



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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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
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
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
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
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	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
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 26, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Bob Kurtz, Linda Kurtz, Sandy Kurtz and others requesting the government of Manitoba consider taking the necessary steps to reform the Pharmacare system to maintain its comprehensive and universal nature and to implement the use of a health smart card.

* * *

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Robert R. Smith, Lee V. Campbell, Eileen Jones and others requesting the Minister of Labour consider holding public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping throughout Manitoba before March 31, 1993, and requesting the Attorney General uphold the current law concerning Sunday shopping until public hearings are held and the Legislature approves changes to the law.

* * *

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of John A. Laplume, Lawrence Pinsky, B. Langner-Pennell and others requesting the Minister of Justice consider adequate funding for the Great Library so that it can maintain its current level of services, hours of operation and preserve its current collection of materials.

* * *

Mr. George Hickey (Point Douglas): I beg to present the petition of Thomas Prince, Cyril Raven, Thomas Webb and others requesting the Family Services minister reconsider restoring funding for the friendship centres of Manitoba.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honorable member (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies

with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the provincial government has without notice or legal approval allowed wide-open Sunday shopping; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has not consulted Manitobans before implementing wide-open Sunday shopping; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has not held public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Labour to consider holding public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping throughout Manitoba before March 31, 1993;

BE IT FURTHER resolved that the Legislative Assembly be pleased to request the Attorney General to uphold the current law concerning Sunday shopping until public hearings are held and the Legislature approves changes to the law.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means has considered a certain resolution, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table the Annual Report for 1991-92 for the Women's Directorate.

* (1005)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 22—The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act**

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 22, The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act (Loi sur la réduction de la semaine de travail et la gestion des salaires dans le secteur public), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

The honourable Administrator, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table the message.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I seek leave of the House to introduce Bill 23, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism have leave to introduce Bill 23?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, leave is denied.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Deputy Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, since this government has misled us and the public on public hearings on this bill—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We had already determined that there was no leave.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this morning from the Grant Park High School thirty Grade 9 students under the direction of Ed Lenzmann. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Sunday Shopping
April 18 Polcy**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

Yesterday, we asked the government what their policy was on the issue of Sunday shopping.

The government had a press conference on November 20 to announce what they were going to do on Sunday shopping, a week before this House sat. The hypocrites across the way should be straight with the people of Manitoba.

The government promised in this Chamber, to the people of Manitoba, public hearings that would happen quickly, on March 2 in this House. They of course had no intention of having those public hearings, they had no intention of the people of Manitoba being involved in the so-called trial period.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of the fact that the bill that is presently before this House, which was passed to second reading, expires in the early April period, what is the government policy in terms of unlimited number of employees being able to work on Sunday for the Sunday, April 18, which is the first Sunday after Easter Sunday, which falls the week before? What is the policy of the government dealing with that Sunday?

* (1010)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member opposite would not allow introduction of a bill with respect to Sunday shopping yesterday in the House and today he has all these questions about it. I also find it interesting that the member opposite, who has always been one who has talked about democratic process, does not acknowledge that there are many sides to this issue and many concerns out there in the community.

That is why a trial proposal was put forward, to give opportunity for those who wanted to see Sunday shopping in Manitoba and try and assess the effects of it and how it would work.

We have never as a government tried to hide the fact that even within our caucus there are variances of opinion. The Liberal Party has never tried to be dishonest about that. They have said very straightforwardly, they have different views on it. It is only the New Democrats who every morning get

wound up by the leaders of the unions of this province, who are given their marching orders, who stand out there like automatons and say, yes, Bernie, yes, Bernie, who have a closed mind on this issue.

We have an open mind on this issue and we are willing to listen to Manitobans. We are willing to take into consideration the views and the concerns of all Manitobans and to try and come up with a proposal that is good for Manitoba.

Mr. Doer: The Premier will note, Mr. Speaker, that he did not answer the question of what the government policy is on April 18, which is a Sunday.

The government had a press conference on November 20 to tell us what their policy was on Sunday shopping, a week before the Speech from the Throne, three weeks before they could introduce the bill at first reading and four weeks before we passed it to second reading so the people could be involved in the public hearing process in the trial period. So let the government remember what they did in the so-called trial period.

We have communities like Brandon voting against Sunday shopping, we have officials in the Department of Labour saying it is not working for the people of Manitoba, the retail sector are quoted as saying that, we have Penner's food store in northeast Winnipeg, a nonunion food store, sending hundreds and hundreds of coupons into the Legislature opposed to Sunday shopping.

