1005)

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that the Leader of the Opposition has not really kept abreast of what is happening in the field of education. This morning, in releasing the consultation paper or the five-year strategic plan, we met with all of the partners that we feel are important in education, and indeed the Federation of Labour, the business groups, the traditional organizations representing various organizations involved with education, the universities, the colleges were all there.

Mr. Speaker, when we take a look as an example at the Ed Finance Review, we have had extensive consultation with all of the players in education. Many, many meetings have taken place involving all of the key organizations in education. By the time the document, the new Ed Finance model, becomes public, we will indeed have consulted with every organization and everyone will have had major input into the document. It will not become a document that is simply that of a government but will become a document of the people of this province, and that is a true and meaningful partnership in education.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister a very direct question.

How would the parents, students, teachers and others have input into the policy direction of this government, a policy direction in education that by

all independent accounts is heading us in a disastrous direction?

Mr. Speaker, I note that on the introductory page of the document, it talks about a solid foundation. It mentions the initiatives through the department. It mentions the department having a framework, and it mentions the department having a direction.

Well, I am concerned, our caucus is concerned, and I believe Manitobans are concerned about what the public's input will be to this document. What will teachers be able to say? What will parents be able to say? What will students be able to say? Will the government really listen to those people?

For example, if the public of Manitoba says that you are wrong-headed to take \$7 million out of the community college system and put that into corporate training, you are wrong to do that. Will the government reverse its position and put the money back into our community colleges in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I guess the Leader of the Opposition should talk to the critic for Education within his own party, because when I met with his critic yesterday, his critic acknowledged that this appeared to be a very good document.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education is wrong. I did not say such words.

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

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It appears the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) would rather answer the question.

The honourable Minister of Education and Training, to finish his response.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, indeed it is regrettable that the Leader of the Opposition has not read beyond the first page. If he had he would realize that indeed we call upon the key partners in education, the parents, the business community, the labour

organizations, the traditional organizations in education to become involved in the initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, this is the framework for the plan for five years, which has many initiatives in it, and within those initiatives there are going to be plenty of time and plenty of room for consultation, deliberation, discussion, and indeed the discussions and initiatives that are going to be undertaken will be the result of good consultation with the partners.

* (1010)

Northern Education Public Consultations

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I did read the whole document. It took about seven and a half minutes, I believe. It is not a very lengthy document, unfortunately.

The minister has not answered the specific question yet about whether he will really listen to people about things like community colleges. Will he really listen to parents and students and teachers? Perhaps our critic would go out and have public hearings on this document to get the public input, if the government will not.

I have a further question to the minister. The Premier promised in the election to have consultation, a commission, I believe, on northern education and training. The minister again xeroxes the same promise on northern education and training for aboriginal people, and we will have input from those people before we make those decisions.

I ask the government: Will it freeze all the negative cutbacks—

An Honourable Member: The Liberal critic had to agree with that . . . embarrassing.

Mr. Doer: It is embarrassing to have a Finance critic of your own party who supports the Tory cutbacks. That is what is really embarrassing.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader, kindly put your question, please.

Mr. Doer: Will the government live up to its word in its Premier's own promise on August 16, the document's commitment to have input from aboriginal and northern people prior to any decisions being made? Will they put on hold and freeze all the cutbacks they have put in place in this budget, cutbacks such as cutting the civil engineering program out of Thompson, which is 90 percent aboriginal people—

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

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Well, within that tirade, Mr. Speaker, there were at least four questions, and I would certainly like to answer all of them.

First of all, I might indicate that we have always consulted with the interest groups before any major decisions have been made. That is the approach we are taking with college governance. That is the approach we are taking with ed finance reform. That is the approach that we will take with any initiatives in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I can also indicate to the House today that there are at least four new programs that are going to be launched in Thompson as a result of the budget. That is not a cutback; that is a refocusing and a reshaping of college delivery programs, training programs which are meaningful, not like the ones that the opposition had put in place, where they spent \$41 million with 18 graduates or 12 graduates out of a program. That is the kind of mismanagement that we saw from the former government, the NDP government of this province.

Universities Departmental Review

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, under the five-year plan announced by the minister, universities, like the North and like aboriginal people, will be studied and reviewed. This is after the damage has been done. This is after the U of M is seeing a tuition increase of 20 percent. This is after 200 to 300 people are going to be laid off. This is after a three-quarter-million-dollar deficit for the first time in history.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister indicate why he has chosen a departmental review of the universities in this province, and will that review consider the operations of the Universities Grants Commission? Will that review look at whether or not—

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

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it is not a departmental review of universities. Indeed, we have already met with the university presidents to ask them for their input in terms of the process, in the way that the

process should evolve with regard to the review of university education.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that when the former government was in office, there was no review or reform of any educational programming. There was a stagnation in the whole education process.

We are not going to sit by and allow the system to fail. Indeed, if it needs reforming, it will be reformed, but with the consultation and indeed with the involvement of all the players that are involved in the education community, indeed, all Manitobans who have a stake in the education of the province.

* (1015)

Education System Funding

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, a strategic plan means nothing if it is not funded. This is unfunded rhetoric. If this government is committed to what it is doing, why has it cut the high school bursary program? Why has it cut the ACCESS program? Why has it cut back on grants to all—

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

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the NDP response to anything, any reform, is to throw more money at it and to tax those individuals. Of the many people who are on fixed income, the many seniors of this province who cannot afford another penny in taxes, the NDP would go after them for greater taxes simply to dump more money at problems.

Mr. Speaker, reform does not mean you simply dump the money and go away. Meaningful reform is to indeed look at the way that we can refocus and reshape programs without simply dumping great sums of money into it.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, 55-Plus and the GFT answer that question.

Education System Strategic Plan Public Consultation

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, since this minister indicates he has consulted so widely, will he table the results of all the consultations with all of those parents groups and all of those students? Will he table the results of the consultations with the university professors so we all can have input into the decision-making process?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, on the High School Review there were some 240 responses from various organizations with regard to the reform of high school education in this province.

With regard to the finance model for schools, there has been input from each organization in terms of what they would like to see as a funding model in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on about each and every initiative. We came forward with the Skills Training Advisory Committee Report, which indeed focused on the plans of post-secondary training that is required, consultation that was held with the broad community, not just the education groups.

If the member would like to see copies of those kinds of reports, he can certainly come to my office, and we would be prepared to share those with him.

Universities Tuition Fee Increase

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago the Premier, in reference to university fees, shouted from his seat, let the user pay. Well, that is exactly what has happened if you are a student at the University of Manitoba, because if you entered a four-year degree program in 1988-89, you have watched your tuition fees rise by 56.8 percent. What that means is that the people whose parents have money will be able to go to university, those who do not will not be able to go to university.

I want to know how the Minister of Education can state on page 22 of this bit of fluff that he wants to increase the successful participation of women, aboriginal people, visible minorities, people with disabilities and other underrepresented groups when those are the very people who do not have 56.8 percent more?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, once again, I wish the Leader of the Second Opposition had attended the briefing that was set up for her yesterday to advise her, to inform her and enlighten her on the document.

Mr. Speaker, let me say about university education in this province that Manitoba has the fourth lowest tuition fees in Canada. When we take a look at tuition fee increases in other provinces,

such as Saskatchewan going up about 15 percent, 20 percent in Alberta, 25 percent in Nova Scotia, indeed we are still offering education at a very good rate in Manitoba when we are the fourth lowest in terms of tuition fees.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I might indicate that we have the richest student aid program in all of Canada. In addition to that, through the budget process this year we were able to put \$1 million into a bursary program. In discussion with the presidents at the universities, they have indicated that a 20 percent increase in tuition fees will mean a marginal call on student loans—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1020)

Aboriginal Education Curriculum Development

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the fluff continues. On page 23 the department says that it wishes to institute an initiative which will integrate culturally appropriate curriculum and materials in schools for our aboriginal peoples.

How can the Minister of Education justify that statement when he has cut curriculum development for Native education in his recent budget?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, a short time ago I tabled a policy on multicultural education in this province. Never before was there such a policy within this province.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the number of aboriginal and Native people involved in education since we came to office, it far exceeds what happened when the NDP was in government.

Our commitment is as stated in the document. We are going to ensure that there is a true partnership with all people in this province, including the aboriginal community, which is so important to the development of our province, especially in northern Manitoba.

Literacy Programs Government Initiatives

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on page 19 he says in this little bit of fluff that he wants to strengthen

existing community-based, learner-centred literacy programs.

Can the minister tell us how he can justify that statement when he has just cut a fundamental literacy program, English as a Second Language, for adult students at Red River Community College?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the fluff is in that chair and the way that she speaks about it.

That document has been endorsed by many organizations in this province—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable minister that we refer to all honourable members in this Chamber as honourable members. I would ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw that comment.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable Minister of Education and Training.

The honourable minister, to finish his response.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, in the last three years of government we have embarked on a very ambitious program in terms of literacy in this province. For the first time, we have a Literacy Council. For the first time, we have a Literacy Office in this province. For the first time, we have community-based programs that have been expanded threefold in this province.

