



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 10, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Alda Hildebrand, Leslie Nicol, Lynn Carriere and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jennifer Aitken, Laura Kaminsky, Debra Matejicka and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Danielle Fillion, George Shrier, Mandy Peters and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Shauna Neuistiuk, Karen Kouhi, Denise Tattrie and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Louise Davidson, Christie Flett, Kim McDonald and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry was launched in April of 1988 to conduct an examination of the relationship between the justice system and aboriginal people; and

The AJI delivered its report in August of 1991 and concluded that the justice system has been a massive failure for aboriginal people; and

The AJI report endorsed the inherent right of aboriginal self-government and the right of aboriginal communities to establish an aboriginal justice system; and

The Canadian Bar Association, The Law Reform Commission of Canada, among many others, also recommended both aboriginal self-government and a separate and parallel justice system; and

On January 28, 1992, five months after releasing the report, the provincial government announced it was not prepared to proceed with the majority of the recommendations; and

Despite the all-party task force report which endorsed aboriginal self-government, the provincial government now rejects a separate and parallel justice system, an aboriginal justice commission and many other key recommendations which are solely within provincial jurisdiction.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to aboriginal self-government by considering reversing its position on the AJI by supporting the recommendations within its jurisdiction and implementing a separate and parallel justice system. (Mr. Lathlin)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today, Mr. Newell Searle, who is a Deputy Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

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

Also this afternoon, we have from the Grosse Isle School, seventeen Grade 6 students. They are

under the direction of Edna Noren. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns).

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

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Budget Post-Secondary Education

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last year the government stated one of their priorities was allegedly the Education department of the government. Unfortunately, after they stated this in many speeches and in many proclamations, they came forward with their budget last year, which produced a reduction in the size of the PACE program in the province of Manitoba of close to \$10 million, a reduction of over 100 staff in our community colleges and a reduction in the enrollments in our community colleges by 1,000 career opportunities and courses and some 5,000 in the evening school grants.

My question to the Premier is: Is he going to restore the 11 percent cut that he made and his government made when he was head of Treasury Board in our post-secondary education area, particularly in the area of community colleges and other areas which are key to Manitoba's improvement and investment in our youth and an investment in the skills that are necessary for the young people of Manitoba to meet the needs of the future?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, last year, despite very, very difficult circumstances that saw us with virtually flat revenues, almost no increase with which to deal, this government was able to pass along an increase of \$90 million on health care spending and also a 3 percent increase to education in Manitoba. That contrasts with a 1 percent increase that is being passed along by the NDP government of Ontario. We have to do what is necessary in order to preserve the health care, the education and the social services of this province. Despite tremendous pressures on us from the international recession in which we are all engaged, we will continue to do our best.

I invite the Leader of the Opposition to wait for tomorrow's budget and to make his judgment as to

our commitments to education based on that budget.

Budget Post-Secondary Education

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the new head of Treasury Board. Last year's budget decisions in the department of post-secondary education, the second largest behind Natural Resources' decline in government support of 11 percent reduction, as I said before, resulted in over 1,000 course opportunities being lost in the enrollment numbers in the community colleges, and we lost 5,000 people who were involved in adult education through the evening school grant program.

I would ask the Minister of Finance, head of Treasury Board, whether the decisions they made last year in government by the former head of Treasury Board were cost effective in terms of investing in our adults, investing in our youth and investing in our future.

Hon. Clayton Menness (Minister of Finance): I regret I did not bring with me the detail of the third quarterly report, but I do have the gross amounts for the Department of Education. Mr. Speaker, 1991-92, as compared to the year previously, we have committed cash—an additional \$66 million flowed in '91-92 in the first three quarters of the fiscal year as compared to '90-91 in education. A goodly portion of that was in post-secondary education.

I do not know on what basis the member is preparing his question. I can say to him with respect to the budget that is forthcoming that there will be announcements that will flow from it with respect to re-establishing some market-driven training, and I am sure that he will be happy with those announcements.

Community Colleges Applied Sciences Courses

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would quote from documents relating to a \$10-million or 11 percent decline in the budget year over year and 142 staff years that were lost. After the Premier (Mr. Filmon) accused us of fearmongering on 100 jobs, we ended up losing 142 last year in the department.

A further question to the minister, head of Treasury Board. Last year, the government cut the applied sciences courses at Red River Community

College and other community colleges. Business people and academic people across this province, in dealing with biotechnology, chemical technology and other courses, have said that this is very bad for the future technological innovations of this province, very bad for the future health care industry of this province. Many, many business people and other academics have asked the government to reverse the decision.

Will the new head of Treasury Board reverse the bad decision that the former head of Treasury Board made by cutting this program and start investing in the future, rather than cutting back as the Premier did as head of Treasury Board last time?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I find it deplorable the manner in which the member asks the question, given my newer responsibility as head of Treasury Board, Mr. Speaker, as compared to the Premier in his past role.

Mr. Speaker, we acknowledged last year, when we made decisions with respect to our community colleges, that we were going to go through a re-evaluation of some certain number of courses, that we would remove those that were not delivering a product that the market needed. We did that. We fully indicated what our plans were, and we said that in this fiscal year, once there was an opportunity for adjustments to flow through the system, we would build in programs in keeping with the market demand.

Those announcements will be forthcoming in due course. I say to the member, he will be satisfied with those announcements.

* (1340)

Health Care System Spending Decisions

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, again today we have information about this government's real intentions and agenda when it comes to health care, clearly an agenda of health care cutbacks dressed up in a poor disguise of health care reform. The evidence today is similar to what we have been raising in this House for the last two weeks, of cuts to urban hospitals to the tune of \$27 million over two years, a further cut of 400 beds or transferred beds out of our urban hospitals.

We would like to ask the minister today, for the sake of dealing with fear among Manitobans and poor morale in our hospitals, will he please come

forward with the information about the options he has presented to our urban hospitals and decisions he has been making to hospital budgets and bed cuts?

* (1340)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my honourable friend's question which was premised on evidence and decisions, et cetera.

The decisions made by this government have been consistent in the last three and a half years. Our decisions in the management of \$1.8 billion of health care spending will have one overriding focus and that is provision of service to the patient, to the individual Manitoban who needs to access health care services in the province of Manitoba. In accomplishing that, we have brought together probably the finest group of individuals in North America to analyze what we have accomplished in our spending in the health care system, again with research tied to the effectiveness and to the outcome of health care spending on improving the health status of Manitobans.

That has led us to decisions, for instance, such as vastly increasing the Home Care budget so that we can care for more individuals in the community rather than relying on expensive institutional care. That is why we announced earlier this year, after several years of study and preparation, mental health reform which moved services from high-cost institutions to the community, again for the patients' sake and to provide quality health care services to those patients in Manitoba needing care.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, in light of this minister ignoring our concerns last year and then cutting hospital budgets to the tune of \$19 million, will the minister today accept responsibility for informing the public of critical decisions this government is making with respect to health care, come clean and let us know the actual decisions—

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

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped my honourable friend, after numerous reminders, might stop using misleading statements in her questions such as cutbacks, reduced funding.

My honourable friend well knows that in four successive budgets we have increased the funding of health care, including hospital budgets,

significant increases to the Home Care budget to support institutional care when it is moved from the institution to the community.

We have taken seriously, although my honourable friend does not care to admit it, the advice that she and other observers of the health care system have made that we must change the focus of the system, centre it on the service delivery to the patient, not on where the service happens but what the service is and its availability to the individual. That is why we have moved consistently from institutions, where appropriate, to community-based services for the benefit—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: The numbers he refutes are alive and well—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate.

* (1345)

Brandon General Hospital

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): How can this minister cut beds, close wards, lay off nurses, as he did in the case in Brandon, do nothing to improve community health services and then say, as he did in Brandon, that these cuts will preserve and improve health care?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I did not expect my honourable friend, in her naivete, to deal with the Brandon hospital issue and talk about cuts in the community. I want to point out to my honourable friend that in the last year that she determined the budget for Brandon General Hospital, it was just over \$32 million. This year, that budget will be just under \$41 million, a 28 percent increase. At the same time, Home Care services, to accommodate the shift in service from the institution to the community, has gone from the last time my honourable friend determined the budget of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: The word cut—

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order? Order, please.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, while my honourable friend was in cabinet deciding the Home Care budget for the city of Brandon in the last year that she had that responsibility, it was \$424,276. Do you know what it is going to be this year after four of our budgets? \$1,056,000—more than double the

budget to provide almost double the services to people in the community in their homes, a policy my honourable friend seems not want to agree with.

Health Care System Bed Closures

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

The Minister of Health has long criticized the NDP for the policy for ordering the closure of beds for a financial reason. Mr. Speaker, now we have learned, and Manitobans know, that there will be at least a closure of 100 beds in the Winnipeg teaching hospital.

Can the minister simply tell us what his reasons are, what statistics he has? Can he share with us today so that people can make a judgment?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have in the past criticized my honourable friends when in government, as New Democrats, in making decisions without a planned information base to judge their decisions.

Mr. Speaker, in the example of the Brandon General Hospital, to answer my honourable friend's question, they have consolidated a number of wards to meet patient care needs in the hospital. It is lower in terms of bed numbers than what it was two and three and four years ago. Why? Because we have funded a significant day surgery program in which patients receive their surgery without admission to a bed.

We have increased substantially the Home Care budget, Sir, which allows people to be cared for in their homes, where they want to be. We more than doubled that budget in Brandon. That has allowed the community and the institution to work together to provide appropriate health care and not fund the staffing of empty hospital beds. That is a program change which is good for the health care system.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, if 200 beds from the smaller community hospitals are to be distributed, can he tell this House where these beds are going to go, and can he again share with us information so that people can make a judgment which hospital needs—

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

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, as I stand here today, I cannot give my honourable friend those kinds of

indications. What I can indicate to my honourable friend is that in our program delivery, our funding and our management within the health care system, to the degree possible within government, one individual will remain at the centre of our planning decisions. That individual will be the patient receiving needed health care.

My honourable friend has criticized in the past, and rightfully so, that it is inappropriate, at \$800 per day average bed cost at a teaching hospital, that we have a person panelled for personal care home waiting. We agree. The only thing is that two and three years ago, when my honourable friend made that criticism, we did not understand the dynamics of the system and how we could make the system work to provide that needed care in a more appropriate location. We think we do now.

Mr. Speaker, that is what the Urban Hospital Council is attempting government to craft in terms of program and policy with the patient needs at the centre of our decision making.

* (1350)

Bed Closure Co-ordination

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, with the major changes coming, can the minister tell this House who will be co-ordinating action between the hospitals so that acute care services are not totally eliminated out of Winnipeg hospitals?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I know my honourable friend is seeking as much information as I can possibly provide him. Let me simply give my honourable friend the assurance that in terms of acute care services, i.e., bed admissions for major surgeries and for accidents, et cetera, those will remain a very key and integral part of hospital care delivery. That, Sir, is what our hospitals are meant to do and will continue to do.

I do not think anyone made the case, however, that hospitals, particularly as my honourable friend has indicated in the past, teaching hospitals ought to be where we panel long-term care patients in an interim period of time. That service is not appropriately delivered in a sophisticated teaching hospital. That is the kind of reform in process, with the patient again at the centre of all changes, that we make to guarantee that the services as needed are provided to the patients of Manitoba.

Education System Funding Formula

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

Last week we heard about 50 job losses at St. Vital School Division. Yesterday, it was Evergreen School Division's turn to cut jobs. Tonight, Transcona-Springfield School Division will be forced to cut further positions, and not just one or two.

Does this minister have any idea what the effects of her funding model will be on school divisions? How many more divisions will face layoffs as a result of the government's inequitable funding model?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind my honourable friend that this government supported an increase to the public school system of 3 percent, much greater than the 1 percent of Ontario. We reduced the ESL by one mill rate on residential properties, and we increased accessibility to the phase-in funds last week for school divisions. Now I trust, with those benefits, that school divisions will make then the appropriate and responsible decisions in conjunction with their ratepayers.

Independent Schools Funding Formula

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister.

Can this minister outline what the job situation is at private schools that got an 11 percent increase last year and will get 10 percent increase this year from this government, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I will remind the honourable member again that the funding for independent schools has not yet been announced.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well the formula is locked in—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Education System Funding Formula Support

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the same minister.

She has indicated that the funding formula has been approved by all of these groups. Can she

table one letter from MAST, MTS, MASBO or any single organization involved in education that approves of this funding model and the effects it is having on education in the province?

* (1355)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the proof is that those members came together around the table and developed the formula, so the proof is in the action and in the behaviour of those members who developed the funding formula.

Free Trade Agreement Lumber Tariff

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

The Free Trade Agreement is supposed to protect jobs for Canadians. Since the Free Trade Agreement has been in existence we have taken a severe beating in terms of job losses. Seven out of nine rulings recently have gone against us, and as a result of those rulings against us, we have lost jobs. We have not protected those jobs.

My question is for the Minister of Finance, again. Yesterday, the Prime Minister took time out to acknowledge that this country will be losing millions of dollars of jobs with new American duties on lumber. My question is: What action has this minister and the government taken to protest the potential job losses that are there?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the decision the honourable member is referring to is a preliminary decision brought down a couple of days ago. The process is that a final decision still remains and the case will be put forward by the federal government. That decision is being made in July of this year. Based on the findings of that decision, there is still another mechanism in terms of the appeal mechanism through the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

This issue is far from over at this particular point in time, and there are other processes to be followed for a final decision to be reached.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, we know that this government is—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Question, please.

Mr. Lathlin: My question is very straightforward, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister contact today the major sawmills of this province and put forward a united fight to preserve those important employers in rural and northern Manitoba?

Mr. Stefanson: I should point out, how this originated is there was a previous export tax in place in provinces across Canada. Manitoba had one. It was at the request of the industry that that export tax in fact be removed to make the industry itself more competitive. A result of the removal of that export tax was the introduction of the tariff in the United States. It is that tariff that is being appealed, will be appealed by the federal government, and we support the appeal for the removal of that tariff.

In the long term, with the removal of that tariff, the opportunities for the lumber industry in Manitoba and across Canada will be significantly enhanced. We support the removal of that tariff, Mr. Speaker.

Repap Manitoba Inc. Treaty Land Entitlements

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): My final question is: Will the Minister of Finance, in his reconsideration of the pulp and paper mill project in The Pas, also be negotiating with the Cross Lake Indian Band over land claims and not leave everything up to Repap, because Repap does not legally have that mandate and this government does?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): We are presently developing the agenda for renegotiation, and we will undoubtedly discuss as the member has indicated, the issue that he brings forward.

At this point in time, we do not have a set position as to how we may deal with that particular area. One could surmise that maybe Repap might not even want that to be included in a new reconfigured area. There are an awful lot of different assumptions and different points of view that one can bring to that specific point. At this point in time, restructuring and renegotiation has not occurred, and therefore, we have not set into place our hard thinking on that issue.

BFI Waste Systems Landfill Site

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment.

On February 18, 19 and 20, BFI held three public meetings in three rural municipalities north of the city of Winnipeg. The subject of those meetings was a proposed private landfill site which BFI is presently in the process of siting. We have been informed by residents of the area who attended those meetings that a number of Department of Environment officials at one meeting, at least three of them, attended those meetings and gave residents the very clear impression from their presence at the front of the room with BFI that they were there in support of this proposed landfill site.

Why were Department of Environment officials there? At whose request? Were they only appearing—

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

Hon. Glen Cummlings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, Department of Environment people are called upon to attend large numbers of meetings to provide information, to provide background when questions are asked. That should not be interpreted as support of projects by appearing there. We are a neutral body there to provide information.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, for the minister, it was interpreted as support—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Edwards: Can the minister tell us whether or not BFI's proposal is for a landfill site that will accept biomedical waste, and if so, given the even greater risk associated with this type of waste, why were Department of Environment officials so careless in being seen to be so clearly in support of this project for the residents who were there?

* (1400)

Mr. Cummlings: Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the member would choose to, in my opinion, spread what I would consider unsubstantiated rumours about the attendance first of all of the officials, or secondly, what the information was at that meeting. If he wants to discuss the specifics of that project, I will have to wait until I have received all the information before I can respond to the question.

Mr. Edwards: Can the minister explain how it is that BFI is now claiming as a result of those meetings that 60 percent of the local residents are in support of this project when those attending the

meeting tell us that the majority clearly opposed the projects? Did the department have any involvement in this alleged balloting, and who counted the ballots, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Cummlings: Mr. Speaker, the question is entirely hypothetical and somewhat silly.

Long Plain Indian Reserve Tree-Growing Contract

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, the NDP constantly falsely accuse our government of not providing jobs for native people. On the Long Plain Indian Reserve southwest of Portage, the federal government built a state-of-the-art greenhouse for growing trees. Unfortunately, through the NDP reign, they never did get a contract to grow trees. Fortunately, the honourable Minister of Natural Resources, three years ago, provided them with a contract to grow trees for the provincial government, and they are still doing so.

I would ask the minister if he could indicate to this Legislature how many jobs this has created and how important this is to our natural resources in Manitoba?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to acknowledge and inform honourable members of the House that the Dakota Plains people are in fact contributing to the reforestation efforts of this government. They have very successfully nurtured and grown just about a million seedlings, 900,000-odd seedlings, of a quality that certainly matches the standards that the department sets.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if this is a one-year shot, or is there any longevity to this contract?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I can inform the honourable member, and perhaps more importantly, the 18 aboriginal workers who are growing these trees in Dakota, that I have been able to, with the co-operation of the federal government, work this into our five-year forestry agreement. That in effect means that they have this kind of contractual arrangement for the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I know the honourable members are interested, but that in general terms—we talk about the commercial harvest of our trees—can be expressed, we cut down about 9 million trees and plant 14 million to 15

million trees. That is in contrast to the 4 million and 5 million trees that the previous administration planted just a few years ago.