I just simply ask the Premier: What is the policy on April 18? Is it unlimited numbers of employees or is it back to the consensus bill that was passed in 1987 in this Chamber?

Mr. Fillmon: Mr. Speaker, subhead in the story in yesterday's paper, or the day before's paper says: Workers unhappy, but most consumers prefer open doors.

So you can talk about all those people who are opposed to it. There are also many people who are in favour of it. We know that.

We are being straightforward and open and honest about the fact that there is a division of opinion. It is only the New Democrats who get wound up every day by their union bosses, who tell them how to vote, who are single-minded and closed-minded on this issue.

We are putting forward legislation that we believe appropriately addresses the concerns and the

issues that are out there on Sunday shopping, and that will be the answer that this government puts forward.

The member opposite can vote against it, as I am sure he will vote against anything this government does, in any case, in his blind ideology. That is okay. We will let him go against it, but we will put forward what we believe is appropriate legislation to address the concerns of the people of Manitoba vis-à-vis Sunday shopping.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, again with the Premier's Barb Biggar rhetoric, he never answered the question. He never once answered the question.

The question is: Will Sunday shopping on April 18 represent a policy of this government to have unlimited number of employees, or will it be back to the 1987 piece of legislation that was passed by all parties that provided a compromise and consensus between small communities and large communities, between small businesses and large businesses, the consensus in Manitoba to have a made-in-Manitoba Sunday shopping policy? Will it be the consensus policy that was passed in this House in 1987 or the policy to have unlimited employees which the government has proposed as policy in their so-called trial period last year?

* (1015)

Mr. Fillmon: Mr. Speaker, in his Bernie Christophe rhetoric, the Leader of the Opposition, of course, tells us exactly what is the position of the New Democrats, which is, close your mind.

We remember Bernie Christophe, what he said the night that that Leader of the Opposition was elected Leader of his party. Bernie Christophe said: The machine works.

Because these were not people, this was a machine that he was putting together to make the Leader of the New Democratic Party the puppet leader of that machine. That is exactly why.

If the Leader of the Opposition is so concerned, let him give leave for us to revert to the introduction of the bill so that then we can clarify all of his concerns.

Domestic Violence Education Program—Justice System

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, on October 29, 1991, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) unveiled the Pedlar report on domestic

violence and stated in his press release that 45 of the recommendations were already underway or will be implemented immediately.

Today we learn that a judge in this province has refused a woman a peace bond because she was not being threatened and there is some good in everyone. He was not going to do something about it; she should do something about it.

My question for the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) is: Since this judge is clearly unaware of the theories and the problems surrounding domestic violence and those issues, why has training for judges in the province of Manitoba not been made mandatory?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, the matter raised by the honourable member has been brought to my attention. I have reviewed a transcript of the proceedings in the case the honourable member refers to.

Since that happened, the issues that gave rise to the fear expressed by the complainant in that matter have become the subject of criminal investigation. That is happening. The matter is being taken, by way of a writ of certiorari, to the Court of Queen's Bench to attempt to overturn the decision of that judge. We are reviewing the transcript and the issues involved to see just what is the appropriate action that ought to be taken by the Department of Justice with respect to the judge in the matter.

However, on December 19, the regional director of criminal prosecutions issued a directive to Crown prosecutors that they are to henceforth take more of a role in terms of obtaining peace bonds for people who live in fear for their safety. That is a very different way of handling peace bonds.

In the past, women or anybody who wanted to have a peace bond were on their own. The Crown was not there to assist and they were faced with the whole justice system. It was their job to try to figure out how to make it work for them. That has changed now.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the Pedlar report was supposed to stop the kind of issues that we have to deal with on a case-by-case basis and enable the entire justice system to be educated and made aware of the issues surrounding domestic violence so individual women would not have to have this happen to them.

I would like to ask the minister why, since it is clear that this judge and other judges have not been given adequate training in the issues surrounding domestic violence, the minister has let the recommendation time frame that was in this recommendation by Ms. Pedlar, that the education of all members of the justice system be completed by December 1992, why two and a half years, almost three years after this report was initiated that deadline still has not been met and judges and members of the justice system still do not get it.

Mr. McCrae: I cannot speak for the judge in this case, because we are not complete in our review of this particular case.

I can say that there has been a significant improvement in the level of symposiums and traditional education that has been going on at the provincial court level as well as the Queen's Bench level since 1988.

The honourable member may not recall, but it was back in 1988 that the government she supports was reducing its commitment to judicial education and this government came along and increased its commitment, so we are moving in the right direction.