We are spending more than a million dollars a year now on literacy programs across this province. That is not a cutback. Indeed, it is an enhancement of programs delivered throughout this province.

Point of Order

Mrs. Carstairs: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, from his seat the Minister of Health not only is prepared to cast aspersions on my teaching career, but in addition he is talking about the crap that I put on the record. I demand an apology from the Minister of Health.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely will apologize to my honourable friend, even though the language I used was significantly better than the language of her Finance critic.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to thank the honourable minister for that withdrawal.

Abitibi-Price Pine Falls Plant Closure

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans sink deeper into despair day by day as this government attempts to govern the affairs of the province.

While students in our universities will be paying tuition fee increases of 20 percent, they will not have jobs this summer, because 23 percent of the males 15 to 24 will be unemployed and 20,000 people have gone unemployed since this government was elected in September—20,000 people. To put that in perspective, that is the communities of Portage la Prairie and Dauphin disappeared—20,000 people.

Whole communities have been threatened: Sherridon, Lynn Lake, virtually disappeared. Today we learned that the community of Pine Falls is in jeopardy, that Abitibi-Price may in fact be closing one of its eight mills in Canada.

My question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. Can the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism tell the House whether he has met with Abitibi-Price officials and whether he can give assurances to the 500 people who work there who are currently laid off but who did have jobs there, whether their jobs and their community are going to be protected, whether the government will ensure that those jobs remain here as part of our manufacturing base?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the member for Flin Flon has read this morning's newspaper. I can certainly assure him, as I can all members of the House, that our department is in ongoing discussions and negotiations with Abitibi in terms of monitoring that entire situation, reading the article or looking at eight facilities across Canada. Certainly my department has been in contact. I personally have not at this particular point in time, but our department is, on an ongoing and regular basis, in contact with Abitibi.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, not only have I read the newspaper, I read that minister's departmental report, and there are no initiatives from this government to save jobs anywhere in Manitoba. This minister has not even met with Abitibi-Price, one of the biggest suppliers in the province of Manitoba.

Bristol Aerospace Limited Layoffs

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Flin Flon, kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): My question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Mr. Speaker, the First Minister and some of his ministers were talking about the aerospace industry; 278 people are going to be laid off by Bristol Aerospace on May 17. We learned today that an additional 22 people are going to be laid off at Bristol Aerospace.

Can the minister indicate whether he has met with Bristol Aerospace to find solutions to this continuing deterioration in our manufacturing base?

* (1025)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, on that particular issue, once again I am pleased to see the member is reading the morning newspapers.

I have met with Bristol Aerospace. The announcement that the honourable member is referring to is an additional 20 positions. The other numbers were provided some time ago.

When I met with the company, what they point to, as I would like to think everybody in this House recognizes, is the recession that is occurring all across Canada. Manitoba, relative to that situation, is faring better than most other provinces in this country in terms of weathering the storm of the recession. They point to that particular issue. They also do point to the economic climate in Manitoba and the kind of economic climate that was created during the six and seven years of NDP government in terms of what they did to the taxation levels and so on.

I want to remind the honourable member that they like to point to the job that Premier Bob is doing in the province of Ontario, with 226,000 jobs that have been lost in that particular province, as reported in a recent newspaper article in *The Globe and Mail*, Mr. Speaker.

Sears Canada Inc. Layoffs

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, while the NDP were in government, private investment was

amongst the highest in the country in terms of the provincial per capita investment. This government has the lowest per capita investment in the private sector. We also learned that Sears Canada is closing its distributorship office in Winnipeg and 65 people will be put out of work.

My question is: Is the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism going to be attending the official closing of this head office?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, once again, if the honourable member would look into the situation and realize what is happening, it is again a cost-saving measure by Sears in terms of a relocation to a distribution centre in Regina, the kinds of things that we are seeing businesses have to do across this country and certainly in this province to remain competitive.

If they have read our budget, which I hope they have done—they voted on it last night—they will look at the kinds of initiatives we are taking in this province to be sure to create a positive economic climate, to create long-term, quality jobs in our province, not the short-term, makeshift jobs that they created in terms of spending taxpayers' money, and on top of that increasing the debt and the kinds of positive investments that they attempted to make, Mr. Speaker, that ended up costing us nothing but money.

Manufacturing Industry Government Initiatives

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I have a question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Estimates of industrial output reveal an 8.8 percent decline in the manufacturing sector in 1990, and now we have a report from Statistics Canada showing manufacturing shipments have declined in Manitoba by 15 percent in the first two months of this year compared to last year at this time. This decline is three times more than the Canadian average decline of 5.3 percent. In fact, Manitoba rates 10 out of 10, the worst performance in the country.

Can the Premier explain to this House why Manitoba's manufacturing industry is performing so poorly after four consecutive budgets of his government, budgets that were supposed to attract industry to this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, what the member fails to recognize is that we are in the

midst of a national recession and that, leading up to this point, we have had some massive increases in manufacturing investment in this province. In fact, in 1989, the first year of our government after the desperate and hopeless policies of the New Democrats, with a new government here, we had more than a 100 percent increase in manufacturing investment in 1989. As a result, we had massive shift and change. The aerospace industry increased dramatically, and in fact many areas of our economy have increased dramatically this year as well. Mr. Speaker, 1992, we are projected to have increases again in manufacturing investment.

The reality is that we were left with a huge burden of debt by the New Democratic government, we were left with a payroll tax that is still considered to be a disincentive to manufacturing investment, we were left with a corporations capital tax from the New Democrats that is still considered to be a disincentive to investment, and we have to work against those things, but by virtue of the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1030)

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, we have had four budgets from this government. He is complaining about taxes he has had four opportunities to do something about, and we are 10 out of 10.

Can the Premier account for the fact that the manufacturing sector is smaller today than it was before this government assumed office? In March of 1988, we had 63,000 people working in manufacturing. Today we only have 53,000, a drop of 10,000 workers in the manufacturing industry.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I may say that during the last recession, in which the New Democrats were in government, some 12,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in the space of about a year and a half. That is what happens during recessions. The manufacturing sector suffers layoffs. I might say that under the presiding influence of the member for Brandon East, 12,000 jobs were lost in the manufacturing sector.

I would like him to explain that, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Leonard Evans: The fact is we had 63,000 and you only have 53,000.

Housing Construction Industry Government Initiatives

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have another question.

We have another sign of our weakening economy in the residential construction sector, which has declined in three consecutive years under this government. What, if anything, is this government prepared to do to stimulate our housing industry, which continues to decline? The first three months of 1991, we dropped by 65.3 percent from last year at this time. Mr. Speaker, we rank nine out of 10 in residential construction this year. Only P.E.I. is worse than Manitoba so far this year.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, you know the member opposite argues against urban sprawl, argues against all sorts of housing developments. His members say, here you are stimulating housing development when you should be creating nonprofit housing or housing for low-income Manitobans. They argue against our entering into an agreement for the development of new housing in south St. Vital. He cannot have it both ways. Do you want housing or do you not want housing? If so, get your people

Distance Education Curriculum Development

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

The Premier has listened to his Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Derkach) today unable to explain this document in light of the budgetary cuts that had been made by this government with respect to Education.

Can the Premier indicate how he anticipates his government will deliver Distance Education, a program that they say they are going to do in this document, when Distance Education has also been cut in their budget?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I think we have to put in perspective the circumstances that we are facing not only in Manitoba, but right across this country. The fact of the matter is that without transfers from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and Lotteries, this province's revenues this year would have increased by less than one-half of 1 percent. Despite that kind of massive pressure from the

finances that are caused by a national recession, we still passed along a 3.5 percent increase to Education in this province, 3.5 percent increase to universities, 3.5 percent increase to the public school education system in total. Mr. Speaker, that being the case, I would say that we have gone to great lengths to reprioritize, to put money into education.

The only thing that we could have done differently was to raise taxes. The Liberals stand up day after day, and this Leader, who wanted to spend \$140 million out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund so that we would have had \$140 million less for Health, for Education, for vital social services, would have spent all that money and raise taxes for the people of Manitoba.

I encourage her to go and speak to her constituents, to go and speak to people throughout this province and ask them whether they would pay for Liberal promises, whether they would pay for Liberal spending with increased taxes today, given the circumstances they face in their daily lives, and I challenge her—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Education System Curriculum Development

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this is, by the Minister of Education's own admission, a document for the future of education in our province, and yet every place that he makes a recommendation, he has cut.

I ask the Premier, because I know this is an area of great concern to him, how can this government produce a curriculum on sustainable development, which they recommend in this, when they have cut the curriculum branch of the Department of Education that writes that curriculum?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Leader of the Second Opposition should have paid more attention to what really happens in the budget process. We have indicated quite clearly that indeed we need to do some refocusing and reshaping in terms of what happens within the Department of Education and Training.

We will deliver the services in terms of curriculum development, in terms of renewing our curriculum. The process has long ago started in terms of

implementing sustainable development into the entire curriculum within the Department of Education and Training. Many programs have already been rewritten to include the concept of sustainable development and ensuring the protection of our environment within the present curriculum.

Minister of Education Resignation Request

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the refocusing of this department is to put one thing in writing and to do the exact opposite in the Department of Education.