Beer Industry U.S. Aluminum Containers

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): The Manitoba beer industry, Mr. Speaker, is a model for environmentally responsible handling of waste packaging. They have a system to ensure that over 95 percent of bottles are returned and reused. In 1989, the NDP prevented this government from allowing that to be disrupted by having cans influx from the American beer industry.

My question is for the Minister of Environment. What proposals does this government have to ensure that the beer industry is not wiped out in Manitoba and we are left to dispose of American beer cans?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member is referring to a number of concerns that have been raised about a possible influx of American beer in aluminum containers, i.e., a one-way packaging proposal. I am very pleased to say that we are in the process of very shortly releasing regulations on beverage containers in this province that will set some very specific targets and allow us to move very quickly into further regulation if those targets are not met.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, will the government ensure that American beer companies will have to compete fairly with Canadian companies? Will the minister institute a deposit on these American cans?

Mr. Cummings: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to enunciate policy on the fly, but I can assure—

An Honourable Member: The Liberals do it all the time.

Mr. Cummings: —well, in contrast to the group of seven.

Mr. Speaker, it is an issue that we will be keeping a close watch on and certainly believe that there is a compatible way of dealing with importation and dealing with waste disposal at the same time.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, the beer industry has been waiting since the end of January to have this issue addressed.

Will the minister, in his consideration of having the deposit system, also look at having the revenue

from this system go into a fund, an environmental fund, similar to the innovation fund?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, if the member is referring to setting up, as has happened in some jurisdictions, sort of an environmental slush fund, I think that would be inappropriate. The fact is we have very strong capability through the WRAP Act to make sure that those who are responsible for the waste can be held responsible and will pay the freight and pay the costs of collection removal from the waste stream, so we will take care of this waste in that manner.

Civil Service Voluntary Incentive Program

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, on January 22, the Minister of Finance announced the voluntary separation incentive program, which he hoped would eliminate the need or reduce the need to lay off as many as 300 civil servants this year.

I wonder if he can tell the House today, how many people have taken advantage of that program?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for and charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): Mr. Speaker, for the information of the honourable member, at the time we made the announcement of the voluntary incentive program, we identified about a maximum of 300 positions that could be affected by the budget of which 200 were presently filled. We have had some, over 200 I believe, applications to take advantage of that process, and the matching is now well underway to match applicants to take advantages of this with people who are in positions that could be affected by this budget.

Mr. Alcock: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is very good news.

Civil Service Staff Layoffs

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Why then is the government issuing pink slips to civil servants in a variety of departments?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) explained the position well. We are trying to match the maximum number of voluntary withdrawals from the Civil Service with those who may be affected with decisions. Unfortunately, we cannot make a 100 percent match, so there will be some people

who will be affected; that was per the announcement made. This year we are probably providing some earlier notice, to those who may be affected, than we were in last year's budget.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps the Minister of Finance could tell us how many people have been provided with his "earlier notice" since the first of this year?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I cannot provide that number. Certainly, I know I was speaking to one department today. For instance, there were going to be 20 individuals in their department who were going to be impacted by budgetary decisions. Fourteen at this time, of course, were saved harm as a result of the voluntary withdrawal. That is at this time, and indeed there may be a higher number within that department, so there is no fixed number at this point in time.

* (1410)

Civil Service Staff Layoffs

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Well, Mr. Speaker, following on the last member's question, the 400 jobs that have been identified, we now learn that, as has been said, some 300 to 400 positions, pink slips are being issued. Forty-nine jobs, we understand, are being lost in Child and Family Services. There are jobs being lost in Government Services and purchasing as a result of contracting out, cutbacks in Finance, cutbacks to farmers in terms of layoffs of entomologists in Agriculture and up to 50 jobs lost in Natural Resources as a result of this government's sweetheart deal with Linnet.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission if in fact he has undertaken an impact study for all regions of this province so that the government knows, before making this kind of a decision, what the impact will be on jobs in the various regions of this province and on those local economies.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for and charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to—again for the information of the member for Dauphin, we were not talking 300 to 400, as he would stretch it out to be. We identified about a maximum of 300 positions that could be affected by this budget. I noticed as well the member referred to contracting out, which if I read the news reports correctly, was an issue in their recent strike with their

own employees. Before the member gets on a high horse in this House today, he should examine how they operate their own party.

I can tell the member that when we made the announcement of the voluntary incentive program and identified well in advance of the budget the maximum number of positions involved, myself and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) met with the representatives of the Manitoba Government Employees' Association and myself later with the Professional Engineers, the second bargaining unit. We discussed how we could handle this matter, and in fact, the reason why it was being done this year in advance of the budget was to accommodate a request that the MGEA made of us last year.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this government obviously has not done an impact study, nor do they know how many layoffs. They are confused in their normal type of operation.

How can this minister justify the cutbacks in jobs and services in rural Manitoba when we already have a rural economy that is reeling from a depressed agricultural economy, from cutbacks in rural economic development, from offloading on municipalities? How can this minister justify those kinds of layoffs?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, the longer I listen to members of the New Democratic Party, the more I am amazed sometimes, because they are the party that claims to be the party of labour. The member for Dauphin has totally ignored the fact that we live with a collective agreement and that collective agreement stipulates certain rules affecting employees if we are reducing positions.

As we indicated to the bargaining units at the time we made the announcement, we would be working very hard to reduce the number of employees affected. Obviously as we have gone through the process, departments have identified applicants where they could make a match. Budget decisions have been made—budget decisions that the member, I would hope, would recall, from his days in government, are made on an ongoing basis almost up to budget day. We have tried to minimize those results, and one will have to wait for that process to be complete before we will have final numbers. It is an ongoing process subject to the collective agreement, as the member should know.

Decentralization Status Report

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this minister how many more, if he knows, of course—he does not seem to know what is going on—jobs are being lost in the decentralization initiative even further. They have cut back on decentralization. How much further is the decentralization being reduced? How many fewer jobs are being transferred to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for and charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): Mr. Speaker, again for the benefit of the member for Dauphin, the process is such that it is an ongoing process at identifying individuals. If an individual has applied for the voluntary incentive program and he can make a match with an employee who has been identified and we make the match, that individual will not even be affected by the budget announcements that will be made shortly. If we have individuals who are in an area where there is going to be a reduction in staff and a number apply for voluntary incentive programs to retire and it is accepted, it may result in elimination of a position without even an occupant. Until that process is complete—

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

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say a few words about the long delayed recognition of Louis Riel by the federal House of Commons. As members are no doubt aware, earlier today the House of Commons finally passed a motion recognizing the achievements of Louis Riel over a century after he was hanged. I want to table that motion in the House today, because I think it is a significant recognition long overdue.

Louis Riel was truly the founder of this province. It was through the work of Louis Riel, then the leader of the Metis nation that this province came together. In 1867-68, as the secretary of the national committee of the Metis, he issued a declaration of the people of Rupert's Land in the northwest. On December 23, 1868, he became head of the provisional government of Red River. Riel led Manitoba into Confederation with The Manitoba Act of May 12, 1870. In 1870, under his leadership the Metis adopted a list of rights which he used to negotiate terms for the admission of Rupert's Land in the northwestern territory into the Dominion of Canada. Formal transfer of power occurred on July 15, 1870. Riel was leader elected three times to the federal House of Commons beginning with the by-election in 1873. Tragically, he was later prevented from taking his seat in the House of Commons.

As members are aware, he was hanged in 1885 for his leadership in defending the rights and freedoms of the Metis people. The recognition he received today is long overdue. As a founder of this province, Louis Riel is truly one of the major historical figures in this country. I can only hope, as a Metis person myself, that his dreams will finally be realized over the coming years.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): I ask leave for a nonpolitical statement.

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

Mr. Enns: I simply want to associate myself with the comments expressed. It is indeed an historic occasion that we pause to recognize, what I certainly have no difficulty in recognizing, a founder of this province, a nation-builder of Canada, one who has indeed a long and colorful history in the annals of our country. I speak as the member for Lakeside within whose boundaries the communities of St. Laurent are located, housing many of the Metis homes and families that, in fact, date back to the historic events that occurred here in this province in the year 1870 in its very formation and to the more tragic ending of that era 15 years later at Batoche in 1885.

Among my friends I count the current leader of the Manitoba Metis Federation, one Yvon Dumont who traces his ancestry back to Gabriel Dumont who was

indeed a lieutenant, often considered the military support arm of the young Metis nation, as they refer to themselves.

I say with some great deal of satisfaction, and I say that as a Conservative because it was indeed a Conservative administration in Ottawa at the time, Sir John A. Macdonald who passed on the harsh sentence of death at the time in 1885, but is today in the person of another Conservative former Prime Minister, the person of Joe Clark who is indeed introducing this resolution to the federal House of Commons in recognizing the Metis nation and the Metis people as such and in particular long overdue recognition of one Louis Riel.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1420)

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): May I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Gaudry: Monsieur le président, il me fait plaisir de reconnaître ce que le gouvernement conservateur a fait à Ottawa aujourd'hui. C'est à dire que c'est là un bon commencement. Ils étaient certainement en manque aujourd'hui de ne pas le réhabiliter et le reconnaître comme un père de la Confédération. Alors, je suis sûr que ce dossier va se poursuivre afin de le réhabiliter comme un père de la Confédération. C'est beau qu'ils l'aient reconnu comme un des fondateurs du Manitoba, mais il doit être reconnu comme le fondateur du Manitoba et non un des fondateurs. Comme je disais au début, j'étais fier de voir ce commencement puisque, le 22 février, j'ai moi-même assisté au congrès du Parti libéral où nous avons présenté une motion non politique, et puis j'ai été contacté par M. Dumont par après. Il avait reçu notre motion de M. Clark. Alors que—Aucun problème, M. Downey.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to acknowledge what the Conservative government did today in Ottawa. By that, I mean that is a good beginning. They were certainly remiss today in not rehabilitating him and recognizing him as a Father of Confederation. So, I am sure that this question will be taken up again

with a view to rehabilitating him as a Father of Confederation. It is wonderful that they acknowledged him as one of the founders of Manitoba, but he ought to be recognized as the founder of Manitoba and not one of the founders. As I was just saying, I was proud to see this first step because, on February 22nd, I myself attended the Liberal Party Conference where we introduced a nonpolitical motion, and afterwards I was contacted by Mr. Dumont. He had received our motion from Mr. Clark. While—No problem, Mr. Downey.

[English]

Now I am pleased to see that they have recognized finally, which is long overdue, and we have been working on this for a longtime. And 107 years is long overdue by recognizing a man that has founded Manitoba. He should be the founder and not one of the founders of Manitoba. I congratulate the Government today for the effort of doing that and, hopefully, in the ongoing recognition that they will rehabilitate and recognize Louis Riel as one of the Fathers of Confederation. Thank you very much.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may have leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I rise as well to acknowledge the resolution and the acknowledgement of the federal government of Louis Riel and as well want to associate myself with the resolution in the recognizing of the contribution of Louis Riel.

I believe at this time when we are renewing the Canadian Constitution that the work that is being done with the Metis people and the work particularly from the Metis community in Manitoba has to be recognized and the leadership which was referred to by my colleague the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), that of Mr. Yvon Dumont, as well should be recognized.

More particularly is the contribution of the total Metis community in Manitoba and their long-term outstanding desire as Canadians to see this country prosper, to see that they have their rightful recognition in the history books of this province and

the continuing efforts that they put forward to recognize in an educational way all of the people of Manitoba the clear understanding of the history as they see it. I know there is currently work going on with my colleague the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) through my department of work with the Metis people so that that history can be truly recorded and brought forward to all the citizens of this province.

I am pleased to be part of the recognition of Louis Riel and the tremendous contribution of the Metis people to this province; and as well with the recognition of Mrs. Elsie Bear yesterday—I think as a clear example of her dedication and her contribution to this province and to her people.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call adjourned debate, Bill 45, and then the bills as they flow on the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 45—The City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), Bill 45, The City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, la Loi sur les municipalités et d'autres dispositions législatives, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. Agreed.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of rising to discuss Bill 45, The City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act. I had an opportunity to review the bill. I reviewed it quite carefully and I scrutinized the bill.

The bill, first of all, strikes me as a quintessential example of a perfect example of something we discussed and studied in law school with respect to bills and legislation in general. The issue often

comes down to when a bill goes before the courts for judicial interpretation or when one studies a bill or its ramifications, the issue often is determined on, quote, what was the Legislature's intention in passing this bill? It is generally fundamental to the way that law is determined, and it is generally fundamental to the ultimate decision or at least the ultimate interpretation of the bill by the judiciary or by whoever interprets it, Mr. Speaker.

At the very onset, that is the great difficulty that I have and that members on this side of the House have with the bill as it presently exists. The question is: What is the intention of the government and what is the intention of the Legislature in passage of this particular amendment, a wide-ranging amendment, a very diverse amendment? The question is: What does the government hope to accomplish by this?

We on this side of the House recognize a decision was made by the residents of Headingley, Manitoba. They have that democratic right and they made a decision. We on this side of the House were anticipating a bill to come forward to deal with the decision made by the residents of Headingley and to deal with the ramifications of that decision and how the matter would be legislated and how the matter would be put into legal form and effect.

However, what we have before us is a bill that does not at all clearly indicate what the government position is. In fact, the bill is so wide ranging, Mr. Speaker, and open to so much interpretation that it makes members on this side of the House quite suspicious and quite suspect of the intentions of the minister.

I am not suggesting in my comments that the minister has any untoward intentions. What I am suggesting is that it is not at all clear what the government intends to do with this legislation, because of the way it is written and because of the discretionary nature and aspect of this bill and the discretionary authority that is left to the minister and to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to deal with this matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing on the one hand with the simple question, a relatively simple question, of how Headingley residents can deal with the transformation into another form of governance. We have in this bill a complicated web of suggestions and a number of legislative changes that do not cause us on this side of the House to have comfort with respect to what is going to

ultimately result as a consequence of this amendment.

Mr. Speaker, this in effect is an omnibus bill. It is an omnibus bill, the result is numerous changes to numerous acts, that open up many situations and result in conclusions that may have not been thought through clearly by the minister, by the cabinet, and by those who drafted this legislation. That is our overriding concern with respect to this City of Winnipeg Amendment Act. That is, in the first instance, our major concern.

Mr. Speaker, just in reviewing the bill in general, the discretionary authority attached to the minister is quite strong. For example, without dealing with the specific sections of the bill, as I realize that my comments are confined to the general nature of the bill, the authority is not "shall," it is "may." We all know that there is a profound difference in legislation. There is a profound difference between the minister may, and the minister shall. In very many instances we see throughout this bill that the minister may, not that the minister shall. That certainly opens up the bill to why executive privilege, and why executive discretion.

* (1430)

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council has wide-ranging authority to establish regulations and to deal with many aspects of the bill—again, very wide open. The difficulty with this is that the ramifications at what could occur or could result as a result of the wide-ranging nature of this bill may not have been well thought out. It is imperative that we legislators in the House, who are dealing with these amendments, scrutinize very carefully the ramifications and the potential difficulties of every single aspect of the bill. I would hope that the minister and the cabinet and those responsible for the drafting of this legislation will pay very careful attention to the comments of members on this side of the House, not that we have privy, or not that we are a fountain of all knowledge, but I think there have been some very valid suggestions about some of the loopholes and some of the open-ended questions that are left up in the air as a result of this bill.

I refer the minister very strongly to the comments of our Leader on Friday in the Chamber to some of the very serious consequences as a result of this particular bill. I urge that the minister and all of those in his department pay attention to those comments, as the minister as I understand in comments during

the course of debate in this House indicated they would be coming back with amendments. We certainly urge and hope that the minister and the department will pay attention to our comments and will come back with amendments that will make the passage of this bill more expeditious, and will result in dealing with the concerns that were initially brought forward by the residents of Headingley, Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Aside from the comments raised by our Leader with respect to this bill, I guess I have some philosophical problems with some of the wording and the nature of this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, and in the almost presidential style of authority given to the minister and the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council with respect to powers under this bill. If this bill is to deal with a specific situation and a specific instance, I do not know why it is so wide open and so much discretionary authority is left with the minister and Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council.

If you are going to amend legislation, why do you not amend it specifically to deal with this situation? Why does the minister insist on wide-ranging and wide-open amendments which stay on the statute books? Until next the matter is addressed by members of this Chamber, those amendments stay on the statute books and can be used by the government in its discretionary authority at any time. That causes us on this side of the House and that causes me specifically with some results and some grave philosophical concerns with respect to this bill.

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

I referred earlier, Mr. Acting Speaker, to the fact that this is an omnibus bill. I just have to indicate one of the books I have most recently completed is Erik Neilsen's autobiography—the title escapes me. Oh, yes, no, it has come back now—The House is Not a Home, which I have to admit I thoroughly enjoyed and found most instrumental.

One of Erik Neilsen's proudest achievements—I remind members on that side of the House that he was the leader of the Conservative Party for an interim period and was government House leader for a fair amount of time—as a member of the opposition was the fact that he was able to delay and stall government omnibus legislation, something which he said was fundamentally improper and incorrect in the parliamentary system. He went to great lengths to indicate that he felt no support should ever be given to omnibus legislation,

and indeed fought very strongly to avoid it when the Liberal government brought in omnibus legislation dealing with a number of matters which the Conservative Party opposed.

Consequently, I am only reminding members on that side of the House that omnibus legislation is a very, very difficult matter to deal with in terms of the parliamentary system, and certainly one of their former brethren—because I do not know what their relationship is now—one of the former deans of the House of Commons from that side of the House certainly warns his peers and his fellow members against that kind of action.