Unfortunately, we do still see hopefully isolated matters that come along and, as those things happen, we take action to try to ensure that they do not repeat.

* (1020)

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, given that the court system is likely not going to be open on Fridays starting this summer due to the 4 percent cutback on services by this government, perhaps the minister would consider using that time on Fridays this summer to conclude the education of the justices in this province and use that time to put forward those education initiatives so that we do not have to have yet another woman from Manitoba dealing with a judge who is unaware of domestic violence issues, who obviously has no cultural understanding of issues surrounding this case.

So let us use Friday afternoons in the summer—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Mr. McCrae: I appreciate the honourable member's concern, and I even respect her sincerity on this matter.

I can only say, would she please speak to her colleagues in caucus and get the same kind of

commitment from the rest of them? They did not demonstrate it when they were in government.

Sunday Shopping Public Hearings

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government is trying to introduce yet another bill on Sunday shopping. There is no question that it is a divisive issue among the population of the province of Manitoba. There is no question that there is a divided opinion within the Liberal caucus, and I suspect some division of opinion within the Conservative caucus.

Will the minister responsible please tell the House why he did not hold public hearings when he was given adequate time between the 17th of December and today to hold those public hearings so that Manitobans could, quite frankly, increase their respect for politicians, not decrease it?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): As I responded in this House on previous occasions on this issue, this particular legislation will be dealt with in the same fashion as all other bills, will go to a committee, and there will be opportunities for Manitobans to appear at that committee in person or to send in submissions by writing.

Clearly, when you are having a trial period, there is a lot of merit to letting that trial period work itself through to allow Manitobans to see how it functions in their individual communities, to see how they deal with it and how it affects their daily lives, and then, based on that trial period, come to the public hearings at committee level and be able to deal with the issue after having experienced it.

Mrs. Carstairs: In all my years in the Legislature, I cannot remember a time frame of three and a half to four months between the passage of a bill into second reading and the failure to call the committee on that particular bill.

Can the minister explain why the government chose to tell the people of this province that they would have the ability to participate in a dialogue on the trial bill, not the new bill but on the trial bill, and now have decided to reverse that position?

Mr. Stefanson: I am sure, as the honourable member recognizes, it is quite unique to run a trial period with various situations. This is one of the few times I believe that has happened in Manitoba.

So clearly, as I have said, in responding to the first question, to allow that trial period to unfold, to then allow Manitobans to come forward after having experienced that trial period, to us makes a great deal of sense, rather than have public hearings early in the process before Manitobans have seen what the impact of the changes to Sunday shopping are in their communities, in their daily lives, how it affects them on an individual basis in terms of the convenience of shopping and need to shop and so on.

So to have the public hearings now, which we will be doing as part of the committee process, makes a great deal of sense.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we have been breaking the law since December.

An Honourable Member: No.

* (1025)

Mrs. Carstairs: We have been breaking the law since December. The law that is on the books right now does not allow wide-open shopping. We have been breaking the law since December.

We gave permission to have public discussions through moving this bill into the committee stage. We are now in serious jeopardy, I would suggest, all of us, as legislators, in once again making the public think that we are going to allow them to participate and then telling them, sorry, no way, you are not going to be allowed to.

Has this minister no concern whatsoever about the erosion of the processes of democracy in this province which would lead to this kind of behaviour on the part of this government?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of concern about democracy and participation. Manitobans will have the opportunity, as they do under all pieces of legislation, to come forward to committee hearings in this particular Legislature.

During the trial period, we as elected representatives obviously have the opportunity to interact with our constituents on a daily basis on this issue, to be in touch with them to find out how it is impacting them.

Certainly members of our government took advantage of that during the trial period to find out the feelings and the views of their constituents.

I certainly hope that members of the Liberal Party took the time to do the same thing. I hope the New Democratic Party took the time to do the same thing,

although we know from their rhetoric that that is not the case, because they had their marching orders.

Home Care Program Equipment/Supply Costs

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

I am asking the minister: Prior to cutting the Home Care Equipment and Supplies program, will the minister confirm that a nonpaying alternative, one that does not take money out of the pockets of the frail and elderly, is in place so that people who are on home care and receive this equipment will not have to pay for crutches, will not have to pay for walkers, will not have to pay for bandages and gauze out of their own pocket? Will the minister confirm an alternative will be in place—nonpaying?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend attempted to raise this issue yesterday.

I simply indicate to my honourable friend that maybe before he leads the charge that possibly some patience would be in order. It is only—what is that phraseology?—seven more sleeps before the budget.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, I hate to see the minister making light of this stuff, neither do the people of Manitoba.