In light of the fact that the Minister of Education is not being fair to the citizens of this province by providing the programs that he advocates, will the First Minister demand his resignation?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, in the last two years, last three years, we have made some incredible progress in terms of the programs that have been implemented in the department. The document that the Leader of the third party waves around today was shared with many people this morning.

From the comments that I heard from the individuals whom I was able to speak with after the presentation, there was indeed positive acceptance of the document, not only by the educational organizations, but indeed by those who were representing business, industry, and people who were representing other interest groups as well.

Budget Cultural Industries

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

The budget made harsh attacks on the cultural life of Manitobans. In the narrow framework of Tory cultural thinking, that is, if we look at the economic contribution of the arts to Manitoba, we know that the performing arts contribute \$61 million to the province, that arts organizations account for nearly 1,900 jobs and that culture and heritage activities, like sports, generate two to three dollars for every dollar of public investment.

My question to the minister is: Did she calculate the economic impact of these cuts? Will she tell the House the results of her studies so that we will know

clearly the contribution of this minister's budget to the economic devastation of Manitoba?

* (1040)

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, we in government do recognize the economic benefit to the province of Manitoba through our culture, through our heritage and through our arts. There is absolutely no question.

Mr. Speaker, choices had to be made in this budget. Some of those choices were very difficult, but our government's priority, first of all, was increasing and enhancing, maintaining our health care as a No. 1 priority, our family services as our second priority and our education system as our third priority.

All of us, Mr. Speaker, within government, within departments, had to sit down and assess the types of funding that were being done and choose priorities. There were difficult decisions that were made, and I believe that the decisions that were made will be to the benefit of all Manitobans, because we have not had to increase personal taxes as a result of this budget.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Speaker, the ministers made choices, and I think this government knows full well that the best health care for any Manitoban is a job.

Museum of Man and Nature Funding

Ms. Jean Frlesen (Wolseley): My second question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. This minister knows that the Museum of Man and Nature is our premiere tourist attraction. It is the reason that Winnipeggers received three stars in the Michelin Guide. This museum has received significant cuts in the budget, and the minister has served on enough boards to know that this board has the choice, cutting jobs, cutting—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member, kindly put your question now, please.

Ms. Frlesen: My question is to the minister. Will he tell the House what the impact of each of these options will be on the tourism industry of Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I met a couple of weeks ago with members of the board of directors of the Museum of Man and Nature. Certainly, as has been indicated by the honourable member, we are

pleased that it is a three-star recognized facility in this province and part of our tourism promotion on behalf of Manitoba.

Certainly, we are working with them, not only in terms of the current marketing of that facility throughout Manitoba and the United States, but also discussing with them some expansion plans that they currently have in the works that they are discussing with the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship as well as our department. We are very positive about the future of that facility and what it provides for us as a province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Stefanson: I hear moans and groans from across the way, Mr. Speaker. I would like to think that they would be joining with us in terms of promoting that very excellent facility and the job that it does for this province. Certainly, when we discussed with the board, they recognized what our government is faced with and the choices that government has to make. They are very positive about their future, unlike the members of the opposition across the way.

Museum of Man and Nature Federal Funding

Ms. Jean Frlesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

The Museum of Man and Nature suffered severe losses from the federal cuts to the museum's assistance program. Did the minister ever discuss this with Marcel Masse? Did she ever pick up that mythical Tory phone to Ottawa? Did she calculate the impact of these cuts on museum programs when she took her ax again to the Museum of Man and Nature?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I would like to state publicly today to the House and to all Manitobans that we value the contribution that the Museum of Man and Nature makes to the province of Manitoba, and they have gone through some difficult times over the last few years and have managed—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Museum of Man and Nature has been an organization that has managed their affairs and their finances very well over the last little while. We have every confidence that they will continue to do that.

When we talk about the reduction, and we can talk about it further in Estimates, the reduction this year to the Museum of Man and Nature was a 3 percent reduction. Those were the choices that we had to make faced with the overall picture of government spending and ensuring that we were not going to increase personal taxes for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this was a difficult year. There were difficult decisions that were made, and I am sure the museum will rise to the occasion—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Health Care System Multicultural Services

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has not sent a very positive message to the multicultural community, first by cutting the Immigrant-Refugee Health Program from his budget deliberations, and then, as he said yesterday, that he may fund the project by taking from another program and by pitting one group against another.

I want to ask the minister, considering that his department had recommended this project, that his deputy minister personally intervened to get three extensions from Core Area, while this government deliberated on its B-Budget submissions, who made the decision not to fund this cost-effective program? Did the minister not bring it forward, or did the cut happen at the cabinet level?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I know this gets to be habitual, but I have to do it. I have to correct my honourable friend, because again in her preamble she did not have accurate information. What we are talking about with the Immigrant-Refugee Health Program is a request by Planned Parenthood Manitoba to have the program instated in the base funding as a new program funded not just today, but tomorrow and years after: base funding request, new program. That was not acceded to. That is not conducive to the kind of language my honourable friend uses in this House and to the immigrant community, of cutbacks. There was no cutback because we did not fund the program in the first place.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I indicated last night to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave of the House to revert back to Tabling of Reports?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to revert back to Tabling of Reports? Leave?

Mr. Speaker: It is agreed. Order, please.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1991-92 Departmental Expenditure Estimates, Supplementary Information for Legislative Review.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I would like leave for a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, this Sunday is an important day for many Manitobans. It is the day of mourning, first officially recognized day of mourning for the many workers who are annually killed and injured in the workplace.

I would like to note that this has been officially recognized by the House of Commons. In fact, a bill, which had been introduced by my federal counterpart, Rod Murphy, was recently adopted by the House of Commons, providing the first official recognition of the day of mourning for workers killed or injured in the workplace. It has adopted a day that has been accepted since 1914 by many workers in Canada and has been recognized since 1986 by the Canadian Labour Congress.

I would note also today that a number of community officials and a number of members of this House will be involved in a tag day which will be raising funds for the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs, which is being timed to co-ordinate with the day of mourning this Sunday. I would encourage all members to participate and support that tag day and also to attend the rally on Sunday, April 28, which will officially commemorate a very important day, the day of mourning, which will provide recognition to

the 35 workers in Manitoba who were killed in the workplace last year, the more than 51,000 workplace injuries that take place yearly, and hopefully commit ourselves to eliminating those fatalities and those injuries, or at least limiting them in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would like leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? It is agreed.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I too from this side of the House would like to rise to recognize the importance of April 28 as a day of mourning for workers and employees injured or killed in the workplace over the years in our country.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Madam Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba in this particular year it is expected we will have somewhere around 50,000 accidents in the workplace. In addition to the pain and the suffering that those who suffer those accidents will have to endure, there will be an average time loss of 28.1 days for those accidents. The costs for medical treatment, for days lost, et cetera, amount to a substantial amount of expenditure. Awareness of safety in the workplace is obviously important to us all. It is important to all Manitobans.

I hope that all members of this House will join with those of us who will be at the rally on the 28th here at the Legislative Building to take a moment to just appreciate how important it is for employers, employees and all people in their workplaces to be cognizant of risks, of dangers, and to never, ever lapse into a moment where we think we are totally safe from accidents.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the member have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Deputy Speaker, I simply want on behalf of our party to join with the comments given by the two prior speakers with respect to the coming day of mourning on April 28. This is indeed

an auspicious occasion and one which we should reflect upon soberly, given the past record of injuries in the workplaces across our nation.

* (1050)

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) has given some statistics, and, of course, they are grave indeed, as are the statistics in Manitoba. He has cited some 50,000 injuries which will happen in the coming year, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that is something which we, as a society, must bear a responsibility for. It is in society's interest not to put the injured worker on the scrap heap of society as it moves forward as a casualty of an industrial and a manufacturing society.

It is the challenge before us all to reduce that, and that is something which we in this party seek to achieve through our efforts, and all parties do in this House. For that reason, we applaud the efforts of the Canadian Labour Congress, we applaud the efforts of the Canadian Federation of Labour and the Manitoba Federation of Labour in setting this day aside as a day of mourning and to reflect on where we have been and where we can go with respect to safety in the workplace.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

* * *

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would ask leave to make two different nonpolitical statements, and given that they are very different I will, with your permission, do them one at a time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable First Minister have leave to make two statements?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave is granted.

Mr. Filmon: Regrettably, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have just been passed a note that informs me of the passing this morning of Richard Hatfield, and I know all honourable members will want to express their sympathy and regrets on the knowledge of his untimely passing.

Certainly, the former Premier Mr. Hatfield had extensive influence on many of the major events of Canada's political history over the last two decades. Certainly, I am sure that people of all political stripes will recognize his contributions on the constitutional front, in many other major national issues over the course of the last two decades and will certainly join

us in expressing our regrets and sympathies on learning of his passing.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable Leader have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave.

Mr. Doer: I would like to join with the Premier, and I am sure all Manitobans, reflecting on the passing today of Richard Hatfield.

Mr. Hatfield, I think, had the longest-serving period of time as Premier in the recent political history of Canada. I think he won five or six elections in the province of New Brunswick. He was a Premier who I believe always put Canada first, Madam Deputy Speaker. He is a Premier I think who will be remembered for always putting his country, Canada, first in the very difficult constitutional decisions that he had to make and had to carry through on in his province on behalf of Canadians.