I ask members on that side of the House to consider that when they are looking at amendments to this piece of legislation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not know where to begin in terms of dealing with the City of Winnipeg and its planning or lack thereof, and the difficulties that we have seen through the city of Winnipeg over the last 20, 30, 40, indeed perhaps 50 years, and how the consequences of a bill like this could figure into the future planning of the city of Winnipeg, because the ramifications and the effect of some of these amendments and some of these proposals in this bill could seriously affect planning and could seriously affect development in the city of Winnipeg.

The problem that I have is the lack of any government plan or any government initiative with respect to the city of Winnipeg. It is certainly hard for me to get any idea where the government is proceeding with respect to development of the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Acting Speaker.

They appear to be all over the board. Although one thing is clear that less planning is better planning, in terms of the members of the opposite side of the House. That is almost a result of years and years on City Council and where the developers go we shall go to, and members on that side of the House, many of whom graduated from the gang at City Hall, graduated to the Legislature now, still have the same attitude of development, development, development.

As was stated by our Leader on Friday, where the bulldozer go we too shall follow, and we see that, and the lack of planning in terms of the city of Winnipeg has resulted in some grave difficulties, and has resulted in some very unfortunate situations, to a large part, is one of the reasons why residents of the city of Winnipeg are seeing dramatic tax increases, and the tax increases they have seen

in the last several years. That is a result of poor planning on the part of the city, and lack of direction from the gang both at City Hall and then the graduates who now occupy the benches on that side of the House.

We are in the absurd situation, where as I understand it, now in the city of Winnipeg we have enough lots, enough development for a city the size of 750,000. That means services, roads, all kinds of amenities, and we have all of that while at the same time many of the services provided in the inner city and at the core structure of this city are provided on a regular basis. For example, residents in West Kildonan that were provided quite efficiently before, are no longer provided as efficiently or as frequently, as a result of the poor planning on the part of the city and the gang and the graduates of the gang.

We see the effects on a daily basis, and we see the effects on property tax bills in the city of Winnipeg. This bill does nothing to allay our concerns about the lack of planning and leadership on the part of the provincial government, the gang and the graduates of the gang who occupy those benches, which is another reason why when we look at a legislation of this kind, and we try to cut through the rhetoric and try to cut through the wording to see what is the intention of the government with respect to this bill, we cannot come up with an answer, Mr. Acting Speaker.

* (1440)

If you superimpose all of the history of the relationship of many of the gang and their graduates to the City of Winnipeg, when you look at that relationship, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is fairly obvious to conclude why members on this side of the House are viewing with suspicion and some uncertainty the intentions of the government with respect to this particular bill and with respect to the government's intentions for the City of Winnipeg and for the powers that it can or cannot exercise under this bill.

On Friday, our Leader, I thought very appropriately, pointed out some of the fundamental difficulties and problems with the referenda. A referendum is proposed in this particular bill. I again urge that the government, and the minister in particular, pay very close attention to those comments because the question of referendum goes to the very core of what we hold dear in our democratic society. But more importantly, it is open to all kinds of maneuvering and it is open to all kinds of—I would not say abuse, Mr. Acting Speaker, but

I would say conflict and potential abuse, and it must be well thought out.

Clearly, in this bill, the whole question of the referendum and its ramifications, its effects, those who can participate, those who cannot participate, those who are residents, those who are not residents, all of that has not been very well thought out with respect to this bill. All of that requires tightening up before members on this side of the House would be prepared to deal with the bill, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I note that the minister is nodding his head in the affirmative and I appreciate that. I hope that the comments will be—well, I acknowledge his affirmative nodding, and I look forward to the amendments that will be forthcoming to deal with some of those particular issues, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I also, Mr. Acting Speaker, wish to deal with some of the questions as to the ramifications and the breadth of this particular bill, and that is, to where and to whom does this particular bill and its amendments apply and what is the government's intention with respect to future referenda or future developments under this bill for people in and around the city of Winnipeg? This does result in a fair amount of uncertainty with respect to what other parts or other regions of the city of Winnipeg may determine or may decide.

It goes far beyond simply a question of governance, Mr. Acting Speaker. It extends as well to issues of taxation and tax base and municipal services. It again ties in very, very closely with the whole question of planning the city of Winnipeg, the direction of the city of Winnipeg, where and how it is to go. Unless it is clarified as to what the government's intention is for other areas of the city, it would make it very difficult to develop any kind of a long-term plan or any kind of overall direction for the city of Winnipeg and to deal with some of the very serious problems that occur in the city of Winnipeg.

Whenever I think about planning, in terms of the city of Winnipeg, two thoughts come to mind. The first is how in my lifetime governance of the city of Winnipeg has changed so dramatically. We went from the metro corporation and the various municipalities to Unicity. What direction we are now heading I am not sure, but we have seen a fair amount of change in my lifetime alone as to governance of the city of Winnipeg, far more I would

suggest than other municipalities and other jurisdictions.

The second point that I wish to make, and which I generally make when dealing with the city of Winnipeg is a concern—and perhaps it is an isolated event—that bothered me for some time with respect to the city in its lack of planning and lack of real attention to long-term growth. I served on one of the early resident advisory committees, early 1970s. I can recall a proposal coming forward to our resident advisory committee. I might add that was when resident advisory committees were far more meaningful and within the confines of the act, and it had some input. The proposal came forward to develop a series of bicycle trails in the city of Winnipeg.

We are talking of about approximately well over 20 years ago. I remember very clearly a very distinguished senior city councillor shaking his head at the time and saying, no, the bicycle craze is just like the hula hoop. It is only a fad and it will shortly die out. Now this was a very sophisticated plan to develop green space and to develop a bicycle path system for the city of Winnipeg. I have to harken back to it, because I view it as a lost opportunity for the citizens of the city of Winnipeg and surrounding areas, because how beneficial that program would have been had the bicycle path system and the green space cotangent with it been if it had been incorporated into the City of Winnipeg plan 20 years ago, when it was far more affordable and far more practical than it is now, particularly now that we have seen some tremendous urban sprawl in the city of Winnipeg.

I reflect back on that on every occasion when we have opportunity to deal with the city of Winnipeg and to deal with matters of this kind, because it fundamentally does come down to the issue of planning.

An Honourable Member: You would not have a constituency.

Mr. Chomlak: The minister indicates that I would not have a constituency. Actually, I think that most of the bicycle trail was destined to be on the east side of the river which would take in several of the members opposite constituencies. It bothers me to this day that we did not take advantage of the opportunity, because the matter has arisen over and over and over again, and it just strikes me that we have lost an opportunity in this city.

The whole question of planning is a constant theme of ours with respect to the city. We really have seen the effects of urban sprawl and what it has done to our city and to the lifestyle here and to the property taxes.

In my own constituency, there is a very unfortunate situation of a large manufacturing area that is totally closed in, almost completely closed in, by residential properties, and there is a very unfortunate situation that has developed, and that is that trucks carrying product in and product out are forced to proceed in residential areas. What has happened, the result has been that as areas of one—quite rightly so—area of residence petition and complain, the problem is moved to another area. The result is, it has been moved from area to area to area and we still have a difficulty. We still have individuals whose sleep is disrupted at night as a result of this activity, whose lifestyle is greatly affected in the summertime because they are not able to enjoy their homes and their property as a result of these trucks passing by.

It is a very unfortunate situation that has developed, and it clearly can only be attributed to a result of poor developmental planning, Mr. Acting Speaker, and unless the provincial government and the city come to grips with that difficulty, we will continue to have problems of this kind. We will continue to have empty space on the periphery of this city and a crumbling core and services to the periphery area, while other areas of the city do not have adequate services any longer.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, whenever we deal with questions such as the Headingley question, we should not deal with it in isolation of the ramifications, but at the same time the government bill should be far more specific in its dealings with the particular situation as it deals with Headingley and the surrounding area.

* (1450)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I had an opportunity to reference comments of other members of this House with respect to this particular bill and the words "blank cheque" were used, or at least it was my interpretation that was the ramification of some of the comments that I read of members of this House dealing with this amendment of Bill 45. Again, I am drawn back to some of the very, very open-ended approaches to this particular bill. I can only urge, again, the minister, that if you are going to bring in legislation of this kind, that you very

carefully address those issues, provide enough lead time for follow-up to examine some of the potential ramifications of the bill, and then bring it in, which would then allow for much speedier passage than to follow this awkward procedure of bringing in the bill with its omnibus type of provisions and, consequently, resulting in amendments and delay, delays not occurring as a result of members on this side of the House being obstructionists, but actually by delays as a result of the government's incompetence, if that is the word to use, or the government's haste, perhaps, in introducing this bill, in not carefully analyzing the ramifications of what they are doing.

We on this side of the House are doing our duty as members of the opposition in terms of addressing this bill, and the government should have done its homework, Mr. Acting Speaker. If the government had done its homework, I suspect quite strongly that the bill would move through this Chamber far more expeditiously than is occurring now.

What is occurring now, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that we are scrutinizing the bill and being forced to acknowledge the defects and have the government bring in those changes and those areas where improvement is needed. When dealing with the issue of planning, one should consider the fact that there is no requirement in the act for any plan for Headingley or any other R.M. which may or may not leave the City of Winnipeg to include a plan for what is going to occur in the future. This is consistent with the lack of attention paid to planning, and the lack of consistency in this bill, and in other actions taken by members opposite.

The question is, as I understand it, Headingley should or will remain largely a rural type area, Mr. Acting Speaker. One would suggest, would this not or would that not be included in the act or some kind of provision to provide a plan for including that in the act? There is nothing like that in the act, and one would suggest that at least the requirement for a plan to be submitted by a certain deadline or by a certain date would almost be a requirement of the act. But we do not see that in the amendment, and it is something that the members on this side of the House would be looking for and would suggest be included in some of the amendments that the minister is going to bring forward.

One of the areas of the bill that I do not completely understand, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the whole question of the inconsistency in this act. Other

municipalities cannot have referendums in one part of a jurisdiction. How is it possible that areas of a particular city can have referendums without the ramifications and the effects which are felt by all of us collectively in one jurisdiction in one urban area, how those matters are not determined and how those matters are not dealt with? I just do not quite understand that particular issue and would probably look for some clarification or some comment from the minister or the government as to where it stands with respect to that particular principle as it applies in this agreement.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the whole question of the bill also fails to deal in any large part with any of the taxation issues. I looked at the issue and I note that the minister can refer the matters to a reference board. That is done via the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, but again I noticed the—and I do not want to get into the specifics of the legislation—some of the differences between the use of language. We have the may's and the shall's. We would urge that the government consider the effect of its discretionary authority and its implementation thereof.

I note, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) is quite excited about—I presume he is quite excited about my comments and I know that he is greatly anticipating the opportunity of engaging in this debate and this opportunity to provide further suggestions and further advice to the minister for dealing with this particular bill and with the legislation.

Generally, in conclusion, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would urge that the minister peruse very carefully the comments of our Leader on Friday dealing with this particular bill and some of the outstanding matters, the unstated matters and the ambiguous matters that are included in this bill and pay careful attention to this.

I will close largely on the note that I began on, Mr. Acting Speaker, that when judges and others are looking to this bill to try to interpret what the intention of the legislators are with respect to this bill, it should be made far clearer so that what in fact we do in this House is interpreted and viewed by those outside of this House as one and the same.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Acting Speaker, it gives me some pleasure to rise after the member for Kildonan and put a few remarks on the record on this particular bill, because I do want to take a

somewhat different slant on this than perhaps has been taken to date.

We have heard from the moment the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) introduced this bill of the need for this legislation. I think that is what I want to talk about. We have heard from the critic from our party and from the Leader of the New Democratic Party and then in lock step fashion from other members of the New Democratic Party what some of the concerns are with the bill. I think there are legitimate concerns. I think there are some legitimate questions to be raised about the need for as general a bill as has been presented to the House. However, I do not think I am telling tales out of school to suggest that I think the minister is open to seeing some amendments. I think the minister's intention with this bill is an honourable one. I think he wishes simply to correct a situation that has been before this province for many years.

* (1500)

He may have been or his department may have been somewhat overzealous in drafting the legislation and has opened some of the doors that people are concerned about, but I think that we can quickly in committee, if we get this bill into committee quickly, we can close some of those loopholes or address some of those concerns and get on with the business of allowing the residents of Headingley, 92 percent of whom voted to become an independent township, that want to separate from the City of Winnipeg. Their reasons for doing that are not only legitimate, but they are longstanding and they are widely recognized. I have not heard a person in this House speak against them.

We have two things before us, and we must not lose sight in our concern about the way this bill is drafted. We must not lose sight of the fact that there are a very large number of people who have for a long time been put in a very uncomfortable and unnecessarily uncomfortable position of having to pay very high taxes for services they do not receive, people whose case has been studied, the legitimacy of which has been recognized for years, and who have been very patiently asking to be allowed to separate from the City of Winnipeg. I think we should not let the debate in this House interfere with the timely separation of the R.M. of Headingley or the town of Headingley.

I think that the evidence speaks for itself. Anytime this question has been studied, anytime the residents have been spoken to—and certainly the

most concrete example of that is the polling that was done. The minister himself spoke about the results of that polling. In fairness to the members of the New Democratic Party, I think that they recognize that. I do not think I have heard anything in the remarks of the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) or from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), anything that says that the residents of Headingley should not be allowed to separate. Have they said anything along that line?

What they had been saying, and I provide them with some comfort in their remarks, is that this bill is poorly drafted and perhaps too broad in its potential application. We agree with that, but I do believe that we do a disservice given the time necessary, the time needed by the people in Headingley to establish a mechanism whereby they can have elections to establish a civic administration to negotiate with the City of Winnipeg about the transfer of resources and certain amenities to —[interjection] I am sorry, Mr. Acting Speaker, there was a question from the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme). The Minister for Government Services was what?—[interjection] The Minister for Government Services was recommending the separation of St. Boniface. Was that the question? Some honourable members, oh, oh.

I want to just be very, very precise and very clear in what I am suggesting, and that is simply that there are a lot of complicated decisions that face the residents of Headingley. There is a lot of work that needs to be done, and it is better done now so we can go through the next civic election which is upon us this fall than attempting to clean it up afterwards. I think that the intention of this bill and I think the intention of this minister is to do exactly that. We should get on with the work of it.

I would hope that at the conclusion of today we will see this bill passed into committee. I would hope that we can get into committee and deal with the clauses of this bill that cause concern to members of this House and produce some changes in those, so that we can—not we can—but having passed this bill, having disposed of this legislation, we can allow the residents of Headingley to do what they have chosen to do, and that is to develop their own administration. To do otherwise, I think is a disservice to them.

I want to comment too on some of the complications that have been raised here because

I think there is a lot of smoke in this discussion about Headingley separating. I attended a meeting with some of the councillors from that end of the city just recently, and there was a concern raised about how would Headingley pay for some of the improvements that have been made over the years by the city.

I think that the people who raise those kinds of concerns simply fail to remember back to when we amalgamated under Unicity, and there was no question of payment by the City of Winnipeg to Charleswood or Tuxedo or other places for civic buildings, or community clubs, or rinks or other facilities that were taken over. I think in the spirit of co-operation and goodwill that should exist on this separation that we should do exactly the same thing, that Headingley should be supported in every way to establish itself as a free-standing and prosperous and healthy community. We should not do anything to interfere with that.

I thank the minister for his assurances that he is prepared to deal with the concerns that have been raised, and I would urge the House to get on with the business of getting this bill into committee and passing it.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Acting Speaker, in response to the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), I would ask, have I ever dealt with any issue in this House with anything but the most care?

I rise, as have other members of our caucus, to discuss the concept of Bill 45. I know that we cannot discuss specific details on the bill at second reading. It is a very complex bill. It incorporates a great number of provisions and changes and new ideas. The very size and scope of the bill is causing us, on this side of the House, a fair degree of concern.

My understanding, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that the genesis of this bill was the request for the area of Headingley to be allowed to separate from the City of Winnipeg, as a result of a referendum that was held a few months ago. It is difficult in perusing the general outlines of this bill to find the Headingley portions of the bill. They are there, yes, but included in this Bill 45 are a great many other issues and items that require a very clear and thorough review of the implications of those provisions in this bill.

This bill is not simply an enabling piece of legislation that will allow Headingley to separate from the City of Winnipeg. The provisions of this bill and the broad outlines of this bill will have enormous

ramifications and implications for the city of Winnipeg, for rural municipalities around the city of Winnipeg, for the suburban areas that are currently incorporated in the city of Winnipeg, for the inner-city sections of the city of Winnipeg.

Our reading of the bill in its entirety is that it is a very major piece of legislation going far beyond what was anticipated would be the parameters of this act when it was first discussed, which would have been simply to enable the district of Headingley to separate from the City of Winnipeg.

The Cherniack report, which has been discussed in this House and raised as sort of a touchstone for some of the issues and concerns that have been brought forth by our side in this House, recommended that the Department of Urban Affairs, the Minister of Urban Affairs and ultimately through the Minister of Urban Affairs, the government of Manitoba should decide the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg, that it should be done not in isolation, which this bill appears to have been done.

This bill appears to have maybe started off as a simple enabling piece of legislation to allow Headingley to separate, but it has grown, Mr. Acting Speaker, much as Topsy did, without planning, without forethought and without thought, it would appear on the surface, for the consequences and the implications of all of the ramifications of this bill.

What needs to be looked at in addition to the fairly narrow details of the Headingley issue are other issues such as suburban sprawl, a lack of planning and co-ordination between the city, municipalities around the city and the province, the lack of green space planning and generally an overall lack of a co-ordinated plan. This issue is not one that has solely been brought to the attention of the government in regard to the City of Winnipeg and the Headingley separation. This whole issue of co-ordinated planning, of consultation, of thinking ahead is one that we on this side of the House have been concerned about with this government since it was first elected.