How does the minister reconcile that statement he has just made? Seven more sleeps—very, very throwaway. How does he make those statements in light of the fact that his own ADM, at a public reform meeting on Wednesday, Sue Hicks, said that the department was only now thinking about community services that they are going to put in place. The department is now only thinking about it, Mr. Speaker, and he gets light and makes jokes about a program that provides supports to the elderly and the infirm.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, with all the respect I can muster for my honourable friend from Kildonan, I will never accept my honourable friend's interpretation of what he believes he heard at any of the public reform meetings.

What happens in the process of change that we are embarked on, which I might add to my honourable friend in case he does not know, is the most open and informed process that exists for change and restructuring in the health care system in Canada.

The only reason he has the opportunity as a critic to sit and listen to some of the presentations, one of them of which he was at on Wednesday of this week, is that it is such an open process. It is not behind closed doors, as my honourable friend on one hand alleges and then comes with his own interpretation of what is said narrowly, partisan politically, to say, well, you know, this was stated.

Mr. Speaker, the man cannot have it both ways. He cannot attend meetings which explain the reform process and then criticize that he does not have information. My honourable friend better visit Saskatchewan and Ontario to see what reform and how it may not be as appropriately undertaken as in this province.

* (1030)

Mr. Chomlak: It is obvious the minister does not care to answer the question, Mr. Speaker.

Ophthalmology Program Service Reduction

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): My final supplementary to the minister of this most open and this most great process in all of Canada, the best in the Dominion of Canada, the minister said in Hansard, Mr. Speaker: How does he reconcile that with the fact that he has received a letter from the Citizens for Eye Care Education, who say that his decision to cancel a meeting to make an announcement this Wednesday on the ophthalmology program, the concerns about deteriorating service and, quoting: It should not be at any cost to any patient's care nor to be impeded by political agendas?

How does he reconcile those statements with the cancelling of that program and the concern by all citizens out there about the deteriorating ophthalmology program?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, again, I have to attempt to be very evenhanded in my reply to my honourable friend.

He is now alleging that the ophthalmology program, which has increased the amount of service available to Manitobans consistently since we came into office and has done more procedures for more Manitobans, is somehow not delivering service.

That is false. My honourable friend knows it is false. My honourable friend brings those statements to the House with the hoped-for

objective that he can somehow get a quick and dirty headline to further frighten Manitobans.

The system has been working. It has been expanding and providing more service in ophthalmology, cataract surgery and other initiatives in ophthalmology, than when we came into government.

In other words, Sir, under Progressive Conservative government, it is better than under the NDP government, simply put.

Victor House Funding

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Family Services.

A few days ago, Mr. Speaker, the minister advised a nonprofit group called Victor House in Brandon that its funding was to be completely eliminated as of April 1, which effectively will close this facility and end this program of support. Victor House cares for the mentally challenged and the post-mentally ill patients through life skills training and guidance with the objective of enabling these handicapped people to be able to live independently in the community and out of an institution.

My question to the minister is: Will this minister now reconsider this ill-advised action and reinstate the funding and allow this highly regarded service for the mentally disabled in Brandon to continue to do its good work?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, this decision was made after a good deal of consideration and affects not only Victor House but an institution here in Winnipeg as well whereby we are going to have the individuals who have been housed in these institutions moved out into the community and, as part of the Community Living Initiative that was started, I believe, under the previous government, to take individuals out of institutions and put them into more home-style accommodations.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister truly understands the nature of this program and that it is community oriented and that it does provide support services for these people who are mentally challenged in the community to be able to live in the community. There are support services; there are ongoing programs 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

My question is: How can you leave the mentally disabled to languish in the community without support services? How can you justify this?

Mr. Gillehammer: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member and the House that there will be support services for individuals who are mentally challenged as they move from institution settings into more homelike settings within the community. Our staff will be working with those individuals to be sure that transition takes place smoothly.

Victor House Funding

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my last supplementary to the Minister of Health and ask the Minister of Health if he would look into this and consider funding Victor House so that it can continue to play a role in the community to support the mentally disadvantaged, the mentally challenged, in the Brandon community.

The Minister of Health—if I could get his attention—recently announced a multimillion dollar program of funding for community-based mental health services in Winnipeg and will soon announce one in Brandon.

My question to the Minister of Health is: Will he assume funding of the Victor House program?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my honourable friend the member for Brandon East's recognition that we have thought through community-based services, that we are expanding community-based services, that they are going to be in place, that they are going to work, they are going to be effective, et cetera, et cetera.