I think all members from all political parties will join in on the sympathy of his passing and the regrets to his family, because Richard Hatfield was a true Canadian and a true figure in Canadian history. We just want to pass those comments on along with the Premier and join him today on this sorrowful announcement of the Premier this morning.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Do I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Deputy Speaker, I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition to express my party's sadness at the passing of Dick Hatfield. As many of us know, he had a brain tumour and, I understand, was in a great deal of pain in the last few months of his life.

He was a law classmate of my husband at Dalhousie University, graduating together in the late '50s. He also, of course, as the Leader of the Opposition has stated, made more than an ordinary contribution to political life in Canada, not just because he was a Premier, but because at constitutional discussions and around the table at First Ministers' meetings he was always known for his eloquence on Canada.

It took great courage for Richard Hatfield to declare the Province of New Brunswick to be a bilingual province, the only bilingual province in our nation. It was not an easy decision for him to make, particularly as he was not an Acadian. He did not come from the Francophone community. He came from the Anglophone community. It was the Anglophone community that, in fact, had worked together to elect him as the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. It was the Anglophone community that returned to him his greatest number of seats. Yet, because of his inherent belief in justice, because of his knowledge of the wrongs that had been given to the Acadian people in the province of New Brunswick, he took what was a bold and very progressive step.

I am sure that, although fortunes politically have changed in the province of New Brunswick, there will be many in that province, particularly the Acadian-Francophone community, who will weep today at the passing of a man who secured for them their rightful place in the Canadian political dynamic.

* * *

Mr. Fillmon: I wonder if I could have leave to make a second nonpolitical statement.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable First Minister have leave to make a second nonpolitical statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Fillmon: Madam Deputy Speaker, today, the 26th of April, marks the fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. The nuclear explosion in Chernobyl caused a disaster of a magnitude far greater than the total release of energy from all the atomic explosions in Japan towards the end of the Second World War.

The immediate effects of that acute exposure on ecology and human health have not been adequately reported. In addition, the long-term effects of prolonged exposure to the low dose radiation that plagues that region are not fully understood as yet. In fact, recent reports suggest that estimates as high as 30,000 lives have been adversely affected by that disaster.

The radiation clouds, of course, spread not only over the territory of the Ukraine but also further north and to the west over Norway and Sweden. Small

amounts of radiation contamination have also been detected as far away as Canada, as reported by our scientists in the Medical Research Council of Canada.

Thousands of people of all ages died from acute radiation exposure. Numerous thousands of pregnancies have been reported terminated, and many children were born with severe birth defects. The cleanup operations—people involved in those so-called cleanup operations now are being found to be suffering from long-term effects of radiation. As a result, many more thousands of children are thought to be at risk of developing leukemia, thyroid cancer and other related diseases.

Needless to say, we are very concerned that this catastrophe not be repeated. Scientists believe that proper technological quality assurance programs were not in place, and that those programs could have prevented that disaster.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we certainly mourn the loss of people through the disaster and the long-term effects of many others whose loss of health and whose death is now being attributed to that Chernobyl disaster, on this fifth anniversary of the disaster, I think it is important that we not only remember the victims of the tragedy but also recognize the efforts of many throughout the world, including Manitobans, who are working to prevent such a disaster from ever happening again in future.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I would like leave from the House, please. I request to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable Leader of the Opposition have leave? Leave has been granted.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I would like to join with the Premier and members of the House on the fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. Madam Deputy Speaker, this has significance for the world and has significance for Manitobans with our large Ukrainian population in the province and the location of this explosion, and the radiation clouds that directly affected the territory of the Ukraine before it spread to other European countries and ultimately looped around through the wind current system into even parts of North America.

* (1100)

Madam Deputy Speaker, this explosion, as the Premier has stated, was much, much greater than we were first led to believe. It is an absolute

astronomical disaster of proportions greater than nuclear explosions that took place in the Second World War. I think we can all recall the official state line at the time of the explosion where it was a minor incident, a minor incident that took place.

Over time, we have begun to realize the absolute severity and devastation of that nuclear explosion on the direct population and the population in the Ukraine region and on the population of the world. Thousands of people have died from all ages, thousands of pregnancies were terminated as the Premier has indicated, thousands of children have been born with severe birth defects and many thousands of people are suffering long-term effects from that explosion in the so-called clean-up operations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are two questions here on Chernobyl. The one question stated by the Premier is: Could proper technological quality assurances been able to prevent this catastrophe? The other question is the whole issue of nuclear energy and potential nuclear radiation in our world ecology.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to pay tribute to the people who are keeping this in the public consciousness. I want to pay tribute to the Manitobans and world citizens who are ensuring that the so-called minor accident scenario portrayed by the Soviet Union when the initial explosion took place is not forgotten and that the human tragedy, the human disaster, the human devastation that took place five years ago at Chernobyl, is not forgotten and that the world citizens will learn so those people did not die in vain.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Deputy Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable Leader have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Deputy Speaker, they talk about the nightmare of Chernobyl. We commemorate five years and yet for thousands and thousands of people in Ukraine that nightmare has not stopped. It is a daily thing with which they live. They have lost babies. They have watched children, adults suffering from radiation sickness.

All of us, of course, learning first of the near miss at Three Mile Island said, ah, ha, but we have some confidence that the safety procedures are in place. Then, of course, at Chernobyl, we learned that there were not sufficient safety procedures in place in some sites of nuclear stations throughout the world. The result has been devastating in human lives and in the ecology, not just in the Soviet Union, but it has spread that radiation into other parts of eastern Europe and, indeed, into Canada in terms of higher-than-normal radiation levels.

The people in Winnipeg who had friends and relatives in Ukraine were touched personally by this nightmare, call upon us today to remember that it happened there; and, tragically, it can happen again if all of us do not ensure that adequate safety precautions are in place, so that man's inhumanity to man cannot be allowed to continue. Ukraine has had a tragedy of a famine. They have now had the tragedy of this disaster.

We speak to all people of Ukrainian origin and say: Let us hope that the future of the people of Ukraine is happier than has been the past.

* * *

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable member for Broadway have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Santos: Madam Deputy Speaker, April 25, 1991, marked the fifth anniversary of the Herman Prior Senior Services Centre at Portage la Prairie. Like any other senior centre all across this province, the Portage la Prairie senior centre provides invaluable services to seniors and resources at difficult times like ours that we have today when they need these crucially.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Also, today is the 34th annual meeting of the Age and Opportunity Centre at the West End Senior Centre. We ask all honourable members of this House to recognize the contribution of senior centres to our province, to visit their own senior centres in their own communities, and to promote the welfare and well-being of our senior citizens who should be treated fairly.

Treading on dangerous ground, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the honourable member for Portage (Mr. Connery), placed in a very unenviable position of making a choice of whether to attend the fifth anniversary of the Portage senior centre and show his concern for senior citizens, or come and attend the voting on the budget in the House, he chose instead to show his concern for senior citizens and attended the fifth anniversary at Portage la Prairie.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Agreed.

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, I also rise in regard to the Age and Opportunity. Our government has been very impressed by the contributions Age and Opportunity has made to the seniors of Manitoba. Through personalized services in many seniors' centres, their work has had a very, very significant impact on the lives of seniors.

I would like also to say something about volunteers. Some say that when you need advice, everyone is ready to help you, and when you need help, everyone is ready to advise you. Of course, this is not the case of this very fine organization. I am particularly pleased that over 500 volunteers spend countless hours servicing our senior population. This commitment and dedication must be recognized and our government congratulates them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the government wishes to call business of the House in this order: the Address for Papers followed by Bill 8, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, second reading; followed by second reading of Bill 5, The Mental Health Amendment Act; followed by second reading of Bill 6, The Mines and Minerals and Consequential Amendments Act; followed by Bill 12, The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act; followed for second reading by Bill 20, The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act.

ORDERS OF THE DAY ADDRESS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT an Address for Papers do issue praying for:

copies of all written policy governing the education and support of deaf persons in Manitoba.

Motion presented.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the government is in agreement with this and accepts this motion.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

* (1110)

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Could I have leave, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Does he have leave? Yes, it is agreed.

Mr. McAlpine: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to rise in the House today at a time when we consider the education of our young people in the province of Manitoba.

It is always heartening to me to be able to communicate the achievements of our young people when they do well. In Silver Heights Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, a high school within my constituency, the Reach for the Top team is in the midst of another successful season. Provincial champions for the past two years, and for three out of the last four years, this team has worked hard to maintain this tradition. On the basis of their regional playdowns, the Silver Heights Reach for the Top team, under the leadership of Mr. Ron Baillie, has once again won the provincial championships. The team will be going to London, Ontario, from May 26 to May 29 to participate in the national playoffs.