* (1510)

It does appear that many pieces of legislation, many initiatives, many announcements are made by this government to respond to a particular issue without having put that particular issue in a larger context. That certainly, Mr. Acting Speaker, appears to be the case with Bill 45.

We would not be legitimately standing on this side of the House and raising issues of concern about planning and green space and urban sprawl and other issues that have been discussed and will be discussed by us if this bill only specifically dealt with Headingley. We on this side of the House would in theory have no major concerns with a bill that simply responded to the requests of the residents of Headingley. I say in theory, because it would be inappropriate of me to categorically approve something that I do not see in front of me. I am dealing with a hypothetical issue.

However, we do have a bill in front of us that does provide this minister and this government with a broad range of powers, of authority, of ability to make sweeping changes to the entire fabric of the city of Winnipeg and the surrounding areas. This is causing us a great deal of concern, Mr. Acting Speaker. We need an overall plan. We need a discussion on the part of the city, on the part of rural municipalities, on the part of the Legislature, on the part of the rest of the province that we need a province-wide policy on planning.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): In a language we all understand, Becky, they have spoken with a ballot.

Ms. Barrett: The Minister of Natural Resources is saying that the people of Headingley have spoken as a result of the referendum. Yes, I agree. The people of Headingley have spoken by means of a referendum. This bill does not simply address the results of that referendum. That is one of our basic concerns about this bill. If it only addressed the concerns of the residents of Headingley we would probably not be standing here sharing the depth and level of concerns that we are showing on the part of Bill 45.

Other provinces, as has been stated in this House before, are a great deal ahead of us in the understanding and the implementation of urban planning, of rural planning, of planning on a province-wide basis. For example, almost 20 years ago in the province of British Columbia when the NDP government of Mr. Barrett was in power they implemented a very broad, far-reaching planning process that is still being followed today through a number of successive governments. In Quebec under the leadership of René Lévesque they instituted another broad, far-reaching provincial planning process which, again, under a range of political perspectives is still being followed.

In Alberta, which has never been considered by members on this side of the House as particularly advanced in its government, at least even Alberta has begun the planning process. In the context of discussing the airport issue in the province of Alberta, they are aware of the broader implications of decisions that are made that appear in this context to be understood by this government as being very narrow in basis.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are some very major concerns that we have with this bill, and I would like to outline them and discuss them briefly. The minister and the cabinet will have the power to establish areas for the city under The Municipal Act which will lead to them having control over many more boundaries than just the city. Again, in the absence of a plan, in the absence of an understanding on the part of all Winnipeggers, all members who live just outside the city of Winnipeg, and even all members' residents of the rest of the province of Manitoba will be rightly concerned over these provisions in this act. It is allowing this government, without further legislation, to make decisions on boundaries of cities and rural municipalities. It has enormous implications for the future of our city and our area surrounding the city of Winnipeg, implications that have clearly not been thought out by the government.

This act will enable the minister and the cabinet to transfer lands and property from Winnipeg to other municipalities, again, without having prepared the way by a full and thorough plan. The manner by which these transfers will be undertaken is the method of the referendum. Now this, as the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) pointed out, was the method whereby the residents of Headingley showed their support for seceding from the City of Winnipeg.

Under this act, there will be referenda in perpetuity for whatever cabinet or the Minister of Urban Affairs deems to be appropriate. Again, on first reading, there does not appear to be an overarching rationale for this—or there is an overarching rationale, it appears to me, and that rationale is that the Minister of Urban Affairs and the cabinet are given enormous power in making the determination as to which areas of the city or of the surrounding area outside the city would be allowed to hold a referendum.

The minister and the cabinet can also decide on the division of assets of any areas within or without the city. This includes, as in our current

deliberations, as the determination is being attempted to be made as to what constitutes the eastern boundary of the municipality of Headingley, great disparity between what the citizens of Headingley see as their eastern boundary and what the City of Winnipeg sees as their western boundary. It is based largely, Mr. Acting Speaker, on the division of assets portion of what is being contemplated here. Some very large assets are at stake here: Assiniboia Downs, John Blumberg Golf Course. A great deal of land is at stake here. This act does not give us a degree of comfort that the determination will be made in an appropriate manner following a well-thought-out, well-articulated, well-understood, overall plan.

This government, throughout its term in office, has shown in many ways and at many times that it does not have a well understood plan, it does not have a plan that deals with more than the specific. Again, in this case, with the municipality of Headingley, we would not have the problems we are having now if this bill actually dealt only with the municipality of Headingley, but it gives enormous delegated powers to the cabinet and minister of the day.

* (1520)

We are very concerned that plans and programs and elements that have such an enormous impact on the future of Winnipeggers and the future of people outside Winnipeg and on the future of all Manitobans is at the whim of an elected official and the whim of a government. There must be more security in place than this.

As well, the minister and cabinet can determine who can vote in a referendum. To my understanding and knowledge, there is virtually no other political entity where another political entity determines who are the eligible voters. In virtually every other sphere of government on the municipal level, whether it is a city or rural municipalities, school boards, local government districts, cities, provinces, federally, in all of those political jurisdictions the determination of which citizens are eligible to vote is not made by politicians, but made by nonelected civil servants and officials based on election acts, so it is very clear and it remains clear to all citizens who is eligible to vote, what the criteria are for being eligible to vote. The only changes that can take place to those criteria are changes that are debated and moved upon by the public through its elected representatives.

This bill will allow the cabinet to make that determination without public consultation, without any responsibility to go back to the people who elected them and say this is how we want to determine who is eligible to vote in this referendum. This element is to my way of thinking a very undemocratic element in this bill and needs to be very seriously looked at.

The right to vote, the right to know exactly who is eligible to vote, is one of the basic tenets of every democracy that we know of from the very beginning. From the very beginning of democracy, arguably in ancient Greece, the population of Greece all knew who was eligible to vote and who was not. Granted it was a very narrow definition of who were the citizens in that time. It was only men of a certain economic stature, but everyone knew that within that definition which had been determined by the duly elected representatives of the citizenry, upon consultation and as a result of election, they knew who was eligible to vote.

When we go to the polls, assuming we do go to the polls this fall in municipal elections in the city of Winnipeg and throughout the province under whatever boundaries are determined to be, we will know who is eligible to vote. The determination as to who is eligible to vote will have been made through a nonpartisan process. It will not be at the whim of whatever minister and cabinet happen to be in power at the time. It will not be as a result of lobbying on behalf of groups that want to get the ear of the cabinet to say, we want to be part of the group that determines whether our area or an area will be eligible to vote on a referendum under this act, an unbelievable amount of degree of opening for maneuvering and an ability of individuals and groups to lobby on something that has absolutely no place in any democracy of being open to influence in that context.

There is no other, as I stated earlier, political entity to my knowledge that says, we as a political group will determine case by case, time by time, issue by issue, without prior consultation and accountable to no one, who will be eligible to vote in this referendum. That is an unbelievable travesty of the democratic system that we have operated under for 3,000 years. I find it very difficult to believe that the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) and his cabinet would allow this kind of antidemocratic action to be part of this bill. I hope very seriously that the

minister rethinks many sections of this bill, but that one in particular.

Many questions on the whole process of the referendum—again I have spoken on who will be eligible to vote and that the fact that is determined on a case-by-case basis, very open to manipulation and antidemocratic influences. Another whole area on the referendum is, what, if any, are the spending limits? It does not appear that there are any spending limits that are put in place in this act. It does not appear that there are any determinations or definitions of what can be spent, the amount of money that can be spent, by whom will the expenditures be allowed, and for what will the expenditures be allowed.

Mr. Acting Speaker, throughout this country we are looking at reform of election finances, particularly on the federal level. We had a major reform of election finances on the provincial level in 1983, 1984 which has made the political process much more open, more fair, and more accessible to all members of the province in Manitoba.

The City of Winnipeg itself is looking at basic reforms to their election finances, given the fact that we will be looking at a very differently configured city council after the next election whenever it is held.

This act, which discusses another major voting proposal, addresses not one word to those issues of who will be allowed to vote, how much money will be allowed to be spent, by whom will this money be allowed to be spent, and on what will this money be allowed to be spent. Also, another element that is quite a substantial portion of The Elections Finances Act in the province of Manitoba, and it certainly plays an important part in the Lortie report which is looking at the federal Elections Finances Act, is the whole issue of disclosure.

Again, in a democracy it is important to know who is paying for what for whom. The reason it is important to know who is paying for what for whom is that we all know that financial support is one of the most important forms of support that can be given in any election campaign.

The federal Elections Finances Act has a very stringent third party disclosure that has currently not been proclaimed because of a court case brought by the province of Alberta. In the provincial Elections Finances Act we have a very strong disclosure provision. That is for the support and the protection of all of the citizens of the province of Manitoba. Knowledge is not only power,

knowledge is necessary for an informed electorate. This act, by not speaking about the whole issue of the referendum process, flies in the face of the most sacred of our democratic principles.

* (1530)

The whole concept of referendum itself is interesting in the context of what the Premier of the province is on record as stating regarding a referendum request in a different context, and that is in the context of a request that the provincial Progressive Conservative Party institute a referendum on the Constitution. The Premier says, "Well, we do not believe the referendums are a way to solve the political challenges that we have to make as government. We have to take into account both sides of every issue, and we have to make decisions that elected officials have to make. We were elected to make decisions. We the people of the Conservative Party were elected to make decisions and we will make those decisions, and that is why we will not support the referendum proposal"

I am not for a moment suggesting that the Premier was inaccurate in his comments about the referendum proposal as it related to the Constitution debate. My only purpose in bringing this forward is that he appears to say that referenda, on the one hand, as an assistance in the constitutional discussion is not appropriate, but a referendum on the future of an element of the City of Winnipeg is appropriate. I am only bringing that apparent discrepancy to the attention of honourable members and would hope that the Premier is able to clarify that in his statements about Bill 45.

However, I would like to reiterate the point we have made, that this bill is very lacking in its supports, in its safeguards for the democratic process under the whole issue of the referendum sections of this bill and hope that they are very seriously looked at and improved.

Another element that appears to have been lacking in this bill is any discussion or any provision for impact studies in the future, when an area of the city makes an application for a referendum on secession from the city.

An Honourable Member: You read your Leader's speech—almost word for word.

Ms. Barrett: I certainly share my Leader's concerns, but I would suggest that if the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) reads Hansard, he will find

out that our speeches are very different in content, although the ideas are very similar.

Again, we would not have the kind of concerns that we do have about Bill 45 if Bill 45 dealt with Headingley only. The issue of Headingley and whether it is to be in the City of Winnipeg or independent has been before the people of Winnipeg and Headingley since probably before Unicity. It is an issue that has had a long and public debate and discussion. That is why we have said that our concern with this bill is not the portions of it that deal specifically with Headingley, but the enormous discretionary powers that are given to this government by this bill in determining future of the City of Winnipeg.

We do not know, we have no way of knowing, and I do not believe the government has done any studies, and it certainly does not appear to be in this bill, that there is any place for an impact study of the effects of any future requests for secession. In particular, two areas of impact are most important for me. One is the whole issue of the taxation structure that would be heavily impacted by many of the potential areas of the city asking to be removed from the City of Winnipeg.

Since Unicity, City Councils have made decisions often mostly without apparent recourse to an overall plan, but these decisions have been made that have had an enormous impact on all of the citizens of Winnipeg, particularly in the area of taxation.

As has been earlier stated, earlier City Councils made the assumption that by the end of this decade there would be 750,000 people in the city of Winnipeg. We have all made decisions based on information that turned out later to be erroneous. There have been external factors that have assisted in making sure that Winnipeg most likely will not have 750,000 citizens by the end of the decade.

The impact of that decision has been enormous. It has meant that the number of serviced lots has increased to support a population estimated to be three-quarters of a million people by the end of this decade. Those serviced lots, many of which are standing idle today, have an enormous taxation impact on the city as a whole.

Those services that are provided for those lots, and in many cases at this point not needed and probably will not be needed in the future, have meant an enormous capital tax burden on the taxpayers of the city of Winnipeg.

That is another whole issue that has also been raised in this House about the responsibility of many of the members on the provincial government benches today who were city councillors when these major decisions on capital expenditures were undertaken, and we are now reaping the whirlwind of those ill-advised decisions but, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is not part of my major comments today.

We have now before us a clear picture of the impacts that earlier City Councils have made when they have not paid attention to the planning process, when all they have listened to are the needs and the desires of their developer friends.

We, all of us, whether we are residents in the inner city of the city of Winnipeg, the northern suburbs, the southern suburbs, the south-east, the south-west, Transcona, St. Vital, Tuxedo, St. Norbert, Kildonan, River East, are reaping the results of those decisions. Now, we have to live with that, but for goodness sake let us not do the same thing again.

Let us not put in place a bill that does not require the government to initiate and respond to impact studies when asked for a referendum on secession of a portion of this city. It is not fair to the people who are asking to be allowed to hold the referendum, and it is certainly not fair to the taxpayers of the city of Winnipeg or even to the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba, with almost two-thirds of the residents of Manitoba currently residing within the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg, and more and more coming into the sphere of influence of the city all the time.

Any decision that is made by the city or the province on behalf of the city of Winnipeg has an enormous impact provincially. We must make sure that any decision that is made on the future configurations of the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg take into account the impact on the taxation structure on the service delivery system for the entire city of Winnipeg and for the areas that are asking potentially to leave.

Another area that is of great deal of concern to me in the lack of a plan is, again, the whole concept of urban and suburban sprawl. I think that this has been discussed at great length in this House and elsewhere. The fact that as a city we have not grown in a rational, well-thought-out manner. We have grown, literally, at the behest of large property developers who can reap enormous tax write-offs

and profits out of developing land outside the inner city.

* (1540)

We on the opposition benches, many of whom represent inner city and older neighbourhoods, see every day the impact of the decisions that have been made over the last 20 years by city councillors when they have allowed the suburban sprawl to go almost without check, and the very narrow and petty and pitiful degree of support for inner city revitalization that earlier City Councils have given, is also well known.

So again, we urge very strongly that any changes in the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg under this bill or, hopefully, a very much changed Bill 45, will take into account not only the impacts on the taxation processes for the city of Winnipeg, but also the quality of life issues, the urban sprawl, the need to help revitalize our older neighbourhoods. Actually, many of the seats that are held currently by members of the government party are year by year becoming defined as older neighbourhoods, and their residents—I am sure they are well aware—are showing more and more concern for the rotting infrastructure that has been allowed to occur in the older portions of our city so that the developers can have their serviced lots, many of which are still vacant.

It is essential that we undertake a very serious look at this bill, and the implications that this bill will have on all members of the province of Manitoba. I would like, very briefly, to state another concern that I have that was expressed earlier by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and that is the extensive use in this bill of the word "may," as opposed to what we would prefer to see as an extensive if not exclusive use of the word "shall."

The word "may" is a very open-ended word that gives an enormous amount of discretionary power to, in this case, the minister and the cabinet.

According to my reading of the bill, this bill does not even require the minister to take any decision on a referendum to the Municipal Board. I cannot understand why a provincial government would take unto itself that degree of power that has such an impact on the people of Manitoba, that they "may" go to the Municipal Board. I cannot understand the rationale behind the use of "may" in that context rather than use of the word "shall."

I would also suggest to government members that the word "shall" implies accountability. It implies a process that is understood to be followed in all cases, that is not open to the whims and the vagaries of a particular Minister of Urban Affairs, a particular cabinet configuration or a particular government of whatever political stripe.

I will state categorically that we on this side of the House would be very comfortable if the word "may" in Bill 45 were changed to the word "shall." We accept as governments the responsibility to be accountable, and this bill with its reliance on the word "may," the enormous discretionary power that this bill allows the government, with a total lack of definition of issues such as the referendum, is an abrogation of the democratic process. The people of Manitoba and the people of Winnipeg should be very discouraged and very concerned about the calibre of bill that this government is bringing forward to deal with, ostensibly, a very narrow issue.

If this government is truly interested in responding to the wishes of the people, particularly in this case the people of Headingley, let it bring forward a bill that deals specifically with the issues and the concerns of the people of Headingley. Do not use this bill as an opportunity to make a mockery of the democratic process, to take away accountability, to take away clarity, to take away a sense of the individuals in this province and this city knowing who is responsible for what, knowing what the process is, knowing what the process is for determining who is eligible to vote in a referendum.

I am very uncomfortable, as I am sure many Winnipeggers and Manitobans would be, to know that only the Minister and the cabinet are the determiners of who shall vote in a referendum. That is not acceptable in a democracy. That is not acceptable in a democracy. That might very well have taken place in many other government contexts, but it is not acceptable in Manitoba in 1992, and I hope the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) takes this very flawed bill back and comes back with something that deals specifically with the residents of Headingley.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I am pleased to rise today to add my comments to those of others that have risen to speak on Bill 45, The City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act. This Bill 45 holds many things for us in the province of Manitoba and,

in particular, for the city of Winnipeg and its surrounding communities.

Bill 45, of course, is brought about and is necessary as a result of the Headingley referendum.

We all know and we remember very clearly the referendum, as we have seen it in the media over the past months leading up to the process of the vote to secede from the City of Winnipeg. Of course, that referendum was held on November 14 of last year.

We can all remember the images that were portrayed when that vote was being held, and, of course, the smiling minister who represented the area announcing the results of that vote, quite proud to be up on the stage announcing those results.

It was under much fanfare and much media hype that this came about, this issue to secede from the City of Winnipeg, the path that Headingley has chosen to pursue.

The minister, as I said, he was quite happy to announce those results to his constituents. It is always nice to be elected to public office, Mr. Acting Speaker, and to represent the wishes and needs of your constituents. It is nice to be a great guy in that process, and to be well thought of by your constituents, but there comes a time during your elective office that you have to stand up and make some hard decisions on what is right and wrong for us in our province, the offices to which we are elected.