Maybe my honourable friend for Brandon East could talk to the critic, his colleague the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who does not seem to understand that.

Dam Safety Program Reinstatement

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

Approximately two years ago, the department terminated the activities of the dam safety program, which prior to that time had employed three individuals who on a yearly basis checked approximately 100 dams around this province.

This work was not contracted out. It simply stopped being done around that time, approximately two years ago.

My question for the minister: It has now been more than two years since those approximately 100 dams were checked in the same way that they had been for many, many years. When is the minister intending, if ever, to reinstitute a dam safety program around this province?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have to take that question as notice. In doing so, however, I am assured that there is no safety risk involved. There could well have been arrangement made with another portion of the department or, indeed, with a sister organization of the federal government, PFRA, that has helped in a more effective way to provide this service. I will take the question as notice.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised that the minister is not aware of the details of it. He needs to answer that question. It is a very important issue.

Again, for the same minister, prior to the termination, as I have said, approximately 100 dams were checked every year and reports were made by geotechnical engineers.

What changed approximately two years ago and, since that time, now allows this minister effectively, and his department, to get out of the business of checking for the safety in the approximately 100 dams that they have direct responsibility for? Not the PFRA—they have responsibility for those dams.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I am having difficulty accepting the premise of the honourable member's question.

I know that my Water Resources people are responsible for the operation of these same dams. I can indicate to him that they will all be in operation doing what they were designed for, collecting the spring runoff waters, whether it is the large structures at Shellmouth or the smaller ones at Stevenson or Jackson or the many dams that are located in different parts of the province.

They will all be in fully operational status, and I am assuming that responsible engineering supervision is provided to these structures with respect to their safety.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that they will be in operation. It is the safety of the operation of those dams that is being questioned here.

Mr. Speaker, on what basis can the minister assure Manitobans today of the safety of those some-100 dams he is responsible for which, if not safe, he will agree pose enormous threats not only to property but in fact human lives and livestock if they are not safe?

On what basis can he assure us of the safety of those dams in the season when those dams are indeed going to be used?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I really think the member does a disservice to Manitobans. If he is suggesting that there is a dam in Manitoba that is not safe, then I think he has a responsibility to tell me, and I will get back to him very quickly.

To suggest that there are lives at risk, property at risk is really not doing the people of Manitoba any service.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I invite the honourable to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I very much resent the allegation of fearmongering. The point is, the minister cannot assure—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. James does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to indicate to all members of the House and to fellow Manitobans that the water runoff situation this spring is normal, perhaps some higher waters in the Red River.

All dams will be performing their functions as they were designed for in terms of water entrapment. There is no structure in Manitoba that is in any way risking property, least of all lives.

Crow Benefit Method of Payment

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the issue of the method of payment of the Crow benefit is a great concern to the majority of farmers in Manitoba.

Farmers are aware that if this method of payment is changed, freight rates could actually triple.

We are told that the federal government is preparing legislation that will change the benefit this year.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he has seen the documents that the federal government is proposing and whether he supports changing the method of payment even though the majority of Manitoba farmers have said they do not want a change in the method of payment.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the member keeps asking the same question. I guess I have to keep giving her the same answer.

Maybe if she reads Hansard some day before Question Period she would not have to ask the question.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very important issue for western Canada. The money was put there about 100 years ago for the development of western Canada, and our discussions continue to be in the direction of trying to be sure that the money is most efficiently used for the development of western Canada. Consultations and discussions continue amongst the Ministers of Agriculture of western Canada, the federal minister, and all the various commodity groups representing Manitoba farmers.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, if the minister gave an answer, I would not have to keep asking questions on behalf of the farmers.

There are many proposals that are being floated around about how money will be paid to the farmers. Will the minister tell us today what proposal he supports? How does he propose that this money will be paid to farmers? Does he support a national plan that all provinces will be treated equally, or does he feel that northern Manitoba and southern Manitoba should be treated separately? What is his proposal?

* (1040)

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, it is plainly obvious that that member's mind is stuck on one track, head is in the sand. She does not want to listen to Manitoba farmers.

I have just told her in the previous answer that we are in a process of very broad consultation with Manitoba producers, and that is the track they will

stay on, even though she does not want me to consult with Manitoba producers.

Yet I will answer the latter part of her question. She said, should it be broadly based and everybody be treated equally? Absolutely. That has always been our position. That is why we continue to talk and discuss and consult, which is obviously what she does not want to do.