The team members are Travis Kearns, Geoff King, Rick Moore, Kai Hasselriss, and the top students within the Silver Heights Collegiate: in Grade 10, Zoe Oliver, with a 93.8 average; and Grade 11, Trevor Lockhart with a 93 percent average; and Grade 12, Elizabeth Carlyle with a 94.7 average, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to also share with the House that former student, recent graduate Vaughn Betz, has been awarded a four-year scholarship in the amount of \$20,500 a year to complete his masters and doctorate in electrical engineering. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, if I can have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Inkster have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to echo some of the comments made from the minister representing Seniors, and the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) in commemorating the annual general meeting that is coming up for the Age and Opportunity. I understand this is their 34th and this is an organization that has done fabulous work in all of the communities throughout the province of Manitoba. Organizations, such as this one, and MSOS and other senior organizations and different ethnic groups and so forth contribute, as I say, so very much. I did want to take this moment just to echo our support in the comments that were made by the member for Broadway and the Seniors minister. Thank you.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 8—The Vital Statistics Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services, Bill 8, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise today and put on record, particularly for members opposite, the NDP—official opposition's support of Bill 8.

I feel that it is important to have this on the record because it has been alleged in the House on one or two occasions that the official opposition has not been supportive or appreciative of the work of the government and am pleased to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 8. I would urge members opposite to

enjoy this speech not only because of the quality of it, but because it may be one of the few times this session when we will be rising in support of bills from members opposite.

When I first received the bill and the amendments to it that we are discussing today, I thought, okay, vital statistics, it is important but it is not that interesting. Then I started to think about the role of the department today. I started to think about the role of vital statistics and the kind of information it has provided in its history and the role that history has played in our human evolution.

We are at a very technologically advanced point in our civilization, but throughout our history, our human history—recorded and prerecorded, humankind has been making attempts to record individual histories, individual records, family records and in some cases cultural and large group records. At the very beginning or even before the beginning of human recorded history, we have been able to find a few remnants of what life was like for our forebearers. It may have been a piece of bone in the savannas of Africa, the prehistorical rock paintings in caves in France, bits of bone and utensils that our ancestors used in their daily lives. They are very small bits of information that deal with the vital statistics of our ancestors, but they are all we have from the very beginning of time.

As we moved further in the development of humankind, people began to leave more and more records of their existence of what was happening to them, how their lives were lived, how long their lives were, the numbers of people that lived with them, and we begin to have a slightly more complete set of statistics about our forebearers.

One of the first, I imagine one of the most important societies, at least in the western civilization, that began to keep records that we have copies of today or can have access to today about the vital statistics of their lives were the ancient Egyptians. I know that we have all, in our schooling and in our popular culture, been very much impressed with and taken with the ancient Egyptians and their society and their lives.

I heard just a couple of weeks ago a very interesting interview on CBC radio with an Egyptologist who stated that many of our preconceived ideas and our notions about what the ancient Egyptians lives were like were based on erroneous material—not erroneous material, but

very incomplete statistical data. What we know about Egypt and the lives of the Egyptians comes virtually entirely from the pyramids.

The pyramids were in the desert, very dry, very protected so that the remains of the Egyptians that we have access to now were very definitely the upper class, the ruling Pharaohs and their families, the very wealthy.

* (1120)

Another thing that that has done is it has given us the impression that the society of the ancient Egyptians was very involved with and consumed with death, whereas this Egyptologist states that if we had had an opportunity to look more directly and more completely at the vital statistics that were available at that time, we would find that the Egyptians were, as every other society, very involved with life here on earth as well as concern for what happens after life. But, because most of Egyptian life took place in the plains and the delta of the river Nile, records of their lives are lost because of the movement and the flooding of the delta Nile every year, so that for ordinary Egyptians—middle-class, lower-class, working-class Egyptians—we have very few records of their vital statistics, of their lives, of how they lived and how they died, not because they were not important to themselves or to society, but because of the geographical facts that they had to deal with in the Nile delta and their lack of technological ability to preserve records of their daily lives.

When we move forward in time, we start in the European area. I think all of us remember—or I certainly remember thinking about the excitement of the parish records and the Domesday Book in early English history. This was finally, at least in Western culture, a beginning of accurate recordkeeping of the vital statistics of the people of the time. It was an understanding of the importance for people to know their historical context, to know their family roots, to know their genealogy. It was a beginning of an understanding of the need to have that kind of record available so that society could be more ordered.

At the same time, it was also the beginning of society's technological advances to enable it to record for posterity the vital statistics of the people in the parish or in the area of the community where they were living. An entire set of bureaucracy, I guess we could call it, has grown up over the

centuries around the collection and the dissemination and the use of vital statistics.

We are, as I stated earlier, here discussing additions to our Manitoba Vital Statistics Act, which I will go into in more detail later, but I did want to as well put some other general ideas on the record about the role of statistics and vital statistics in our lives. I think just a definition of the words "vital" and "statistics" is interesting and helpful. In the dictionary, vital is identified as being essential to organic life, essential to the existence of a thing or to the matter in hand, full of life or activity, affecting life and important. I think that we would all agree that most, or if not all, of those definitions of vital in this context are very applicable. These are bits of information that we, as a society, require in order to be able to carry on our daily and our group-life activities.

Statistics, I find it—a brief aside, I think it is very appropriate that we are discussing an issue relating to statistics on a Friday, which in my short term in this House I am understanding has come to sort of be a regular feature of Question Period on Friday as a discussion of the weekly statistics, and I think it is appropriate that we have this debate. —(interjection)—

I appreciate the support from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). I would like to make another aside and tell the Minister of Health that it does not matter how much support he gets, I will not support him for the Lady Byng Trophy.

In the dictionary, statistics is the science of collecting and analyzing numerical data especially in or for large quantities. Statistics is also defined as any systematic collection or presentation of such data. I think we would all agree in the context of discussing The Vital Statistics Act that these definitions of statistics most certainly apply, that what we are talking about here is the collection, dissemination and utilization of a large amount of numerical data.

I think that I can say, without fear of contradiction, that the act itself is appropriately named, The Vital Statistics Act, and that the amendments to this act are appropriate in this context.

I would like to go back a bit to talk again about the role of statistics and the kinds of statistics that are found in this act in our western society. Humankind is a social animal. We have seen that throughout recorded in prehistory. The earliest records we have of our ancestors are records of our bone fragments

and our records of daily lives, pottery shards and such things, and they are virtually always found in groups which shows that we definitely are social animals.

We relate to each other. We need to live in groups, and part of living in a group—a group can be defined as something as small as a dyad, a couple. It is a family. It is an ethnic group. It is a religious group. It can be a social group, a recreation group, activity group. There is a wide range of definitions of group and social activity that we, as members of the human race participate in.

What you ask is the context that this Vital Statistics Act has to do with our being a social group or a social animal. I think it is very important because in all of our social activities, whether it be a couple, a partnership or a group such as we are here today agreeing with each other on occasions, disagreeing with each other on occasions, we require records in order to be able to carry on the work and the activities of our group. The larger the group becomes, the more the need for accurate records. As we have evolved we have codified our social being, and we attempt to live by those codes of conduct. We also have codified and put into place information that helps us to deal with our social lives, that helps us to deal with our history, our history as individuals, our history as groups, our history as a community, our history as a province, our history as a people.

The people in the Vital Statistics department, and I believe that there are approximately 22 or 23 people in this department, are the latest in a long line of historians. They are the people whose predecessors painted the pictures on the cave walls in France, painted the hieroglyphics on the pyramids, entered information in the parish Bibles and the Domesday Books about people's births, marriages, deaths, property transactions, movement in and out of the community. They have as their predecessors as well, members of individual families who have taken upon themselves to provide that kind of vital statistic in the family Bible, in a family book that went from generation to generation.

* (1130)

There are members of—I would venture to say, every member's family here today has at least one member of their personal family who is very interested in their families' genealogy, virtually every member, someone who takes it upon themselves to

put our generation's lives in context of our past and puts that material in a form so that future generations will be able to carry on the thread of their lives and their family's lives. This is a very ad hoc type of genealogy. It is in itself a form of vital statistic. However, the Vital Statistics Branch of the Department of Family Services does have this role and performs these functions in a more stratified and organized manner than do most individual family genealogies.

The type of information that is available that the Vital Statistics department deals with includes all of the statistical information that we have been talking about. It includes information on birth records, marriage records, records of deaths, records of name changes, all of the kinds of information that we as a society, and particularly a society that is as dependent on information as our society is.

This North American society, in the last decade of the 20th Century is, I would say, unarguably, the most dependent on information than any other society in the history of humankind. We only have to look at the amount of written material, printed material that we as individual members of the House have access to on a daily basis to understand that.

One of our society's colloquial expressions is "drowning in paper." We are blessed and cursed with an enormous amount of information. The only way information can be useful to us, the only way we can utilize it that it is not just printed words or numbers on paper, or material on floppy discs, is for it to be accessible as information.

If we, as a society, a post-technological society, only had our individual families, only had our family Bibles, only had our members of our families who were, on a voluntary basis, interested in genealogy, interested in recording the vital statistics of our families, if we had only those voluntary noncodified means at our support we, as a society, would not be able to function.

If we think about the kinds of statistical data that we require in order to go through our lives, whether we ever get in the newspaper or not, whether we ever are public figures or not, we require vital statistics at a great many times in our lives. In order to get a passport we require a birth certificate. We require a birth certificate to get a name change. We have to go through Vital Statistics, fill out a lot of forms to get a name change. The same situation applies for a marriage licence.