I think this minister has unfortunately not fulfilled his obligation to the remainder of the citizens of Manitoba, he has shirked his responsibility and his duty. He wants to be a nice guy to his constituents, but I do not think that was the proper course of action for him to pursue.

The minister, of course, by his actions has created a long-term effect for us in the city of Winnipeg and in the province of Manitoba. It will have a great deal of impact upon us in the city of Winnipeg. I do not know if the minister fully realizes the consequences of his actions or his decisions, as he has gone with his constituents and pursued the course of secession from the City of Winnipeg for the residents of Headingley.

This Bill 45 gives the minister a great deal of discretionary powers. It gives him the discretion to determine the division of the assets of the breakaway communities, the municipalities which are going to be created as a result of this bill.

In a few moments I will get into explaining a situation that happened in my own community of Transcona a number of years back when we became part of Winnipeg. I will give some further explanation on what happened with some of those assets, and what we can see happening here for the community of Headingley.

The minister, in his power and his wisdom, has decided to go with his constituents' wishes and to pursue the course of secession for Headingley. I think he has an underlying urge to be the minister of rural affairs. I think he wants very seriously to have that opportunity to be the minister of rural affairs, and by having his community of Headingley become a rural municipality that would give him the opportunity.

Of course, that will mean some changes to his travel allowance. Being a rural member, he will have some increased travel allowance as the MLA for the area that, had he not been cabinet minister, he would be entitled to. That is probably one of the reasons why he wants to be a rural member. [interjection] As a rural member, he is entitled to a travel allowance for an area.

An Honourable Member: So are you.

Mr. Reid: No, I am not. No, I do not. No, I wish to correct the members opposite. When I asked to be reimbursed for legitimate expenses for travel within the province of Manitoba, I had to write a letter of explanation to the members' allowances— [interjection] To represent your constituency.

* (1550)

If you are a rural member—I say this tongue in cheek to the member opposite, of course. He takes this very seriously when I make these comments about the minister wishing to pursue a course of becoming the Minister of Rural Development. Maybe I should have smiled and given him some indication that this was done tongue in cheek, but—[interjection] No, I do not think many members opposite would have thought that this minister's real underlying reason for allowing Headingley to secede is so that he would get the rural travel allowance.

I think now that this has come forward, I hope that the minister will take the next opportunity to stand up and tell the citizens of Manitoba that that was his real reason for allowing Headingley to secede. Of course, maybe we should change the definition or the title of his office. Maybe he should become the

minister of separation. Maybe that would be the more appropriate title that we should have here, looking at what this bill, discretionary powers this bill gives to the minister. If that was the same policy that was applied to our country, then our country would be falling apart today. I do not think this is the right course of action that this minister should be pursuing for the city of Winnipeg. He may wish to represent the wishes of his constituents, but I do not think it is in the best interests of the city of Winnipeg.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

This bill gives the minister discretionary powers, many discretionary powers, not only to this minister who is currently responsible for the area, but to other ministers that will follow after this minister. The minister will then be able to determine the boundaries of the new rural municipality. I know that in second reading of this bill, we are not supposed to get into the content, but to talk about the policy that this bill brings to us here. I do not wish to in any way challenge the rules of the House or the past practices of the House in talking about this bill, but I do not think in my humble opinion that those discretionary powers should be given to the minister, whoever that minister may be who holds that office, to give that minister the discretionary powers to make the decisions that are outlined in this bill.

There has been much discussion about the issue of referendums for secession. I know that when my own community of Transcona became part of the greater Winnipeg, became a part of the Unicity, there were people on both sides of the argument. There were those that said that Transcona would not receive any benefits as a result of becoming part of the greater body; then there were others that thought that there were going to be benefits in becoming part of Winnipeg.

Hindsight is always 20/20 on this issue. I know there are many points, and even during the debate on the Headingley referendum the citizens of Transcona, I received a few phone calls, just talking about what Transcona used to be like before we became part of Unicity.

The residents in Transcona, of course, had some concerns about what was going to happen to our community when we became part of Unicity, what was going to happen to the services that we had in our community, whether we would still have that control of our community and the decisions that were going to be made that would be impacting

upon that community. There were those on either side of the argument. We have lost some services and some control or powers over decisions that are affecting our community, but then we have gained some areas of power and control as well.

There is a need, of course, as I indicated, for the minister to represent the wishes of his constituents, but there is also a responsibility to ensure that there are services and that he fulfills his responsibilities. If areas like Headingley separate from the larger body, if other areas separate, that could be St. Germaine, Transcona, St. Vital, St. Boniface or other areas that were reluctantly in some cases becoming part of the City of Winnipeg but have obviously reaped the benefits of becoming part of that larger body, these separate communities will then lose some control or some power over the decision-making process on how it will affect them in their borders, the surrounding communities that border on their particular community.

I talk particularly about my own community of Transcona once again, and I will explain. We have a situation in my community that has been impacting upon us where we have had little control because this area is outside of the area of authority of the City of Winnipeg. There is a particular scrap metal shredding company that is in the extreme southwest corner of the rural municipality of Springfield. That particular industry is located far away from the residential and the agricultural areas of Springfield and, of course, does not impact directly upon the people residing in Springfield. It provides a necessary source of revenue by tax base to the R.M. of Springfield, but at the same time this particular industry impacts upon my community of Transcona. It impacts upon my community in that it borders on Transcona, the portion of the community known as Lakeside Meadows. It borders on that portion.

During the processing of this scrap metal through the shredding process, the process involves the shredding of derelict or scrap vehicles, and in the process sometimes the occasional gas tank that is filled with gas sneaks into the process and it gets shredded and that—

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I, moments ago, was absent from the Chamber for a moment, and I understand that during my absence the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) in his remarks gave some indication that the reason

that I was advancing this bill was so I could obtain a rural minister's travel allowance. I will wait to peruse Hansard tomorrow. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, I want you to be advised I will be rising on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable minister.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I take it that was a point of order?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister has advised the House that indeed after perusing Hansard, he might have a matter of privilege, and seeing as how timing is very important on a matter of privilege, the honourable minister has just informed us that he would probably rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I might indicate that the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), just to inform the minister, to assure him, the member for Transcona indicated that he was making reference to this in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, so the member no longer need to peruse Hansard in order to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Reid: Just for the clarification of the minister opposite, while he was out of the Chamber, I did indeed make the comment, tongue in cheek, that this minister would probably bring this bill forward so that he could be considered for the minister for Rural Development for the travel allowance. Prior to this point in the Hansard, I am sure you will find that there are comments in there by myself indicating that this was done in a tongue-in-cheek fashion. I have no problem with the comments that I have made, because there are the comments that are recorded in Hansard to back that up.

* (1600)

I am sure that the minister opposite, when he peruses Hansard, will have that opportunity the same as other members of the House to see that. It was done in a tongue-in-cheek fashion as I indicated to the current Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach).

An Honourable Member: No one has the privilege to insult me, no one.

Mr. Reid: If the minister was insulted I apologize for that, because it was done in jest and there was no malice intended on my part towards any members opposite or any other members of this House.

An Honourable Member: Now I feel relieved.

Mr. Reid: I am glad you are relieved. To continue my remarks, and I am not finished by a long way, contrary to what the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) might like to think. I have many comments to add on this particular piece of legislation. Of course, the Minister of Labour, had he been concerned for my community, his colleagues might have risen at the time that this particular business was impacting upon my community some two years ago.

He would have risen in his place in this House and represented the needs of my constituents and had been concerned for their well-being, and of course he probably chose not to take that action at the time. I refer particularly to this business that is creating an impact, a real impact upon the community. As I indicated earlier, as these derelict and scrap vehicles are pushed through the scrap metal shredding process and the gas tanks explode, it impacts in a large way upon the surrounding community.

These explosions shake the foundations of the very homes, and in some cases I have noted people scurrying from their buildings thinking that their gas lines had exploded. These explosions happen in all hours of the day or night, Mr. Speaker.

I raise this as an example of what can take place when municipalities are not part of a larger body, and where communities do not have any impact on the decisions that are being made by their neighbouring communities.

This particular industry through the then minister responsible for the environment, Gerard Lecuyer had the Clean Environment Commission undertake hearings to determine whether or not this process was working properly under its licensing authority. Of course, a result of this process became the fact that the hours of operation were restricted for this particular business, because they could not ensure, in any definite fashion, that there would be no further explosions as a result of their shredding process. That added some comfort to the residents of the surrounding community.

But the point I want to illustrate here, Mr. Speaker, is that had this portion of the community been part

of the City of Winnipeg, we, then, through our by-laws would have been in a position to take some action to correct that situation without first having to go through the Clean Environment process. That would have given us further discretionary powers, and we could have reacted much quicker to the situation that we found ourselves in at that time.

The powers of the elected representatives also to influence their fellow councillors on decisions is a very important one. There is also the opportunity to regulate detrimental operations or plans as part of city councils. But the residents of the community of Headingley and others that wish to secede as a result of this Bill 45 may find themselves in the unfortunate position of no longer having any control or any discretionary powers to regulate or control any operations that may be detrimental to their residential areas. Headingley may find itself in that situation some time down the road, and I do not know if this minister has considered that.

I think the answer would have been more appropriate if this minister had taken his time to come forward with the proper legislation that would have allowed the residents of the community of Headingley to secede from the City of Winnipeg on a separate piece of legislation, instead of making it an omnibus type of bill.

I do not know if the minister has considered the consequences of this. If the communities now see that they have a free and open opportunity to come forward and to request secession from the City of Winnipeg, will this minister and his government then go forward to assist these communities to secede? Is that the underlying purpose or the underlying reason of this bill? I hope the minister has considered all of the ramifications that are part of this process.

In this bill there are also many discretionary items, and one of the things that jumps out at me from the different pages of this bill is the discretionary use of the word "may."

I know my colleagues before me have indicated time and again, "may" is a very discretionary word that leaves a tremendous amount of power in the minister's hands to decide who and who will not be part of the City of Winnipeg, and gives him that sole discretionary power without it having to come before the Legislature to have a debate on the wishes of those residents, whatever portion of the city of Winnipeg that may be part of.

The discretionary powers also give the minister the power to determine, for the purposes of the referendum, who is qualified to be an elector. I am not sure what gives the minister the right to determine who is qualified to be an elector. I thought that, through the democratic process, those who are resident in the province of Manitoba or the city of Winnipeg are qualified to be electors if they meet all of the predetermined and established criteria. There are no predetermined and established criteria in this act. The minister has, of course, given himself that discretionary power to determine who is qualified. It does not give me a great deal of comfort to know that the minister has that power.

In the procedures of the referendum as they are laid out in this bill, Mr. Speaker, the minister also has the power to fix the time, the date and the place of the referendum. Now, our election process in this province, the democratic process in Manitoba, means that there are others other than the government or the ministers involved who will make those independent decisions. Of course, any member of this Chamber could be viewed as not being independent. I think that by the minister having this power to affix, all of the procedures for the referendum are something that should be outside of his powers of discretion.

The minister also has the power of preparing and revising a list of electors, something that is not normally part of the minister's opportunities or powers. He also has the power to determine the holding of the vote or the returning officer to report back to him.

We saw the glee in his face when he stood up on the podium and announced the result of the Headingley referendum. We know that he wanted to represent the wishes of his constituents, but this in my opinion is not the proper way to address those concerns.

I will go back to my community for a few moments and talk about the residents in Transcona and the decisions which were made when we became part of Unicity. Just a short time before becoming part of the City of Winnipeg, we had become a city unto ourselves, and of course there were some unhappy residents and taxpayers at that time. I can remember clearly in my youth the concerns of my parents and my neighbours when the residents found out that their taxes would be increasing when

we became a city, as we had formerly been a town and our tax base had been somewhat lower.

A short time later, we found ourselves to become a part of the City of Winnipeg, and that was more cause for concern for some residents, because we were afraid at that time that we were going to lose the opportunity for some of our services and we were going to lose control of the decision-making process and we would lose control of the equipment that was utilized to provide the services for our community. By that, Mr. Speaker, I refer specifically to the street repair, street cleaning equipment, that plays a large part, a very important part of the daily operations of any community of our city or our province.

* (1610)

We saw, in becoming part of Unicity, that a large portion of our very modern fleet of equipment was then relocated to other areas of the city of Winnipeg. Even to this day I get calls in my constituency office from constituents complaining about the degradation of the services and the reduction of services. A lot of the senior members of the community remember back to the time when they could have picked up their phones and called the local community councillor or mayor, who was most likely a neighbour, and made requests of the councillor or mayor to have some particular service provided by the town or the city at that time.

That opportunity is still there to some degree to call our city councillor, and our city councillor has been very responsive to the needs. I know that because of the calls that I have coming to my constituency office that we then relay to the city councillor. The city councillor has been very helpful in meeting the needs, but the process of repairs and equipment control and decision making has been removed from the community itself.

So there are pros and cons to the decisions that this bill will allow communities to secede from the city. It depends on what side of the argument you are on and how it is going to impact you in your personal life. This bill, unfortunately, I believe, goes far beyond what is necessary to ensure the residents of Headingley the opportunity to secede if that is their wish, and they have expressed that wish to secede from the City of Winnipeg.

Now I know, in listening to and reading the various media reports, and listening to some of the debate of others in this Chamber about the wishes of the residents of Headingley, there is obviously an

underlying need for those residents to secede. They have expressed that concern, and I believe it is based around the issue of services that they feel should have been provided to them in accordance with the tax base or the taxes that they have been charged to be residents of Headingley and part of the City of Winnipeg.

Now I am sure the minister, who is a resident and whose constituents make up Headingley, and having been a part of City Council in past years and I believe deputy mayor at that time, would have been in a position to influence in some way the decisions of City Council to provide the necessary services for the residents of Headingley, so that they would not have had to take this unnecessary and possibly unfortunate step of seceding from the City of Winnipeg.

I am sure the minister knows full well that when he provides funding support to the City of Winnipeg, and as he has just done recently with his past commitment to the City of Winnipeg, he has attached certain strings to the development of certain portions of the city of Winnipeg. I refer specifically to the debate that went on in this city about the paving of Wilkes Avenue. The minister, having made those decisions to attach those strings to the funding grant that was given to the City of Winnipeg, I am sure that he could have given the—

An Honourable Member: Ernst Boulevard.

Mr. Reid: Yes, Ernst Boulevard. That is an appropriate name. We should rename that, Wilkes to Ernst Boulevard—would be given the opportunity to influence some way the decisions that are made by City Council and possibly he could have attached some strings to that funding grant to the City of Winnipeg and said, okay, if you are going to continue to collect the taxes on a comparable level from the residents of Headingley, as compared to the remainder of the city of Winnipeg, then you must put in place some plan that would give them the opportunity to receive the same services as the remainder of the residents of the city of Winnipeg.

If the residents felt that they were not being provided those opportunities, then I am sure the minister could have impressed upon the City of Winnipeg that in their own best interests, as well as for the best interests of the residents of Headingley, that the City of Winnipeg could have provided those services and should have provided those services. If, as the member opposite indicates, the City of Winnipeg would not listen, then that is why I indicate

that as the minister had done with the paving of Wilkes, and where he attached some strings to the grant transfer, he could have attached similar strings saying that the City of Winnipeg must, in some fashion, meet the needs of the residents of Headingley.

I hope that the minister had taken that opportunity to impress upon the councillors and the mayor of the City of Winnipeg that this course of action was going to happen and that he did not just fall back and let the council make that decision on their own. Of course, we see in the continuing discussion on the community of Headingley, the debate is now centering around the division of assets and the control of property for development, the control of business opportunities, either for the city of Winnipeg or the community of Headingley. Of course, we talk specifically about the Blumberg Golf Course and the Assiniboia Downs and, of course, we also have the other opportunities that take place in the summertime and those decisions have not been made yet. It is going to be interesting to see how the minister, what side he comes down on when it comes to make those decisions on whether Blumberg Golf Course or Assiniboia Downs remain as part of the City of Winnipeg or they become part of the rural municipality of Headingley.

We will watch with great anticipation as the minister makes those decisions and comes forward with his position on those particular issues. Of course, the residents of Headingley want very much to have that remain part of their community. It will provide them with the necessary tax revenue that is so important to all of our communities so that we continue our services, provide our services, to our residents.

I believe that there are a lot of issues that should have been addressed before this legislation was brought forward. I do not believe, in my own mind, that the minister or the government did enough research before bringing forward this legislation to determine all of the ramifications that secession from the City of Winnipeg would hold for the residents of Headingley and other areas that may wish to secede in the future.

The minister has given himself a lot of discretionary powers, and it will be interesting to see what position he takes, whether he will support the City of Winnipeg's position or his own constituents in Headingley.

There are long-term effects that will come about as a result of this bill, and they will affect the future of the city of Winnipeg. The other areas that have been talked about by other members of this House, areas like St. Germain and St. Norbert and Transcona and St. Vital and St. Boniface, that may wish and may have the opportunity to take advantage of this bill will, I believe, and could lead to the disintegration of the City of Winnipeg as we know it now.

They want to carve up the City of Winnipeg. I do not believe that is the right course of action. There is no doubt, in my mind, some serious flaws in how the City of Winnipeg operates, but I do not believe that by allowing the individual communities to secede is the best way to address those serious problems or concerns. I believe that we have to sit down. We have to talk rationally about the problems, to talk about having compromise solutions to them so that all sides can be part of maybe what could be determined as a win-win process.

I do not believe this bill will allow that process to take place because it now becomes too easy for St. Germain or St. Norbert, Transcona, St. Vital, others to secede. I think we have to continue to look at very seriously why this minister is wishing to give the various portions of our city of Winnipeg and surrounding communities the opportunity to secede.