Public Hearings

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): I have asked the minister for consultation, and I will ask him again: Will he take his proposal to the public so that farmers can have input? He supported public hearings last year and did not listen to them. Now will he take his proposal so that farmers can have clear information of what it is he is proposing? Will the farmers have a chance to have input into this? It is a very simple question.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the issue works the other way around. I ask farmers to bring their information to me. That is why I set up meetings, and I set up another one this morning with the leaders of major farm organizations. I want their input to me.

She would like to be a dictator. I am not; I am a consulter.

Labour Force Development Agreement Signing Announcement

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I note with interest that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) is making yet another announcement outside this House—in this case, the Labour Force Development Board Agreement's signing.

The minister knows that over the last year and a half we have been raising questions consistently in the House about the Labour Force Development Agreement. I want to know why this minister has such little regard for the Legislature of this province that she is not prepared to make these kinds of statements in the House where there is an opportunity for the voices of all Manitobans to be heard.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we have worked very hard to conclude and to bring to conclusion the signing of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, which we do expect to bring to conclusion later this morning.

Consultations

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Could the minister explain why there has been no consultation since June with the basic partners in this agreement—labour, education, and equity—since she so abruptly and unilaterally cancelled those discussions in June of last year?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I have explained to that member several times that there are two separate issues. One is the signing of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, and the other is the setting up of the private sector boards of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development boards. She is confusing the two issues and has continually in her questioning.

Labour Force Strategy Tabling Request

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Is the minister prepared at this time to table the labour force strategy of this government, which she claims that the government has been working on for the last two years and which has not seen the light of day?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the member has said, we will be bringing to conclusion the agreement, the Canada/Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement. Then further announcements will follow that signing.

Teaching Hospitals Long-Term Patient Transfers

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health will know that the transfer of long-term care patients from the two teaching hospitals has caused considerable concern and unease among—[interjection] I will repeat the question. The Minister of Health missed my opening remarks. He will know that the transfer of long-term care patients from the two teaching hospitals has caused considerable concern and unease among the patients themselves and their families, many of them having parents who are aging themselves.

Perhaps if I could have a Page deliver these petitions, an indication of that concern, to the Minister of Health. They are not in the formal petition format for purposes of tabling in this House,

so I hope that the minister will look at those petitions very carefully.

I would ask him if he would tell Manitobans, through this House, how many patients have now been transferred to date. To which facilities have they gone? How many more will be transferred, and what is the deadline for completion of the process?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I think that is finally an appropriate question from what used to be my critic in Health. I would be prepared to provide details of that information, but appreciate—I think my honourable friend would understand—I do not have that detailed information on the top of my head. I will attempt to provide that for her.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister if he has dealt with the concern by many of these patients and their families about the mandatory process and whether he inserted into this process of transferring long-term patients an element of choice, some consultation, and some consideration for patients' needs and family circumstances.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I believe a significant improvement in that process has been achieved over the last number of years.

Let me give my honourable friend an example around choice. When my honourable friend was making decisions in government, people choosing placement in long-term care homes had no choice. They had to accept either a prolonged waiting period for the home of their choice or take the earliest available bed. We thought that somewhat unfair.

So we have allowed people to maintain the choice of their personal care home of their choice and an interim placement does not compromise that final choice. Mr. Speaker, that is a progressive change in policy that we have made to respond to the needs of seniors, their families and others, something that was not there in 1988 when my honourable friend, presumably, had input into that. I think there have been a lot of very good steps to improve the system, Sir.

* (1050)

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, it is by the minister's own documents that this government has indicated and has underlined the words "mandatory transfers" from the teaching hospitals to long-term care facilities.

I would ask the minister, given the concerns expressed, if he has changed his mind about that mandatory system and if he is prepared to offer some choice to patients and their families and be considerate about their individual and family needs.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, let me try to deal with my honourable friend's concern, because I have already indicated the difference in ability to choose in our government versus theirs where there was no choice.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my honourable friend that, yes, we have asked that transfer to be completed by March 31. Is my honourable friend now saying that we should maintain at considerable cost long-term care patients in our teaching hospitals? That is a complete reversal on my honourable friend saying we should move away from acute-care hospital treatment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, maybe my honourable friend might want to comment on whether she agrees or disagrees with 240 new personal care home beds that are being constructed in the northeast corner of Winnipeg, as we speak, to care for Manitobans.

Is she also against that, Sir?

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

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable First Minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members of the House will want to join me in extending congratulations to a member of our Legislature, who has been referred to at times as the dean of the Legislature, the Honourable Harry J. Enns, who attended on Tuesday of this week the 58th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Washington, D.C.