We have to go through the Department of Vital Statistics, more and more of us, as another fallout of our post-technological society, to conclude a divorce action. We need the Department of Vital Statistics again at the end of all of our lives for the paperwork that surrounds our deaths and the deaths of the members of our families. We are, whether we like it or not, from birth to death, from cradle to grave—we may not have socialism from cradle to grave in Manitoba, but we certainly have the Department of Vital Statistics from cradle to grave, helping record the public events in our lives and making our lives thereby more structured.

The specific changes to The Vital Statistics Act that we are talking about today are, in the words of the minister who introduced these amendments on April 4 of this year, "to make The Vital Statistics Act consistent with the new Fatality Inquiries Act which was proclaimed on May 14, 1990."

While I am not familiar with The Fatality Inquiries Act, it is clear to me that from the amendments to The Vital Statistics Act and from the comments of the minister in his introduction of these amendments, that the three major changes are essential, is why I stated at the beginning of my remarks that we, as the official opposition, were in favour of these changes and were going to support them in their entirety.

The first set of changes are necessary because there are additional cases that are to be reported to the medical examiner, the cases in order for the act to be harmonized with The Fatality Inquiries Act.

Changes with regard to the completion of medical certificates for deaths within 48 hours—the 48 hours is a change to make the reporting of deaths happen within a shorter period of time, so that this also we would have no trouble with supporting. Again, it is important we believe to report deaths, to have in place the required paperwork surrounding an individual's death, as quickly as possible to enable the completion of the forms that are required and to be able to enable the families that are left, and the continuation of our social system and the ceremonies that surround deaths in our society today.

The third area deals with the actual documentation or registration of a death where no body is found. This particular change, to my way of thinking, is the one that I am most pleased to see. In the past there was a fairly extensive and

time-consuming process that families had to go through in order to be able to carry on with funeral and memorial arrangements for family members who had died in situations, such as an airplane crash, drownings, other accidents and fatal events where the body was unable to be recovered. In the past you would have to go to court, you would have to have a fairly extensive legal process to go through in order to be able to register the death and then be able to carry on with the ceremonies.

This addition allows for much quicker proceedings to take place so that families do not have to wait an extended period of time. They do not have to access the court system. They are able to move forward with speed. It humanizes—if I can use that term—the process of death.

* (1140)

The changes also require the chief medical examiner to investigate certain types of death and gives clarity to the listing of the kinds of deaths that are to be looked at. Again, this is a simplification and a codification of a situation that allows The Vital Statistics Act to be harmonized with The Fatality Inquiries Act.

Actually they specify certain cases where deaths must be reported to the chief medical examiner. I think that this is an important change as well, because the number of cases that are required now to be reported to the chief medical examiner have been expanded from nine to 22. These cases now include all children's deaths, deaths as a result of poisoning, contagious diseases, employment and pregnancy.

These additional types of cases that now must be reported, I think reflect very positively on our understanding as a province and as a society of the importance of knowledge about the causes of deaths in certain classifications. We need to have statistical information. We need to have objective information about all aspects of our lives in order to not only be able to help ourselves have a better quality of life, but also to enable those who follow us to have a better quality of life, to require the chief medical examiner to report and to investigate these kinds of deaths, deaths of children, contagious diseases, poisoning, employment and pregnancy, means that the information that we gather will be expanded.

We will perhaps be able to, in the case of a child's death, shed some light on perhaps the sudden infant

death syndrome. We may be able to shed some light in cases of poisoning on certain—for example, an individual may expire as the result of a toxic mixture of prescribed drugs, the combination of which might not have earlier been seen as having potential lethal consequences.

Again, by adding these kinds of areas of information and documentation to this act, we increase our body of knowledge. We increase it in a way that it can be used, can be accessed, and that we can learn more, not just about what happened, not just about the individual situation, but we can also then perhaps learn more about that event to enable us to be able to perhaps prevent a certain type of death later on.

I also am pleased to see that all deaths resulting from employment are to be listed and investigated. We increasingly understand in our society the possible lethality that can occur in the workplace; however, we are only beginning to be aware of those kinds of things.

We had today, in nonpolitical statements, an acknowledgement that this is the fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. Five years ago there was a sense that there would be only a small number of fatalities. There was a concern that there might be more. We are now seeing, as we get further and further away from the actual event itself, that we severely underestimated the lethality of that incident, and we need to be able to access as much information about each of those cases, as they come to light, as possible in order to learn, in order to be able to prevent or to be able to help individuals in the future to not fall prey to these kinds of situations.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Again, the requiring of reporting deaths due to pregnancy is a very important situation. It is an important addition to this act. It is important because we need to carefully monitor the types of death that occur that we think in our society, given our technology and our advances in health care, should not happen. Fifty years ago or 40 years ago a maternal death, a death due to pregnancy, was not nearly the unusual situation that it is today.

I think it is a very positive statement to be able to make, that a death due to pregnancy is, in most of Canada today, an unusual occurrence. I say, most of Canada today, because in the province of Manitoba, for example, there is a significance

difference in the statistics on maternal death, on death of children, between the southern parts of the province and the northern parts of the province.

There is some statistical information that says that socioeconomic conditions of people have an impact on their mortality rates from certain types of illnesses and diseases. This is another case where by using statistics we can improve our knowledge, we can improve our potential ability to make positive changes to be able to make the lives of ourselves and our children better by the use of these kinds of statistical analyses.

Again, I think that, in the light of our history, our written history, our prehistory, our continued interest in where we are, where we come from, who we are, which is again part of the human condition, an unceasing quest for knowledge, for information, for understanding, the role of statistics, and particularly of vital statistics, cannot be underestimated. We need to use every technique at our disposal today to try and make the quality of our lives better, to try and understand the world around us better, to try and understand on a global level or on a provincial level who we are, where we come from, what happens to us. We also need to combine that with an understanding that individually we are very interested in our own personal vital statistics.

This department provides excellent service in that regard which allows us to carry on our lives with the least amount of disruption, given the fact that we are surrounded by requirements for legal papers, requirements for statistics, requirements for paper that says we are who we are, paper that says we were born when we say we were born, paper that says we married who we married when we married, witnessed by whom we say were our witnesses—

An Honourable Member: You have to get it right.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, I will take the professional advice of my colleague the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) in that context, particularly in the role of marriages.

I forgot a very important part—baptism.

An Honourable Member: Except you do not have to register at Vital Statistics.

* (1150)

Ms. Barrett: No, you may not have to register baptisms in the department of Vital Statistics today, but who knows. We may be here next session with

an additional amendment, and I will get a chance to speak yet again on a vital amendment.

In conclusion, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like again to put on the record the fact that our caucus supports the amendments to The Vital Statistics Act, Bill 8 of this session. I am sure there will be other members of our caucus who will be speaking on this very important bill.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I commend the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) for bringing these amendments forward and also again put on record our support of the vital work that the Vital Statistics department does for the people of Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation will destroy—oh, wait a second that is the budget.

I wish to just take a couple of minutes to say a few things on Vital Statistics. -(interjection)-

Well, the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) has asked whether or not I am prepared to agree with him. I have to tell him that I am prepared to agree with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) on this particular bill. I think we may well be able to pass this into committee today because I will be the only speaker for my caucus on this bill.

I do want to put a few things on the record relative to the office that administers this bill. This legislation comes about as a result of the passage of The Fatality Inquiries Act, and I think the critic for Family Services for the opposition has correctly identified some of the changes that were necessary as a result of that piece of legislation. I think it was a necessary thing to do, and I think when we spoke on The Fatality Inquiries Act, people in this Chamber also supported that because it was time that we brought that legislation into at least this decade.

There are a couple of issues though that came out of the department. I am pleased by the rumours that I hear, although I have yet to have them substantiated, that there has been a decision not to decentralize this division now, that they were slated for decentralization, they were going to move; but I am told that we are shortly going to hear an announcement that they are going to remain where they are. I think that is a positive announcement. I think that this government has spent so much time abusing the staff who work for it. It is nice to see it

stepping back for them for once and recognizing the flaws in the policies that it had begun with. So, even this government can change in the face of facts, although that has not been a hallmark of this particular administration.

The second thing is, I saw some very progressive stuff in a memo that was leaked to this House awhile ago out of the Minister of Labour's (Mr. Praznik) office on the management of the public service. I would like to suggest to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) that he look carefully at that in divisions like this, in divisions that have a fixed amount of work to do in a year, that have some ability to function within some expanded management parameters, that he look at the suggestions that were made in the Department of Labour. I think they go a long way to improving management systems within all departments, frankly, and certainly are applicable within this one.

Vital Statistics provides a service to the community, a direct service to the community. There are some things, I think, that could be improved upon if we just gave that division a little more flexibility. I had a case just recently where a Manitoban is about to get married and needs a marriage certificate, a marriage licence. His fiancée lives in the province of Ontario, is a Canadian citizen, and meets all of the requirements; there is no possible problem but is unable to get a marriage licence in this province on the simple production of all her documentation. She has to make a special trip in here, arrive and present herself in person to the division in order to obtain this. I think it is an unnecessary bureaucratic approach. I think that the division should look at revising some of its procedures to allow it to be a little more flexible in the way in which it provides services to the community.