There are many concerns that can take place, and I talked about how the various bordering communities can impact upon one another. We saw how on the west side of the city of Winnipeg, when there was a particular farm operation that was impacting on the surrounding community, and since it was part of the city at that time, how the city could have some role in the decision-making part of the process.

I think that if Headingley and other communities are allowed to secede, they will then effectively remove themselves from any debate and any input on the decisions on their neighbouring communities. That would put them in the unfortunate position, I believe, and I think that they should seriously reconsider the role that they play in the city of Winnipeg. I hope that the other communities themselves are not forced into a position where they too will have to decide and choose whether they wish to remain a portion of the City of Winnipeg or secede from the City of Winnipeg.

I believe there are many advantages to being part of Winnipeg. I believe that we can address any concerns, any problems that we have by working within the system instead of trying to move outside of the process. United we stand.

So I hope this minister will reconsider his Bill 45 and withdraw it from debate, Mr. Speaker, and come back with an appropriate piece of legislation that will respect the wishes and the needs of his constituents in Headingley but at the same time will ensure that the other communities will remain a part of the City of Winnipeg and that the minister will not be given the free hand, the free discretionary powers, to have so much control over the lives of by far the majority of the population of the province of Manitoba.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to add my comments on Bill 45 and have the opportunity, I am sure, to speak on other bills.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I note the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) was yelling "question" from his seat and, indeed, there is a question that we have, and the question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) as to why he—[interjection] No, no, we are not allowed to state that, Mr. Speaker, but why is he bringing in Bill 45?

Why is he bringing in a bill that goes far beyond its stated purpose? Why is he bringing in a bill that is not simply to deal with the recently approved secession by the soon-to-be community of Headingley from the City of Winnipeg? Why is he bringing in a bill that amasses powers in the hands of the minister that will allow that minister to not enhance the democratic process, but in many ways to subvert the democratic process? Why does this minister wish to amass more power in his hands in this Legislature?

Well, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says it is the old power rip. Indeed, he should be saying that, Mr. Speaker, not only because it is true, but because some of us are wondering as to the true intentions of the Minister of Urban Affairs, who now is soon going to be an urban/rural MLA, indeed, an urban/rural MLA in the sense that he represents the people of Headingley.

Will he be seeking soon the Minister of Natural Resources or, God knows, the Minister of Agriculture or Rural Development, perhaps? I think he is probably the one minister who could compete with the current Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) in terms of political patronage. Indeed,

Mr. Speaker, what is the agenda of the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst)?

Well, some members take offense to that comment, but the ironic thing is, I think both the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) and the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) would take that as a compliment. The Minister of Rural Development most definitely would; he is about the only person who took the release of a memo indicating that he is not to be allowed to hire in his new department as a compliment, an indication of the attitudes of the members opposite. Indeed, that is the question.

Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says that he has come to listen, and I will give him credit, at least he is listening. We know that for sure. We are not sure if the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) is listening. I cannot embellish upon that, but let us put it this way, Mr. Speaker, it is very unlikely the Minister of Urban Affairs is listening to these comments right now, and that is unfortunate. That is unfortunate.

On the one hand, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) wants to ram this bill through, to push it through and to obtain unprecedented powers for the Minister of Urban Affairs. That is indeed what he wants to do. [interjection] Well, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says, that we have found them out.

Indeed, if the minister is going to seek passage of this bill, Mr. Speaker, the least he can do is listen to the many concerns that have been expressed today and will be expressed in the future when we debate this bill.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): My colleague, he wants to know what are you going to do for St. Boniface.

Mr. Ashton: The Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) says that his colleague the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), the Liberal member, wants to know what this is going to do for St. Boniface.

We have concerns, Mr. Speaker, that the actions of this government vis-a-vis the city of Winnipeg will impact negatively on every citizen of the city of Winnipeg including the residents of St. Boniface. Indeed, I as a northern member have concerns about this government and its agenda and, particularly, the agenda of the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst), or the minister for

Charleswood, I am not sure. At times, minister responsible for Headingly seems to be the cause of that minister's life. We have concerns because, if this government is allowed to subvert the Unicity, the City of Winnipeg, it will impact negatively on all residents in the city of Winnipeg and all Manitobans.

There may be a small group that will benefit. Indeed, Conservatives are usually very good at finding small groups of people that can benefit from their activities. In fact, this minister is notorious for finding small groups of people that can benefit from activities or at least attempting to benefit them, as we saw with the Rotary place. The minister, shall we say, had his fingers caught in the cookie jar, Mr. Speaker, and indeed that project did not continue. I am not suggesting any impropriety on behalf of the minister in a legal sense. I am just saying that the minister's type of politics is very well known to members of this Legislature. That is the concern we have about the attitude of members opposite.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, how many members opposite truly support the Unicity concept. A member from his seat only a minute ago talked about going back to the good old days. Indeed, a good expression of the Conservative philosophy, the good old days. The good old days what? Before Unicity when we had a patchwork quilt of services?

An Honourable Member: R.B. Bennett.

Mr. Ashton: Or indeed, R.B. Bennett. Perhaps they want to go back to the Depression. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in many ways they are doing their best to send us back to the depression days, certainly through their economic policies. I am talking here about Unicity. What do they mean by the good old days? Do they want a patchwork quilt of services in the city, the kind of situation that existed prior to Unicity with a patchwork quilt, with duplication of services, with great differentials in terms of local taxes between the various different cities that made up the so-called metropolitan area of Winnipeg before?

I wonder indeed where the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) stands on the question of the city of Winnipeg. [interjection] He says something about sticking me out the window with the rest of the NDP. Perhaps he wants to stick Unicity out the window, Mr. Speaker, or perhaps I misunderstand his comment. [interjection] Well, a former city councillor indeed. It is interesting when one probes into this issue that one sees a different agenda. One sees

the member who has not yet spoken on this bill—[interjection] The former member of the gang—

* (1630)

An Honourable Member: Darn rights.

Mr. Ashton: Darn rights, he says, sitting there, not participating in the debate, and saying that indeed he is against the Unicity concept. I mean what would he like us to do? When Tory members thought about going back to the good old days, how many different jurisdictions should we establish now in the city of Winnipeg? Should we go back to the previous structure? Should we do it block by block, house by house maybe? I mean, what level do they want to atomize the City of Winnipeg, if it is integrated? What do they want to do? Do they want to divide it up on constituency boundaries, and go back to the Middle Ages perhaps, the rotten boroughs? How far do they want to go back? Why do they want to break up the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Tammany Hall.

Mr. Ashton: Tammany Hall indeed. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) says, Tammany Hall. Is it because it is a lot easier to manipulate the political process when you have a smaller entity? It is indeed.

Would it have been easier for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) as the member of the gang to dole out the goodies in the tradition of the Tammany Hall days? I know the member for St. Norbert is thinking very gleefully of that prospect. Tammany Hall, the boroughs, we could perhaps have established the boroughs system. Perhaps the member for St. Norbert wants us to model Winnipeg on New York at the turn of the century, Tammany Hall politics, when indeed city councillors were able to dole out the jobs and dole out the social assistance and dole out the contracts. Is that their model of a city?

Mr. Enns: It is called muscle politics.

Mr. Ashton: It is called muscle politics, says the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). There are other names for it. Indeed, if one wants to look at what happened in New York, there was a fine line there between those who were borough captains and those who were dons in the Mafia at the turn of the 20th Century. Both had similar economic bases and activities, and there were crossovers. Is that

the kind of system they want to see established in Manitoba here in the city of Winnipeg?

I ask you this question, Mr. Speaker, is that the vision of the Conservative Party? Is that their vision of urban reform, back to the future, the good old days, the days when pork barrel was king? Well, I suspect that they do more than jest; I suspect that indeed may be the dream of many a member opposite.

What was the basis of the gang at City Council? If they could not have the boroughs in a direct form, they created it in an indirect way. The gang divided up the spoils, all these so-called independents. I look around this Chamber. It is amazing how a new crop of so-called independents every number of years seems to be harvested into Conservative and the occasional Liberal MLA.

This new crop over there, the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), a very independent nonpartisan individual when he was on City Council, who miraculously is elected to this Chamber and all of a sudden appears as a Conservative. Surprise, surprise, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst). We remember the Minister of Urban Affairs as deputy mayor in the previous reincarnation of the gang, well, head of the gang indeed. There have been so many sequels of the gang, it is hard to keep up with what they call themselves. I remember when they used to be called ICEC. Then, they were totally independent, but they sat around in a caucus and they made decisions and that was it—very independent—but the Minister of Urban Affairs.

The Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), indeed, another one of those independents who all of a sudden, miraculously—

An Honourable Member: The Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Mr. Ashton: The Premier, indeed, who in 1979, Mr. Speaker, after achieving the dream of his life in getting approved garbage pickup, a six-day cycle, went on to greater things by becoming Premier and I understand still says that his greatest achievement was the six-day garbage cycle. Indeed, members, that may be the one point we agree with the Premier on. After seeing the Premier in this Chamber for the last number of years, indeed, he probably accomplished a lot more in City Council for garbage collection than he has done for the province of Manitoba.

But the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is these so-called independents, who go through this metamorphosis, and all of a sudden, surprise, surprise, appear in this Chamber as Conservative MLAs, and indeed, previously as Liberal MLAs. John Angus, a former member of this House, who was once again, surprise, surprise, in this particular case, a Liberal. Well, indeed, Manitoba has its own tradition.

It has its own tradition. We did not perhaps have the Tammany Hall politics of New York, but ever since the days of the 1919 General Strike in this province, City Hall politics has been dominated by progressive forces on the one hand, but has been controlled by the so-called independents. Those favourites of developers and the business community, who seemingly can go from obscurity, obtain significant amounts of campaign funds, all of a sudden become those, and I say in quotation marks, "independent councillors," and then miraculously go through a conversion and become Conservative members of the Legislature, and indeed, MLAs and ministers, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the question: At what point are we to stop believing that these individuals are not independents? I think, Mr. Speaker, it is high time, in this province and in the city of Winnipeg in particular, that people recognized what was happening. I think it is indicative—the last results in the election in the city of Winnipeg—I think one of the reasons why the WIN coalition was able to be successful in a number of seats was because they came out and they said what everyone had suspected and what most observers had been observing for many years, and that is that there was a gang dominating City Council, that they were political, that they were using their positions of power in terms of patronage and pork barrelling in the city.

They said, Mr. Speaker, that that was unacceptable and they wished to bring in a new atmosphere of reform into the City Hall. Indeed, I do give them credit. I believe they have changed the sense of urban politics. Indeed, there are still those powerful figures, the leftover of the gang, gang part II or III, the sequel, whatever term you want to apply to it. I know some councillors have had the guts to come out and actually admit that they were part of the gang. I know the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) would have no qualms about being identified as being a member of the gang.

[interjection] He says, no qualms, Mr. Speaker, and I am not trying to put words in his mouth. I wish to be fair to him.

There are indeed members of the gang who have denied it, have continued to deny it. There have been people in this House who appear as Conservative MLAs and still talk about the difference in the City Council, the independent councillors, Mr. Speaker. It is time we came down to reality in this province and recognized what has happened—a small group of individuals who have an inordinate amount of influence over the functioning of this city. I say, I look forward, as someone who is not a resident of the city of Winnipeg, who is resident of the third largest city in this province, but as someone who is vitally concerned about the future of this city, I say to the people of Winnipeg that I believe for them one of the key challenges that they are going to face is going to be in the next civic elections.

They have a real opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to launch a new chapter in the evolution of this city with true urban reform. They will only do that, to my mind, and I am not trying to interfere in the electoral politics of the City of Winnipeg, but I will say they only will succeed in that if they recognize who has been controlling what and for whom the last 50, 60, 70 years in this city and categorically reject that cynical, manipulative approach to politics and elect people who are going to speak on behalf of people and not developers and vested business interests.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I raised this at the beginning of my speech because indeed the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) said, question. Well, I have a number of other questions as well, not just the general one as to why this minister has brought in this particular bill.

* (1640)

I want to ask in this Chamber why this minister, if he was so concerned about the situation in Headingley, could not have brought in a bill that dealt specifically with Headingley, Mr. Speaker. To the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), who I assume has read this bill, well, I ask him because, as the—and I am not referring specifically to the absence of any members, but the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) is the only gang member in the Chamber right now—or the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld), who I know has probably gone through this bill in great detail, who is very concerned, I am sure, about every aspect of this

unprecedented power that is being given to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), I ask the members of this Chamber, why this bill? Why have we dealt with a whole series of issues that go far beyond the situation at Headingley? We are all aware of what has happened in Headingley, Mr. Speaker, the referendum that took place, the fact that Headingley residents have opted overwhelmingly for separation from the City of Winnipeg. We are also aware of the difficult questions that have arisen about what jurisdiction there should be for the new entity of Headingley. I am sure the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) is concerned about what will happen to, for example, Assiniboia Downs and a number of other properties which are currently part of the City of Winnipeg and could be impacted. This dispute between the City of Winnipeg and the dispute between the to-be-established R.M. of Headingley, the bottom line is—[interjection] the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) says, that is why we have a Municipal Board. Who appoints the Municipal Board?

An Honourable Member: Moi.

Mr. Ashton: Moi, says the member—me. I do not believe it is strictly the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Indeed, he probably has some significant influence over it, because the Municipal Board is appointed by the government, the government of the day. What is going to happen now is the Municipal Board is going to make recommendations to whom, Mr. Speaker? To the Minister of Urban Affairs?

An Honourable Member: Is that the guy who gave us The Pines?

Mr. Ashton: Indeed, the minister gave us Rotary Pines, the minister who attempted to give us Wilkes Boulevard. The minister just happens to have a certain stake in terms of Headingley. Now the group that has been appointed by the minister is going to recommend to the minister, who just happens to represent that area in the Chamber, and we are going to expect that an objective decision is going to be made by the minister. Mr. Speaker, does anyone believe that? Did the minister make an objective decision when he attempted to proceed with Rotary Pines? Did he make an objective decision?

Mr. Enns: Yes.

Mr. Ashton: The Minister of Natural Resources says, yes, he made an objective decision. If the criteria included satisfying some of the needs of some of his friends in the contracting community, indeed, Mr. Speaker, maybe there are some elements of truth in that.

When we saw the minister with some of the gang members on the City Council attempting to get roads constructed in a certain area of the city, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), was he indeed making an objective decision? I would say that it does not take too much to figure out that the Minister of Urban Affairs has shown through his actions that he is willing to do anything possible as a minister of the Crown to do what he feels should be done to benefit his contacts and to benefit his constituency.

You know, he is not minister responsible for Charleswood or minister responsible for contractors. He is the minister responsible for Urban Affairs. He is responsible for every citizen of this province. It is time he realized that. He represents the interests of all citizens of this province, even someone such as myself from a northern riding, even someone who lives in the city of Thompson. He is responsible to ensure that my best interests and the best interests of my constituents are represented in this Chamber.

I ask you, given the track record of this minister, first of all, Mr. Speaker, is there any surprise in the fact that he is attempting to obtain this power for himself, this unprecedented power giving him the final authority to determine final division of assets for breakaway R.M.s, with only the recommendation of the Municipal Board and the minister? Is it any surprise? Second of all, I ask you, is that proper public policy? Is it acceptable in this province in the 1990s that a minister should use his position as a minister of the Crown to deal only with certain very narrow parochial interests? Is that acceptable?

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): Oh, come on.

Mr. Ashton: Oh, come on, says the member for Portage. I look to him as someone who represents the city of Portage, the fourth largest city in the province. [interjection] Indeed, he said, should he represent the interests of Portage? We would certainly hope he would, Mr. Speaker. That is his role. When he was a minister of the Crown and was minister responsible for Environment or minister responsible for Labour, did the member for Portage act on behalf of all citizens of the province or just the

citizens of Portage? Did he? That is something that indeed he may wish to bring to members of this House.

Perhaps I underestimate the member in terms of his activities when in cabinet, but I do not recall anyone accusing the member for Portage of having the same type of approach in terms of matters with the Minister of Urban Affairs. We were critical in other areas. Indeed, we were critical in other areas, but no one ever got up and said that the member for Portage was jokingly handing out pink slips or saying the hole in the ozone layer was not big enough, because it was not good for Portage. We said that what the minister did was criticize the bill on its own merits or lack thereof.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I remember very well the day in which we found out about the minister's sense of humour in handing out pink slips to his employees. That is something the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) has patented in this House. You know, we have sort of a new Peter Principle here. We have seen it in terms of the way the Premier makes appointments to cabinet. It is always subject of speculation.

An Honourable Member: Barb Biggar runs the whole government.

Mr. Ashton: Well, there is some suggestion that Barb Biggar runs the entire government, and indeed I am wondering if the former Minister of Education—

An Honourable Member: She hands out a probation letter, you should have had her—

Mr. Ashton: I know she had handed out the probation letter, but I suspect that came right from the Premier himself, because the Premier has a strange sense in this House, standing with the Minister of Urban Affairs. One, Mr. Speaker, can bring in bills like this which are supported apparently by all members of the cabinet. One can shamelessly interfere on behalf of small select groups. One can throw away one's oath as a minister of the Crown. What happens? Does one get demoted by the Premier? No, one gets a pat on the back.

The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) has not been demoted. He is still Minister of Urban Affairs. In most governments, someone who had gone through the fiasco of Rotary Pines would probably be a minister without portfolio responsible for international liaison with some distant land, would probably not be seen very much in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Urban Affairs is still the Minister of Urban Affairs, and now he is bringing in bills like Bill 45. He is enhancing his power, as indeed with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), who went from Minister of Education to Minister of Rural Development, continued to have authority to hire questioned. [interjection]

Indeed, it is relevant. If the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) understood the kind of powers that were part of Bill 45, he would be standing up himself to criticize this government as he has supposedly went to do on other issues, and he would be demanding that the minister withdraw this bill, because his constituents of St. Norbert are going to suffer. They are going to suffer because of the powers of this minister that he apparently, like a trained seal, is supporting, Mr. Speaker, because he has not spoken once on this issue, not once.