At that conference the Minister of Natural Resources was presented with the 1993 Wetlands Conservation Achievement Award in appreciation of his outstanding contribution to wetlands conservation.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I thank you and members of the House for the opportunity to have leave to make a nonpolitical statement. Last evening my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) attended the 110th annual celebration of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce in which Mr. Ray West was voted the Businessperson of the Year for Brandon, and I want honourable members to join with me in congratulating the individual who has been recognized for his hard work and effort for the city of Brandon and I thank members for this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Brandon East have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I would like to join with my colleague the minister and the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) in congratulating Ray West for all of his service. I would say I cannot think of anyone in my experience more loyal and dedicated to a particular company for which he works. He has worked all his life virtually for the A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd., and he has done a fabulous job. We had the opportunity of seeing Mr. West last week during the Economic Development committee meeting and the board of McKenzie Seeds when we discussed the annual report. There is no question that the company has done well with Mr. Ray West, and I only want to wish him many, many more years of success and many more years of health and service in the community. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY—INTERIM SUPPLY

COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Will the Committee of Ways and Means please come to order. We have been considering a resolution respecting the Interim Supply.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Madam Chairperson, this question is for the Minister of Northern Affairs.

Order-in-Council 173, 1993, it is indicated here that the community council of Poplarville has been dissolved. I would like to ask the minister why this was brought about.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Madam Chairperson, that is a fair question, and the response is that the community with loss of population brought forward a resolution.

As he realizes, there are several types of community governance systems. One, there is the contact; others, the elected community council.

The community, because of numbers of people who moved away and have decided not to live there, the people from that community came forward of their own desire and petitioned the minister to have this kind of action taken. It is less costly for them and apparently more effective. So it was at the request of the community that changed the designation of the community.

Mr. Cliff Evans: Madam Chairperson, I want to thank the minister for that answer and clarification.

I would like to ask the Minister of Rural Development, Madam Chairperson, I know that not only in my constituency but in others the REDI program that this government has put into process—we are getting a feeling from the people that accessing the REDI program has been a tremendous difficulty for a lot of people.

I would like to bring up a specific—even though I can appreciate that Arborg has recently been accessed through the REDI program for a study on the cheese plant, there are people out there who are still confused when they contact the Rural Development department as to exactly where and what criteria fall when they have a specific project that they would like to proceed with. They are getting mixed feelings as to criteria, whether they fit in that program, whether they do not fit in the program, what they have to do.

Can the minister just enlighten myself on the process and some of the criteria that the minister has indicated to apply for the REDI program?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Chairperson, I would certainly be pleased to provide the member with some information regarding the REDI program.

The REDI program was introduced in midsummer last year, in 1992, and it was at that time that we began to receive applications for the REDI program. The REDI program was designed for communities and for businesses who in rural Manitoba may wish to either embark on feasibility studies to expand their existing businesses or perhaps a potential business that has not been established could apply

for funding to assist with feasibility studies, market studies and to determine whether or not a business of that nature would be able to survive in a particular community.

Another program under the REDI umbrella was the Development Support program. The Development Support program was one where if a potential project was to be embarked on and if it met the criteria of being unique, of being one that would have lasting benefit to a community, that would provide a value in terms of the economic base to a community and would have the support of a community, it could be considered under the Development Support program.

Another program under the REDI umbrella is the Capital Infrastructure Development program. That is a program whereby municipalities or in fact businesses could apply for the assistance to the provision of infrastructure, such as water or sewer, hydro electricity, perhaps an access lane or other infrastructure kinds of initiatives to a business that might be locating or expanding in a particular community.

All of these programs have been outlined in fairly significant detail to all municipalities, to all Economic Development boards in local communities, to round tables, to communities at large. We have had staff virtually crisscross this province and meet with interested groups to make sure that the public understands what the REDI program is all about.

In terms of the applications for Rural Economic Development programs, we have tried to streamline it so that the process itself is not a complex one. Many proponents do not understand whether or not their project may or may not qualify. To assist them, we have indicated that we would like them to just fill out a one-page application form and send it in. That would take a couple of days.

* (1100)

In that time, we would be able to assess whether or not that project would be one that could be considered under the criteria that have been established for any one of the four different programs.

If it passes that first hurdle, information is quickly then returned to the proponent and then they can proceed to a more detailed application form, which would involve such things as the financial statements, financial plans, et cetera.

Once that application has been received by the department, it undergoes a fairly intricate due diligence process, but it is one that we expedite as quickly as possible and within six to eight weeks, a response then goes back with the approval.