Beyond that there are some, I think some—the progressive elements in this bill are simply to bring it in line with a bill that has improved the powers of the Chief Medical Officer and improved our ability to examine fatalities and to record and issue appropriate documentation. We do have in a high-tech world some very serious problems that arise when an aircraft goes down, for example, and it is difficult to locate a body. It is a tragic and unfortunate circumstance for the family. This allows us to bring some closure to that. I think that is a good thing to do and a humane thing to do.

In any event that is all I am going to say, Mr. Speaker. We are quite prepared to have this passed to committee.

Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that this bill be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 5—The Mental Health Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), Bill 5, The Mental Health Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale, standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcia-Leis). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. Agreed.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on Bill 5 today, The Mental Health Amendment Act, and to allow myself to put my concerns and those of my constituents on the record as to this important issue of mental health care and, of course, to talk about some of the actions that have been taken by this government which affects the situation for people suffering from mental health illness throughout the province.

Of course, the issue of mental health care is very important to the citizens of Selkirk. We, of course, have in our community one of the two mental health centres that are in this province. The Selkirk Mental Health Centre has been in operation in the town for decades.

Many members of my immediate family have worked there, my grandfather, my aunts, uncles and cousins and so forth. They provide the most vulnerable patients in our health care system with very vital care, care that has been recognized throughout Canada. The hospital, of course, has received its professional three-year accreditation and this professional care has been recognized by the accreditation, recognized throughout the country.

In Selkirk itself, the community is very proud of the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. It is very economically important in our community as well, providing a

payroll to 450 employees. Of course, we were very disappointed this week when the government decided to close the Selkirk Mental Centre school of psychiatric nursing. The 70-year-old institution is our community's only post-secondary facility. I was very disappointed and so was the town of Selkirk by this decision and so, I would say, the municipalities of West St. Paul and St. Clements and St. Andrews as well.

This error in judgment will not only hurt the economy of Selkirk, but mental health care in this province as a whole. It will negate any positive aspects of this bill. Rather than enhance mental health care in this province, this closure will hurt mental health care. Of course, I will elaborate on this closure further on in my discussion today.

I realize that this is an extremely important area of health care that has been neglected by our society. The stigma attached to those who suffer from mental disease is immense. Coming from Selkirk, I understand this stigma, because it is attached to all of us who live there as well. We are all familiar with the cruel and childish jokes and remarks, because once a person has contracted a mental disease, whether or not they fully recover, the stigma of this serious illness will be with them the rest of their lives. They, unfortunately, could never escape it. It will haunt them forever.

No other disease carries with it this terrible scar. If one were to contract cancer or heart disease or even have a knee operation, which I had last fall, and then recover fully or partially from the ailment, they would face no negative memories or social shunning, but you do if you have ever contracted a mental disease.

* (1200)

I had a chance to tour the hospital during the election, and it was very much an eye-opening experience. Our attitudes, of course, toward mental health are slowly changing, but I would categorize the treatment of mental health patients and mental illness as misunderstood and neglected.

Of course, we have all heard of the horror stories of individuals who spend their entire lives in institutions, forgotten by family and friends, doomed to a life of treatment and locked doors. The medical profession has in the past encouraged people to voluntarily admit themselves to psychiatric institutions when they the patients felt it necessary. The difficulty of this procedure, of course, is not

getting in; the problem is getting out once you are in.

The unfortunate fact is that it has been shown in several cases that patients with mental health illnesses have been abused by their caregivers.

I realize that there is an urgent need to deal with the treatment of mental health illness in a humane and open way. I believe that treatment of the mentally ill in our society has been one of the most misunderstood and neglected of all areas of health care over the years, and I believe that there is a need to expand mental health services throughout the province, throughout community-based delivery systems, one that at this time has not been implemented. The reason, I believe, is this government does not really believe in a community-based mental health delivery system, that it is finding itself in a squeeze for dollars and is determined that this is not the kind of priority that should result in major expenditure enhancements now.

So the mentally ill in this province will continue to suffer, and their families throughout rural Manitoba, with improper treatment, I am certain, and treatment that is inadequate. That, of course, is very regrettable.

I was discussing earlier the fact that many patients in the institutions in this province have been abused by their caregivers. We have all heard these rumours; I have heard these rumours several times, of course being from the town and having so many members of my family work there. Massive drug injections is one example; the uncontrolled use of electric shock treatment, of course, is another. Over the years many individuals in our communities have been incarcerated and locked away and forgotten. Of course, this is the deplorable way to treat human beings. The Selkirk Mental Health Centre at one time had bars on the windows; they still do have bars on the windows. When I toured there, it was like going into a prison. The doors are all locked, and there are codes to get in. Everyone is very, very conscious of this as you tour the facility.

We must remember, of course, that these people in there are the most vulnerable in our health care system, people who have mental illness. Of course, as I said, this is a deplorable way to treat human beings.

We can cite the case of Velma Orlikow, wife of David Orlikow I believe, and the problems that she

went through when she was—I guess it was at the University of Montreal, I believe it was, or McGill University in Montreal, where a doctor—I think it was Dr. Cameron—at the time injected her or gave her huge doses of LSD, and you know she went through a life of anguish and suffering after being a victim of this medical experimentation.

She received this treatment without her consent and she received this treatment without her full knowledge of the treatment or the long-term effect it would have on her and she, of course, suffered the rest of her life due to this abuse.

One of the sections of this bill deals with the rights of certain patients to refuse treatment. This is a situation where judgment determines whether a patient can refuse treatment or not. Of course, a psychiatrist or a physician will make that decision, a decision which will have tremendous implications for the individual patient. If consent is not given, this legislation will require detailed records of that treatment be kept. I believe that this is a requirement that is welcomed by this side of the House.

This legislation would stop further abuse like the Orlikow case I just mentioned. So in that regard we are very pleased with that element of the bill.

Of course, another important principle of the bill is that if treatment is provided under the authority of the act that that treatment be detailed. The clinical record of an individual must include the medicine used, the method of administration, the dosage administered and the frequency of administration.

It also provides guidelines as to how a patient is to be restrained, if a person needs to be restrained, and a description of the means of that restraint, a statement of the period of time during which the person was or is expected to be restrained and a description of the behaviour of that person that required that he or she be restrained or continue to be restrained.

This provision will help alleviate patient abuse because it is a fact in mental health care that restraint is often necessary. Again, this would provide more record of that restraint in case there was to be recourse taken by the patient later. They would have a good solid record on that. Again, like I say, these provisions would help alleviate patient abuse. A person who is in an institution with no support, a family who is often miles away, a family who often forgets about the individual, has no

recourse now to deal with this kind of abuse, and there has been probably countless examples of this.

Mental health patients of course are the most vulnerable patients in our health care system. This provision in the act requires that if treatment is provided that is unnecessary, the patient will have some sort of form of recourse to follow. The institution and mental health care providers will have the responsibility to the patient and to the patient's family. Of course, this is an important principle to us over here. It is an important principle to me, Mr. Speaker. It is important that more patient rights and treatment guidelines be instituted.

The whole issue of protecting individual rights, especially those suffering from mental illness, is a major issue in the mental health care field. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), of course, often would have to—has a problem with—underlying this is the mental health in the Charter of Rights. I think this bill, of course, attempts to clarify the process to ensure that the individual rights of the patients are not unduly undermined.

* (1210)

I said that the Minister of Health has a serious problem at hand when it comes to conflicts between The Mental Health Act and the Charter. Of course, the Department of Health has in the past been taken to court over its admission policies and practices in general. I realize that this bill tries to tackle some of these major issues, so I do commend the minister for that, but I know that the jury is still out on the whole issue and on the whole bill. The public interest and affected groups still need to be consulted by this minister. I am sure that once he hears all their comments and suggestions, he can even build and develop a stronger bill that I am sure would receive far better public approval.

I know that one of the major concerns that mental health associations have about this particular bill is that it questions the government's commitment to community-based mental health care. I realize, of course, that community-based mental health care also requires the de-emphasis of institutionalized care. This, of course, is a process that would affect my constituency and my town very dramatically, because you realize that we have in our town the Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

An Honourable Member: How many jobs?

Mr. Dewar: In the Selkirk Mental, there are 450 there now. -(interjection)- I realize that, but we have one of the two major institutions in the province—you have to bring in Brandon, of course. The government has decided to build a \$43 million institute downtown here in the city, one that has been a labelled a white elephant, a planning fiasco, and so forth. It seems that you would have to question the necessity of that.

Moving toward community-based mental health care would mean moving patients out of these big institutions, and would put them back, of course, into their home communities. They would be provided with the proper support system staff by professional mental health caregivers.

I know that the present system of community-based supports is not working now. The hotels in Selkirk are full of individuals who were put back into the community. Many of them live in a single hotel room with no kitchen facilities. They must share bathrooms with many others. I have talked to several of these individuals. I talked to some during the election, of course, and all throughout. Some of them felt that they would be better off in the institution, where they receive treatment and proper care. They feel they would be better off back in the hospital than in the community setting, but that is just a reflection of the present system. It certainly would not be the example that you would want to use for the reform of the system. Again, this is the present situation. It is great for hotel owners, but it is not especially good for those who have to go through this process.