I ask the other urban members—I look to the other urban members and particularly the backbenchers, because you know, Mr. Speaker, when you are in the back bench on a government, indeed I have been in the back bench as part of a government, you have a little bit more luxury perhaps than do other members on the government side to criticize.

I look to the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld). Actually the member for Rossmere never was wont to criticize the government even when he was a minister. I look to him, whether he really believes that this bill is in the best interest of his constituents in Rossmere. I look to the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). I look to other members in this House, in terms of Seine River or Sturgeon Creek, other members. Is this the kind of bill that they can go to their constituents and say is in their best interest? Are they going to participate?

* (1650)

Are they going to be accomplices, in terms of the carving up of the City of Winnipeg that we will see the kind of assets that have been developed by the city over the years by all taxpayers of the city of Winnipeg chopped out of the City of Winnipeg for a political expediency? Are they going to support that? Where do they stand in terms of the boundary issue? Do they believe that Assiniboia Downs should be carved out of the City of Winnipeg and given to Headingley? What side are they on? [interjection]

The member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) says he is on the side of the Headingley R.M., but what about the urban members? Do they think that

is in the best interest? How about the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), who I know is a student in his own way of government ethics, and I respect him for that. He has never been one to back away from stating his view, has a very philosophical approach to this Legislature. [interjection]

Indeed he had some very philosophical views on Rotary Pines. He was the only minister—and I thank members opposite for reminding me of that—who came out publicly and said that the Minister of Urban Affairs was wrong in what he was doing and the impact he was having on the city of Winnipeg and the airport access.

I look to the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Would he now like to, on this bill, on Bill 45, stand in his place since he was so vocal at the beginning of my remarks about this bill—

An Honourable Member: How many times did he go to the woodshed?

Mr. Ashton: Indeed, and there are some references to him having gone to the woodshed, Mr. Speaker. If I was to take that a little bit further, he has been there before and he is still here, and he can still hold his head high because he was one Conservative member that was right on Rotary Pines.

I look to the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Will he now continue with that ethical sense he had, stand in his place and say that the kind of powers the Minister of Urban Affairs is seeking is wrong, that the way in which the Minister of Urban Affairs is dealing with a very sensitive question in terms of the concerns of Headingley residents but also in terms of the residents of the city of Winnipeg, that once again the Minister of Urban Affairs is wrong? I look to the courage of the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Will he stand in his place on this debate and take a stand for the citizens of this province? We shall see. [interjection] Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways and Transportation says he always stands in his place. Indeed we are looking forward to his comments in this debate.

Indeed when it came to Rotary Pines, he was a good minister, because he recognized that his role as a minister was to represent the people of this province, his role as a minister of the Crown was to speak out on behalf of the people of this province, the mandate he received as Minister of Highways

and Transportation. His role was not to say, me too, to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) with the Minister of Urban Affairs' attempt to use Rotary Pines to benefit a certain few.

He was never a part of any gang, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Highways and Transportation would never want to call himself a member of a gang of anything. That is not his approach, unlike the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). In fact, I wonder if he will educate the member for St. Norbert on his own responsibilities, the member for St. Norbert's responsibilities to members of this Assembly and to the citizens of this province, because that is what is at stake.

Bill 45 is a bill that essentially has few, if any, redeeming values whatsoever. It is a bill that is rotten in principle. It is a bill that is unprecedented in terms of the powers we are attempting to see given to an individual here who has shown that when he gets the opportunity to use the power of office, he uses it in ways in which we on this side consider to be inappropriate—apparently not considered inappropriate by members of the government.

Have members of the government gone through the other aspects of this bill in terms of the power to regulate the provision of services to the new R.M. by the City of Winnipeg? How about the taxpayers of the city of Winnipeg? How are they protected when it comes to that question? I ask another question to members opposite and ask them to answer it. In fact, there is no specificity in this bill in terms of Headingley. There is nothing in this bill that deals with other issues, nothing that deals with the real issues of urban reform that are required by this minister.

Let us look at what this government has done. The gang members aided and abetted by the members of the Legislature and the Conservative and Liberals Parties in the last two decades have led to the city of Winnipeg, which has had slow but steady population growth. Slow is probably the right word to emphasize. We have had urban sprawl develop in the city of Winnipeg. What has the result of that been, Mr. Speaker? Some developers have benefited, but what has happened to the taxpayers of the city of Winnipeg? They have footed the bill for the kind of expanded services that have been required. We have seen the inner core of the city of Winnipeg rot. We have seen it rot while urban sprawl has benefited the few again.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): What did the NDP do?

Mr. Ashton: The member for St. Norbert: What did the NDP do? Has the member for St. Norbert ever heard of the Core Area Agreement which the NDP spearheaded, Mr. Speaker, unlike with this government where we see a lukewarm attempt at best on behalf of this government? We have seen a lukewarm attempt by this minister to try and get any sort of funding. Go downtown to the core area of Winnipeg, and you will see the results of what the previous NDP government was doing in terms of the core area, I might say with often very little assistance by the city which, despite being a tripartite signatory to the Core Area Agreement, continue with its policies of urban sprawl that have led in this city to the point where we have a decayed inner city and yet we have suburbs all around the ring of the Perimeter Highway. We as a city have one of the largest surface areas of any municipality in this country, and we have the city which has led to that kind of sprawl with the kind of developments that have taken place that have not benefited the taxpayers of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, look at the other issues that are involved here. This is, I think, one of the concerns that also has to be expressed about Bill 45.

If we can now let a minister, such as the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), make this type of decision with regard to Headingley or other areas, what will be next? What other parts of Winnipeg will secede? Will it be done on a constituency basis? Will work start on the edge and work our way in? How will it be done? How is this government going to continue down this path? Will there be other areas?

We look at other areas of this city, St. Norbert, perhaps. Will St. Norbert be the next to go? Will it be the next to go? At what point is this government going to draw the line? I ask it even further, and I look at this as a northern member.

What next in terms of other municipalities? Are we now going to allow and have this government encourage parts of rural municipalities to leave the other parts? Are we going to ask that cities be divided up? Thompson has six different neighbourhoods. Are they going to suggest there be six new political entities in Thompson?

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I say this not facetiously, because if you would allow the principle that you will listen to a group of people in the context of

separation where they can take off a certain part of the land area of a municipality, you will set up a situation where certain residents may realize that they live in proximity to the greatest commercial tax base. They may realize that if they split off they may be able to stick a lot of the other costs on the remaining part of the R.M. and at the same time be able to absorb the tax base and reduce their own taxes.

If we allow this, I ask the question, at what point are the boundaries in terms of rural municipalities in this province also going to be subject to the same type of pressures? At what point will we have any assurance that this government will act on behalf of the people that it should be acting on behalf of, the citizens of this province as a whole? That is why the Schreyer government brought in Unicity in Winnipeg in the early 1970s. It was the only thing that made sense, and it led to rationalization of services. It led to greater equity in terms of tax rates and indeed was a major plus for the City of Winnipeg.

I already believe that if it was not for Unicity, we would not have seen Winnipeg even be able to dream of competing with other cities across this country, because that was part of the great way of urban reform which was accompanied by grassroots participation through the then resident advisory groups and the community advisory committees, which were fundamental in terms of urban reform.

What was the problem, in many ways, was that the political leadership at the city never changed, they never kept up to date with that community grassroots-based urban reform. It is in the 1990s we need to recreate that spirit. This city of Winnipeg needs it desperately because it is suffering. It has slipped to ninth and 10th out of 11 cities on virtually all economic scores. The only way it is going to survive is not through this kind of carving up but through urban reform that starts by rejecting Bill 45.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Before you recognize the time, there is a disposition of the House to let the member complete his remarks and ultimately vote on the question, and the government would be prepared to accept that.

Mr. Speaker: Is there will of the House to allow the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) his

remaining three minutes by leave? The honourable opposition House leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Ashton: The minister would have to ask that we not see the clock or that we dispose of private members' hour. Obviously, the question of speaking would be secondary to that and, if the minister is asking us to either not see the clock or to waive private members' hour, our response is no. There is no leave; we wish private members' hour.

Mr. Speaker: Okay.

* (1700)

* * *

Mr. Speaker: When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) will have three minutes remaining and, as previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 16—The Health Care Directives Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), Bill 16, The Health Care Directives Act; Loi sur les directives en matière de soins de santé, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 18—The Franchises Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill 18, The Franchises Act; Loi sur les concessions, standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 25—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), Bill 25, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 27—The Business Practices Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), Bill 27, The Business Practices Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques commerciales, standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed.

Bill 31—The Municipal Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), Bill 31, The Municipal Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 50—The Beverage Container Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs), Bill 50, The Beverage Container Act; Loi sur les contenants de boisson, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 51—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), Bill 51, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), who has nine minutes remaining.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I want to start off from the onset in regards to a bit of disappointment in listening to the number of bills that the government has chosen—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have recognized the honourable member for Inkster for Bill 51, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act, and I would ask the honourable member to keep his remarks relevant to said bill.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, Bill 50 is a private members' bill in which I would hope that the government will not do what they are doing to other bills by continuously standing them, that the government will speak to Bill 50 as it should speak to all of the private members' bills, and I would encourage the government, as they obligate us to speak and put positions on the order regarding government business, we would likewise request the government to speak to Bill 51 and all private members' bills, because as the government puts efforts into legislation that they bring forward, I can assure them that, like Bill 51, my colleagues put in a lot of effort in the bills that they bring before the Chamber and would encourage the government to speak on Bill 51 along with all the other bills.

Mr. Speaker, specifically on Bill 51, it is a very positive bill, positive piece of legislation that is being provided for debate within this Chamber. I believe, as I had pointed out in the first opportunity I had to speak on Bill 51, that this is a bill that can be supported by each and every member of this Chamber, that this bill addresses the fundamental principles, five basic fundamental principles of our health care system. I would encourage all members, in fact, to go over the bill and to raise concerns that they might have at the onset—I should not say at the onset. In many cases when they stand up to speak to a bill—at times, I can be somewhat political on this particular bill. I want to refrain from taking any political shots even though that in many cases it could be justified, because I believe that this is a bill that I do want to see proceed into the committee stage and ultimately receive some sort of Royal Assent.

That is why it is so very important that, at the very least, we give the bill the opportunity to be thoroughly debated from all parties inside this Chamber so that everyone is, in fact, on the record, Mr. Speaker.

I for one can say that health care is the No. 1 concern that has come up in my constituency since I have been elected. I believe that Bill 51 would alleviate a lot of the concerns that have been raised in regard to health care and the importance that it remain universal, portable, accessible, and that it be publicly administrated and comprehensive.

I do not want to put any other words on the record other than to encourage members to allow it to go to the committee stage, and if they are not going to allow it to go to the committee stage, at least to stand up and put on the record their reasons and their rationale as to why the bill should not be allowed to pass to committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Second reading, public bills. Are we proceeding with Bill 55? No, okay.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), Resolution 4, I am

presently awaiting translation, so we are not proceeding with one.

Res. 9—Education Against Violence

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer),

WHEREAS the Manitoba Government is helping Canadian educators find and use programs aimed at ending the cycle of violence in our country; and

WHEREAS the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, through the Manitoba Women's Directorate, has compiled the first national listing of violence prevention materials used in Canadian schools; and

WHEREAS this government recognizes the need for education to battle the cycle of violence; and

WHEREAS Canadians must learn to take steps to end violence in our society; and

WHEREAS education and dialogue gives us the tools we need to make choices to resolve conflicts without violence; and

WHEREAS many schools are already beginning to supply these tools to our children.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the establishment of efforts to institute the fight against violence through education.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Dacquay: It has been well documented that violent behaviour in our society is on the increase. This issue affects us all. The elimination of violence is a responsibility that must be shared by all Manitobans and, indeed, by all Canadians.

The members of this Legislature have recognized the magnitude of the problem, and just yesterday considerable debate ensued on violence in our society, particularly violence against women. Violence against women in our society is acute, and I know yesterday that the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) cited some statistical information on violence, alarming statistics, but I feel that these statistics need to be re-emphasized.

* (1710)

One in six women is a victim of violence. Given this ratio, 70,000 Manitoba women over the age of 18 have experienced some form of violence in their lives. In 1990 and '91: 5,917 women and children sought safety in the 11 Manitoba shelters. This was

an increase over the 1989-90 figure of in excess of 1,200 individuals. Crises calls also increased from 41,634 to 60,867 in 1990-91.

The recently released Urban Safety for Women and Children report states that 56 percent of Canadian women feel unsafe walking alone at night in their own neighbourhoods. Sexual assault statistics are alarming and continue to increase.

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

We as a government on this side of the House are concerned about this disturbing trend. Federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for the Status of Women are also concerned about the increase in violence, particularly violence against women. Increased awareness and education are crucial to the understanding and the ultimate elimination of violence.

I listened intently yesterday to many of the speeches, and members on both sides of the House emphasized the importance of educating society. The honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) stressed the importance of the role of the educational system, as did the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), and I agree. Education and dialogue are essential in the resolution of this problem. Educating our youth is an excellent starting point.

Yesterday, in the remarks from the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), she applauded a program that was written by the Canadian Teachers' Federation entitled, Thumbs Down, and I will quote: "It deals with this very issue of how we can create a climate in our school system to talk about attitudes towards violence, to dialogue with young people about violence issues and to change their attitudes before they become the perpetrators of domestic violence, because we know sadly that children who have been abused, abuse."

Children can be encouraged to develop positive communication and conflict resolution skills. Because of this government's ongoing concern and commitment to assist in the alleviation of this horrendous cycle of violence, the Manitoba Women's Directorate compiled the first national listing of violence prevention materials used in Canadian schools. This listing is a guide for educators and policy makers on the range of programs already in existence in Canada. It was compiled through co-operation and through contact

with teachers and organizations who deal with violence prevention and other educational programs across the country.

The Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson, presented this listing to the joint meeting of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada last September in Calgary. In her presentation the minister emphasized the need for education to battle the cycle of violence, and I quote: The alarming increase in the incidence of violence affects us all. Canadians must learn to take steps to end violence in our society. Education and dialogue gives us the tools we need to make choices to resolve conflicts without violence, and many schools are already beginning to supply these tools to our children.

Mr. Acting Speaker, many educators have found themselves compelled to confront this serious issue of violence. During my seventeen and a half years as an educator I too was often made aware by both students and parents of the turmoil they were experiencing in their lives because of abusive situations. I can vividly recall the countless hours I spent listening to their problems. Through concern for the problem, educators are making an invaluable contribution to our future and the quality of the lives of our children.

We can achieve violence prevention through the introduction of positive values and attitudes. I think I cannot reiterate how important it is to be able to influence the lives of children through positive values and attitudes.

Educators can and many are taking a proactive stance in the area of gender equity and can ensure that the text and the support materials reinforce the principles of gender, racial and religious tolerance.

Another initiative by this government in the field of education was the introduction of a pilot program in Grade 9 this past September entitled "Skills of Independent Living." Next September this course will be introduced at the Grade 10 level and will contain self-management, which will attempt to give students the skills necessary to handle stress, manage conflict situations, and to deal with crises in their lives.

Another method of educating the public was brought to the forefront through the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer)

during the introduction of the major media campaign in 1990 entitled Abuse is a Crime.

This was aimed at prevention and reporting of wife abuse. I have spoken to many, many individuals and many indicated to me how strong the message was, and how much more aware they became, after having viewed this media campaign, of the actual situation and the actual acuteness of the ever-growing problem.

In some areas of our province, community-minded individuals, who are also concerned about violence, have formed a group. One in particular entitled SAVE, which represents Schools Against Violence Everywhere, is committed to increasing society's understanding of violence and promoting alternative choices to violence.

The purpose of this group is to work within the educational system to co-ordinate, encourage and facilitate actions to reduce violence through advocacy, education, networking and resources. I commend community-minded groups of this nature who indeed are taking ownership and doing what they can to ensure that the public becomes made much more aware of the magnitude of the problem.

Across various departments in government the message is becoming much more real, and the message is becoming much more alarming to those who have never experienced violence personally or in their day-to-day lives.

In the Department of Justice, some of the actions once again are educational in nature and definitely lend to creating awareness and making both perpetrators and victims aware of the services that are available and the strong measures and actions that the Department of Justice will take against, in particular, perpetrators.

* (1720)

Some initiatives, to name a few: allow women quicker access to restraining orders; tighter enforcement of gun control laws; the mandatory education programs, once again, for domestic-violence offenders at all corrections and probations facilities; prosecution of any domestic violence offender who fails to attend, participate in, or complete the mandatory education program.

Education and training of the entire justice system on the social dynamics of domestic violence is another initiative which is ongoing. I personally feel that by working co-operatively together, each and every one of us can do our own little part to help

eliminate the problem of violence against women. I know that we on this side have a serious concern about violence, and we are committed to alleviating violence.

In June 1992, the minister has made the commitment that she will be updating violence prevention materials in the schools, a national listing which, as I indicated earlier on, is an excellent resource and, once again, is creating awareness of the magnitude of this problem. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Acting Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this vital issue as represented by the member for Seine River's (Mrs. Dacquay) private members' resolution.

Again on this side of the House, we have absolutely no quarrel with the need for education and dialogue. We understand only too well that only through changing values and attitudes will any long-term progress be made in breaking the cycle of violence. We need to change attitudes and values on the level of individuals. We need to change attitudes and values on the level of families. We need to change attitudes and values on the level of community groups such as schools, various recreational teams that children and adults are involved with, community organizations that can be participants in this ongoing process. We need to change attitudes and values on the part of elected officials at all levels of our government.

I am particularly concerned by the attitudes and values that appear to be driving the federal government in its recent budget, where there were major cutbacks to programs that have a direct and an indirect impact on women, particularly women who live in poverty, women who are as much if not more at risk in our society. I understand that this is a provincial resolution, so I will confine my remarks to the provincial arena.

An Honourable Member: Time is up. Time up, Mr. Acting Speaker?

Ms. Barrett: I would remind the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that he will have his turn tomorrow. I am having my turn today.

I am looking forward to this budget with a great deal of anticipation and a great deal of trepidation. I certainly hope the anticipation will be a positive experience, but we are not very convinced that will be the case.

An Honourable Member: It will be.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Acting Speaker, if I may return to the subject at hand.

We do need to work on attitudes and values throughout our society. Education in its broadest and narrowest context is also a very important role and vehicle through which these attitudes and values can be changed. Education encompasses far more than simply the public education system. Even if we talk in terms of the public education system, we on this side of the House have some serious concerns not with the statements that are being put forward by this private members' resolution, on the face of it, but by the actual commitment of this government to doing anything about the very positive statements that are in this private members' resolution.

The public school system in this province is in, I think not to put too fine a point on it, desperate straits. The resources are not nearly keeping up with the cost of living. The public school system is caught between the legitimate concerns that are raised by families as to the quality of the education that is being provided to the students, and it is caught on the other hand by the requirements that are being placed on it from the social service system, which also is in desperate financial straits.

Our society is recognizing today the needs of many more types of students than we have in the past. We are attempting in our public school system to respond to all of the needs of children who come from an enormous range of backgrounds and who have an enormous range of needs that must be addressed by society in one form or another. The public school system is not being given the resources necessary to address those needs. The social service system is not being given the resources necessary to address those needs. So what happens, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that in many cases a child in a classroom with an unacceptably high student-teacher ratio is simply passed through into the next grade. If this child exhibits behaviour problems the teacher has no resources at his or her disposal within the school system to provide counselling or to provide assistance to that student.

On the other hand, Mr. Acting Speaker, what often happens is that a child will be part of the social service system. Perhaps the Child and Family Services agency will have custody of this child, will have this child on its caseload, and there is no place to send this child for counselling services. There

are no facilities available or the agency cannot afford the facilities that are available to provide adequate counselling or rehabilitation for this child. So that child goes to the public school system without any supports in order to enable that child to effectively deal with the stresses of modern life.

In this context, Mr. Acting Speaker, we are asked through this private members' resolution to endorse the establishment of efforts to institute the fight against violence through education. Well, of course, we endorse that. There is not a member in this House that would not endorse that concept. The problem is that it is only a concept. Again, like time after time after time with this government, there are plenty of flowery platitudes; there are plenty of public relations exercises; there are plenty of press conferences and studies and pamphlets and brochures. What there is not is a true commitment on the part of the government to effectively service these high-flown platitudes. It leads to an enormous amount of cynicism on the part of the citizens of the city and the province and the country.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would be far more inclined to support this private members' resolution if I had any sense that there was anything behind it except the paper that it is written on, if there was any commitment to actively support the principles that are being espoused by this resolution.

* (1730)

The education system is not only made up of just specifically the public school system, the independent school system, the post-secondary school system that is funded largely by the Department of Education. Education, very rightly in this private members' resolution and certainly on our side of the House, includes a much broader constellation of services and groups and agencies. Everyone knows that the way you break the cycle of violence is to begin with the children of our province. Everyone knows that. The earlier you can instill positive behaviours, the earlier you can instill a positive network of support, hopefully, through a family but through other means if that is not possible.

The earlier you can give children a sense of positive self-worth, the earlier you can model positive parenting, the earlier you can model a positive means of communicating and of dealing with stress, dealing with anger, dealing with fear, of dealing with grief, the more likely you are to have a child who will become an effective, productive

citizen of this province who will be able to function in a nonviolent way. We all know that.

We also all should know that there are many nontraditional educative processes that could be in place in this province to make an enormous impact in this context. I will only mention one of them. It has been mentioned in this House and in the media over the last year and a half, and that is the program called Parent-Child Centres.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this was a program that was initiated as a part of the Core Area Initiative Program, which was instituted largely through the efforts of the former government. It ran for five years. It was a program that was designed by and for single parents. It was a program that was largely delivered by single parents in schools, in community centres, wherever it seemed appropriate in the community to locate these Parent-Child Centres.

There were five in the community before their funding ran out last year throughout the community. They were all very different because the communities that they served were very different. The people that were involved with them had different needs and different ideas about how to go about implementing this program. Very cost-efficient, very effective preventive education programs were provided through Parent-Child Centres.

Education in the larger context of the word, education and positive role modelling, education and positive parenting, sharing of ideas between parents, sharing of social interaction with children, time out. Anybody who is or has been a parent will know what time out means. Some of us will know very immediately what time out means. Time out is a necessary element to any parent's ability to survive in this very stressful world in trying to bring up functioning, happy, productive children in this late 20th Century.

Parent-Child Centres provided one of the few avenues for time out for single parents, most of whom were on very low income. It provided them with a very positive, social and educational program. So what happened with this excellent program? Cost-effective, proven over five years, virtually run by volunteers, an organization of a group of people that this provincial government keeps talking about and then keeps not utilizing. The federal government chose not to continue funding the Parent-Child Centres when the Core Area Initiative closed.

Parent-Child Centres made presentation after presentation after presentation to this provincial government to take over the ongoing Core funding for this program, ongoing Core funding for a program which would have made an enormous difference to hundreds of families in the city of Winnipeg, would have had a very positive long-term effect and impact on the problem of domestic violence, the problem of sexual abuse, the problem of the cycle of violence.

What did this provincial government do? It has turned down that program. This is only one example of this government's total lack of commitment to true reform, to true progress in these issues.

I think that we on this side of the House have every reason to be cynical and to rise in our seats at these occasions when they occur with a great deal of regularity, when the government is patting itself on the back, puffing out its chest and saying, look at how wonderful we are, look at what we have done. Well, we are looking at what the government has done; we are looking at what we think the government will be doing. It is a very poor track record on all fronts.

In closing, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would just like to say—I wish that we on this side of the House could support this private members' resolution, but until the provincial government begins to actually act, rather than just talk, we on this side of the House will continue to have to stand up in opposition to the words that are put on the record by this government. We will be more than happy to support any positive actions, but so far we have seen very little of that.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Acting Speaker, this is a very interesting resolution to say the very least. It seems in the last couple of days there has been a lot of discussion about violence, in particular, domestic violence. I think it is very important, that is, an issue that can, in fact, not receive enough debate time inside this legislative Chamber.

As in the past, we see what we have before us is another example of how the government will do whatever is necessary in order to make platitudes, to congratulate themselves as to what they believe they have done.

One of the single biggest components that is missing in many of the resolutions or many of the

ideas and announcements that the government makes is new resources. Whether it is this particular resolution or resolutions that we have debated in the past, the government is very reluctant to initiate new programs if there is a cost factor to it in particular. The opposition parties are criticized for even making the suggestion that a government has a responsibility to make commitments when necessary, when they are making some of these announcements.

I only go back to the amendment that the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) put forward yesterday to the resolution where we commented once again, like this resolution, that the government is taking certain actions, but the biggest factor, once again, that is missing is some sort of an additional resource.

* (1740)

It does not matter how the opposition parties try to get that message across to the government, the government has only one comeback and that is that the opposition parties want to spend, spend, spend. As an opposition party, we try to come up with, at the very least on occasion, some constructive criticism in terms of how the government can make life or society here in Manitoba that much better to live in, to participate in. It is time that once they want to pat themselves on the back, they accept the criticism for what it is.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would suggest that the government should start acting on some of the criticism. Even though they in their political biases might say that the opposition is wrong no matter what they say, I sincerely believe in their deepest of all thoughts, their own personal thoughts, at the odd time at the very least, from their point of view, there is a good idea that comes out of the opposition benches. I would ask them to go to those deeper thoughts that they have, their subconscious. [interjection] Well, we have to take for granted that they do have some internal thoughts and start acting on some of those thoughts.

One of the most encouraging aspects about this particular resolution that I like and I support wholeheartedly is the concentration on education, because yesterday when we were talking about the domestic violence, I talked about the single biggest important issue when it comes to combatting domestic violence or violence in general is through education. Part of the Pedlar report, which I do not have in front of me, made a recommendation to the

effect that we have to look at starting to have domestic violence as a part of a curriculum in our education, in our public school systems.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe that it is long overdue because it is good for the domestic violence of whatever sort that it might be, that we have an obligation to the children, to the future generations in the province of Manitoba, to provide an atmosphere in which they can learn the responsibilities of what we believe are today's values. I believe part of today's values is that violence against any individual is wrong, that there is no justification for violent actions against any individual.

To that end, suffice to say that a violent action needs to be put in the general mind set of the population, that any violent action is in fact a crime. At the other end, the abused individual is someone that we have to do what we can in terms of support services and, particularly, counselling—not only counselling to those that have been abused, but also counselling to those that are the abusers. The educational component in our elementary schools and our high schools is just one level of society. I do not believe that we should give up hope on the other aspect of society, those being the elderly population over and above the age of 17, 18, whenever in fact they leave our public educational facilities.

There are courses that can be made available. There are different programs, if the government will was there, that could be created to provide educational opportunities regarding domestic violence. One of the issues that come up time after time with myself and, no doubt, a number of MLAs is in regard to the whole concept of community police.

I can recall doing a summer survey when I was a student at the University of Winnipeg. In going to some of those doors, a number of the seniors in the area in which I lived quite often talked about the resident police officer and how valuable the resident police officer was because the resident police officer would talk about violence, would know who the kids in the area were and the younger adults and the adults, in fact, all of those, or have a good idea in terms of the community that he was working in.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

It helped in the sense, I would argue, of bringing first-hand to many citizens of the province an opportunity to become better acquainted with some

of these violent crimes, because of having that peace officer in their premises at all times.

When we have peace officers who go to our high schools and talk to our student bodies, and I understand they even go to our elementary schools to talk to our student bodies, the children, after listening to what the peace officers say, do reflect very seriously on those comments.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the package that has been put forward from the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson) in regard to an overall compilation for a first national listing of violence prevention is a good step and it is a step in the right direction. I would encourage the government to continue moving in that direction.

There are some stronger actions that could be taken, and a lot of that onus is put on the shoulders of our current Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey). I believe the Minister of Education has an excellent opportunity to institute into our educational facilities a curriculum that would allow for the debate and the discussions of violence, of domestic violence in Manitoba. I believe that would be a very positive contribution from the Minister of Education and would encourage her to make comment, at least to take what opportunities she has before her to put on the record in terms of what her position is on a number of these issues, because, as this particular resolution points out specifically and as has been debated in previous debates regarding violence and particularly the domestic violence, is the importance of education.

Because of that, I believe that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) should take very seriously her responsibility because, after all, she has the support supposedly from every member of this Chamber. So we would look forward to some form of a stronger action coming from the Minister of Education.

* (1750)

Mr. Speaker, I did want to also emphasize the importance of education through the differing programs, specifically in regards to counselling services. There are opportunities that counselling on domestic violence can be brought to the communities because, generally speaking, there are resident committees, community club committees that meet throughout the province of Manitoba. I think the government can attempt getting a message out regarding violence, domestic

violence through some of these residential committees.

An Honourable Member: A good idea.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) says it is a good idea, and I say it with all seriousness, and he does too and I appreciate that. I would hope that the government would seriously look at a program that would be fitted around to reaching out to the different communities throughout the province of Manitoba, that the government can come up with a package that would go a long way in making individual community leaders throughout the province of Manitoba that much more aware, so that when the debates at the community level come up for discussion, whether it is the coffee shop, the doughnut shop, whatever it might be, inside the mall, Mr. Speaker, we have individuals who are educated, well educated, who have been provided an opportunity through the government to get more familiar with the effects of violent crimes.

We would benefit as a society as a whole if the government were to take stronger actions in that direction, and I look forward to seeing the government doing just that. I know one constituent who has said to me back during the surveys that they felt so secure at their homes they would be able to leave their doors unlocked. I do not know if we will ever get back to that type of an atmosphere, but I think that there are things we can do to make people feel safer.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Things we must do.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Deputy Premier says, that we must do, and I agree. There are things that we must do to make Manitobans feel much more safe in their homes.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): When I take a look at this particular resolution that was brought forward by the member, I cannot help but comment, of course we support this resolution. The intent, some of the suggestions in this resolution are clearly something that I am sure all members of this House would support. In fact, I am certain there would be very little difficulty in obtaining the unanimous consent of all members of this House with respect to this resolution because of the topic it deals with and because of the suggestion.

The difficulty, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, with the resolution is that it clearly does not go far enough and it deals with gaps. It does not approach the problem in a holistic or a whole fashion, like so many endeavours of the government. It sort of pigeonholes a problem and says, let us pat ourselves on the back for what the government has done in one area—and I will give them credit for it—but what it fails to do is see the rest of the forest for the trees out there with respect to that problem.

Mr. Speaker, the Pedlar report as one of its main recommendations states, and I quote: It is recommended that educational institutions in Manitoba integrate a mandatory domestic violence educational component into the school curriculum for elementary, junior high and high schools.

That is the recommendation of the Pedlar report. No action. Time and time again when it comes to actual activities, to action, to positive responses, this government fails, time and time and time again. The Pedlar report is just a classic example, which I will return to subject to time.

Mr. Speaker, I accept the comments of the member in terms of her sincerity in the approach, and I noted that she talked quite extensively about the pilot program, the curriculum that has been put in place, so I went down and I took out the main planning document for curriculum and the main functional document with respect to the government's intentions for the education system over the next several years called Answering the Challenge, something that the former Minister of Education hung his hat on. I could talk for hours about the deficiencies in this document, but that is not my intention here today. When I look at this document there is not a single reference to the topic, to the question of violence, in the curriculum and the approach to it in this document. It is totally deficient.

The member talked about the pilot project, Skills for Independent Living, a new curriculum that has been piloted and has been introduced. I would like to read from the minister's press release with respect to that Skills for Independent Living program, and let me quote: the introduction of a new course, Skills for Independent Living, which will emphasize critical thinking, decision making, money and time management.

If this is such a high priority of this government, where is the reference to this new program that is supposed to somehow be the be all and the end all dealing with violence in terms of our classrooms and

our curriculum. There is not even a reference to it in the minister's press release, Mr. Speaker. I look at the introduction of that program; I look at the pilot project; I look at the strategy, Answering the Challenge; and I say again it is mere words not backed up in whole or in part by any kind of meaningful action.

Mr. Speaker, when we deal with the question of violence, I think we should categorize it into two separate areas. We should deal with the question of those who are alleged to have or have committed violent acts and deal with that group, and then we should deal with what I think is the issue the member was approaching in terms of the resolution, and that is with the education component and dealing with the prevention aspect and dealing with the wholesome approach to conflict resolution and different ways of resolving conflict. So there are two separate bodies that we should address with regard to these issues. Both are educational in their composition.

I just want to diverge for a second, Mr. Speaker, to talk about something else, and that is the whole concept of education. We should not focus exclusively on the classroom; we should not focus exclusively on the institution, the school, in dealing with matters of this kind. Even if we were to put a program in place which we would support, we should not say, well, that is the problem solved; we

have pigeonholed it now; we have a course, we have a curriculum, and everything is fine.

The whole concept of education is that it is a lifelong experience and we encounter, we learn, not just in the classroom. We learn in a lifetime, and we should have access to educational services and resources and programs in a lifelong sense.

Returning back to the point that I commenced on, it is clear that even in the Pedlar Commission report, something that the government hangs its hat on in terms of a response exclusively, there is condemnation and criticism of the government's policies with respect to violence because of the long waiting lists that exist for the programs dealing with abusers. Even the government's own hand-picked, hand-appointed counsel, Mr. Speaker, the individual whom the government instructed to bring out this report, even she was critical of the long waiting lists, of the deficiencies in program and of the serious shortcomings that exist in terms of the programs that have been put in place.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) will have eight minutes remaining.

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Tuesday, March 10, 1992

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Petitions

Fight Back Against Child Abuse Campaign	
Barrett	1108
Reid	1108
Cerilli	1108
Martindale	1108
Dewar	1108

Reading and Receiving Petitions

Aboriginal Justice Inquiry: Support for Recommendations	
Lathlin	1108

Oral Questions

Budget	
Doer; Filmon; Manness	1109
Community Colleges	
Doer; Manness	1109
Health Care System	
Wasylycia-Leis; Orchard; Cheema	1110
Education System	
Chomiak; Vodrey	1112
Independent Schools	
Chomiak; Vodrey	1112
Education System	
Chomiak; Vodrey	1112
Free Trade Agreement	
Lathlin; Stefanson	1113
Repap Manitoba Inc.	
Lathlin; Manness	1113
BFI Waste Systems	
Edwards; Cummings	1113
Long Plain Indian Reserve	
Connery; Enns	1114

Beer Industry	
Cerilli; Cummings	1115
Civil Service	
Alcock; Praznik; Manness; Plohman	1115
Decentralization	
Plohman; Praznik	1117
Nonpolitical Statement	
Federal Recognition of Louis Riel	
Dewar	1117
Enns	1117
Gaudry	1118
Downey	1118

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 45, City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act	
Chomiak	1119
Alcock	1124
Barrett	1125
Reid	1131
Ashton	1137

Private Members' Business

Debate on Second Readings—Public Bills	
Bill 51, Health Services Insurance Amendment Act	
Lamoureux	1146

Proposed Resolutions

Res. 9, Education Against Violence	
Dacquay	1147
Barrett	1149
Lamoureux	1151
Chomiak	1153