Of course, the solution lies in developing a better way of using the resources of psychiatric professionals and providing more supports in the community where people live. Professionals must provide backup to the informal supports of family and friends. I feel that what is right for the patients must be the guiding principle followed. We have often had this discussion in our community as to whether we support community base or institutionalized base, but the answer is quite simple: it is whatever is right for the patients. It has been suggested that community mental health services can provide treatment and crisis intervention in a more cost-effective manner. Community teams, which include a range of professionals, can provide services where people live. Early intervention and ongoing support

increase the quality of life and reduce the need for hospitalization and institutionalization.

Services locally available offer people the ability to maintain interaction with family and friends, and participate in community life. Again, this lead may seem strange when you consider I have one of these institutions in my riding, but patients' rights and requirements must come first. So what happens to these institutions, these huge structures? Of course, not all patients can be allowed to return to their home communities. Acute and chronic, violent patients require constant supervision and treatment, so the hospital can always play that role, Mr. Speaker. It has provided that role up to now, and there will always be a need to continue that role. However, the institution and the facility need not be abandoned. The community-based support system will need a resource facility, and this institution can provide that role.

There is a need for a properly staffed and properly built forensic unit in this province, and it was with some pleasure that I heard the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) the other day, in one of my questions, announce that he was considering Selkirk as a possible site for a forensic unit. I am glad he followed our advice on that. We said that during the election.

Of course, criminally insane individuals, in many cases, are housed with the general patient population both in the Selkirk Mental Health Centre and in the different psychiatric wards in the hospitals—Misericordia, Health Sciences Centre and Seven Oaks Hospital. This causes a concern for both patients and for staff protection. What is needed is a facility that is properly planned and properly built, properly staffed by professionals in this field, those who deal on a continuous basis with forensic patients. That again, Selkirk hospital will have the ability to use this structure. It already has the resources now, so the structure could place quite well into the prison situation there.

* (1220)

As well, as our population ages and the number of seniors in our population increases, so do the number of psychogeriatric illnesses, illnesses that affect our seniors. This is an area that needs much research, an area that is quite misunderstood by the medical profession. A proper facility is needed, of course, to attend to the needs of these very vulnerable patients who are probably the most vulnerable in our health care system, seniors who

suffer from a mental illness. Research in this area is needed, and a psychogeriatric facility would accommodate this. It could provide housing and supports as well as allow professionals to understand and treat diseases of our aging population.

However, I feel one of the most important functions that this institution could provide is education. That is why I and in fact my community, and actually many from across this province, felt betrayed when this government decided wrongly, we all conclude, to close the School of Psychiatric Nursing in the Selkirk Mental Health Centre in this budget. The protest to this move has been growing and growing, and the students who demonstrated outside in front of the Legislature yesterday to show their disapproval of this move is an indication of that growing support against the closure. I have received many calls on this issue, as I know my colleagues have. -(interjection)- The honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) acknowledges that. He has received several calls on this issue as well. None of these calls, none of them, praises the government for making this decision for closing the school.

In fact, this woman phoned me the other day, and she emotionally explained what this closure meant to her. She was 38 years old and married with children. Now she felt that she wanted to do something for herself. She had raised her family. She provided a home life for her and her family, and now she wanted to do something strictly for her own. She looked around at different professions, and she decided upon the psychiatric nursing profession. She spent years and money on upgrading her education. She took high school courses and university classes in preparation for the formal training that she hoped to receive at the Selkirk School of Psychiatric Nursing. She looked around at the different schools, and she compared the different schools in province, out of province. She decided upon the Selkirk school and she applied.

Then just last week, when she was writing her final examination, she found out that school will be closing. This struck her very hard. She just did not understand why they would do that. She did not know what to do. All these years of upgrading and all this money was wasted.

Now apparently it is too late for her to apply to Brandon because there was a cut-off date to even

apply into Selkirk—she just met that cut-off date—and anyway, apparently Brandon is restricting its enrollment. Its normal intake would be 50 students; they are reducing apparently to 25. So instead of amalgamating the two schools, they simply reduced the number of openings for psychiatric nurses in this province.

Of course, this is one of the many human tragedies this closure of the school cost.

It is difficult to understand why the government would cut opportunities for education, especially in a profession where the employment rate is 98 percent. Why cut a profession which is fundamental to mental health care reform? It just does not make sense.

It does not make sense to us over here on our side and it also does not make sense to those probably the most affected, naturally enough, the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Manitoba, who stated recently, through its President, Jeff Gunter, and I would just like to read this quote here.

He begins his remarks by stating: Haven't they figured out the connection between education programs and service delivery yet? What sense does it make to plan for reform and cut off at least half of your largest assets for such reform? And he stated he expected some changes as a result of the report of the psychiatric nurses association group, a project commissioned by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in partnership with the association.

He continues: We were requested to meet with the Deputy Minister last month and were informed that the government had plans to reorganize psychiatric nursing education programs under one administrative structure. We were led to believe that the reorganization would result in modest layoffs, but would continue with the two teaching sites in Brandon and in Selkirk.

They were led to believe that they would not be closing any schools.

Then he goes on: The board of directors called together to discuss the implications of this proposal and we were left with the impression that government would be open to our reaction. We were not informed that the School of Psychiatric Nursing in Selkirk would be closed and that all of the teaching staff would be laid off.

He continues: We also expected some common sense in terms of the time it takes to reorganize any

education program so that there is a minimum negative effect on current students, potential students and the credibility of the future of the profession. I guess partnership and common sense also ended up as budget cuts. If this is the way that they intend to plan for reform in mental health, the people of Manitoba had better be prepared for some rough times ahead.

He concludes with this comment: This is devastating to the profession. They have no idea what has been planned for those persons who have applied to enter the program at the school in September of this year. The field of psychiatric nursing is a difficult one. It has always been very difficult to attract enough people to this very special profession.

Of course, psychiatric nurses work in a variety of settings with individuals who have mental health problems and often other problems such as physical illness or developmental disabilities. This is where psychiatric nurses are not just confined to the mental health centres.

Here is a list of other places I would like to read into the record here. They work with the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba, the Agassiz Youth Centre, the Concordia Hospital, Correctional Institute for Women, Deer Lodge Centre, Eden Mental Health Centre, Grace General Hospital, Headingley Correctional Institution, Health Sciences Centre, Holy Family Home, Knowles Centre, Lindenvue Residence, Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre, the Manitoba Youth Centre, Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg, Mount Carmel Clinic, Misericordia Hospital, Salvation Army and all the different associated institutions with that, the Selkirk Co-op on Abuse Against Women, Selkirk and District General Hospital, Seven Oaks General Hospital, Victoria General Hospital and the Vista Park Lodge.

It just shows the diversity of this profession and the very important role they play in the mental health care and just health care in general in this province. Of course, if this government does not want to listen to me, and obviously it does not, and does not want to listen to the registered nurses, would they at least listen to the town council which passed the resolution just this past week? I would like to read that into the record here.

Resolution moved by Councillor Rennie, seconded by Councillor Scramstad:

WHEREAS the Psychiatric School of Nursing has been situated in the town of Selkirk for approximately 70 years; and

WHEREAS the Psychiatric School of Nursing in the town of Selkirk has a Canada-wide reputation of excellence; and

WHEREAS the school has contributed not only human resources but also financial resources to the community; and

WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Selkirk has been made aware of the decision to close the Psychiatric School of Nursing through the news media; and

WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Selkirk was not consulted by the provincial government on this proposed closing of the Psychiatric School of Nursing; and

WHEREAS the citizens of the town of Selkirk have always expressed a caring and considerate attitude to the mental health and wellness of the patients in the Selkirk Mental Health Centre; and

WHEREAS the quality of care would not be available without the high calibre of trained nurses acquired from the school of nursing; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Town of Selkirk implore the Premier of the Province of Manitoba to reconsider the decision to close the Psychiatric School of Nursing in the town of Selkirk.

This was carried and signed by Mayor Bud Oliver, Selkirk.

The resolution, of course, stresses the importance of the psychiatric nursing school to the town and the importance of psychiatric nursing to mental health care throughout the province. The government's decision to close the school is a blow to the local economy and an even greater blow to the psychiatric profession. It will mean the wholesale elimination of 13 jobs, three management and support staff as well, as well as the loss of the town's only post-secondary educational institution.

At that particular meeting, there was a first-year student. He told the council in the crowd that when he decided to become a psychiatric nurse, he checked out both schools. When he compared the schools of Brandon and at Selkirk, he decided to choose Selkirk due to its excellent academic record and its teaching excellence. This young man was

from Brandon himself and he decided to come to Selkirk because he felt it had a better school.

Everyone recognizes the value of this school. Even the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has admitted it several times.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 12:30 p.m., when this matter is again before the House,

the honourable member will have six minutes remaining. As previously agreed, it will also remain standing in the name of honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis).

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Friday, April 26, 1991

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