If that project should not be approved because it does not meet the criteria, then that response goes back far more quickly than the six to eight weeks.

We have to date received about 150 or 160 applications at the REDI office. Of those that have been received, a good number have already been processed. I would say close to 50 applications have gone back with approvals already, another 30 or so are in various stages of approval and yet there are a number of projects that have been rejected because they did not meet the criteria.

We have committed something in the neighbourhood of \$4.1 million under the REDI umbrella, and that would include the program of Partners with Youth, the Green Team, the administration of the Grow Bonds Program, the Ayerst approval, plus the other approvals that have been processed already by the department.

Madam Chairperson, we tried to simplify the process as much as we can. I might tell the member opposite that we have two staff people in the REDI office. They are assisted by our local Economic Development officers throughout the province from our regional offices. In addition, our Grow Bonds officers also assist in the processing of application forms and indeed in collecting the information.

We are doing everything we can to expedite every application that comes before us. For that reason, we have incorporated the use of our regional staff and also our Grow Bonds staff, and we are in constant contact with proponents. Sometimes the delay is not the responsibility of the department. In many instances, the information that is required is not forthcoming from the proponent. Therefore, we cannot process that application until all of the information is in.

In some cases, we have seen that proponents for one reason or another are reluctant to share information and yet this information is very necessary in order for us to be able to process an application. I think the member would appreciate that because this is public money we have to ensure that we go through an appropriate due diligence process, so that the public can be satisfied that we are simply not throwing money at projects that may

not be worthy, but indeed we are supporting projects that will be of lasting benefit, not only to the community but to the province as a whole.

Mr. Clif Evans: I want to thank the minister for the answer. If I may then, in listening to his remarks, it seems that the situation one of my constituents on Matheson Island has and a proposal that he has would perhaps fit into the criteria. However, having said that, he has run against a brick wall with the department with the REDI program. They claim that his project does not fit the criteria and really have not given him an appropriate answer as to why not.

So I would appreciate it if the minister would in fact—the constituent is a Mr. William Mowat, whose proposal to the REDI program is for expansion of the Matheson Island airstrip to promote the community, and to have on Matheson Island an air strip. There is one there now if he wants to expand it so that it can develop the community and also provide a source for the outcamps to bring people to Matheson Island and further north.

Now I would appreciate if the minister would take notice of Mr. Mowat's case particularly, and have someone within his department clarify for Mr. Mowat just why he does not meet the criteria.

I would think in discussing the issue with him that perhaps this project would fit under the REDI program, and I would ask that the minister look into this particular matter and get back to me with it. I would appreciate that. Certainly, Mr. Mowat and the community of Matheson Island and Pine Dock would certainly appreciate knowing why or why not that this particular project does not meet the standards.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chairperson, I do not have the details on each and every proposal that comes before the department. There is no way that I could keep track of whether or not a particular proposal meets the criteria. The staff evaluate every proposal that comes before them through a process that does not just involve my department, but indeed we also consult with other departments, such as the Department of I, T and T and also the Department of Finance.

Now, Madam Chairperson, I would have to tell the member that I would be prepared to pay attention to this particular project that is before the staff and provide the member with a written response as to whether or not it meets the criteria. If it does not, then I think it is only fair that not only the member

but indeed the enterprise or the proponent would have an explanation as to why his project does not meet the criteria. I would be prepared to share that with the member.

Mr. Cliff Evans: I look forward to dealing with this with the minister.

My next question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. A few weeks ago, the minister had the opportunity to meet with the municipality of Bifrost on a few matters. I would like to ask the minister. It has been four years—it will be four years in September that this minister signed an agreement to continue Phase Two of Washow Bay project. Now, Madam Chairperson, we are aware and the minister is aware of the problems with flooding of hay and croplands that we do have in the Interlake and particularly north of Riverton, and Phase One has been completed with great success. The municipality has done its part in dealing with the agreement signed by the minister in 1989.

I would ask the minister, can he tell us where and what he is prepared to do to continue with Phase Two? He signed an agreement. It is a very, very important project, and I think the minister should seriously consider the request of Bifrost and the people of Interlake.

*(1110)

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): I acknowledge that we have indeed an agreement with the people in the community, the farmers around the Washow Bay area for what to them is certainly an important project with respect to providing the necessary drainage for some very productive land that has been subject to chronic flooding over the years.

The member is correct. We have been able to conclude the first phase of that project. It is, Madam Chairperson, a project of some size. It would take some additional millions of dollars to conclude it over the next period of years.

In my meeting with the councillors from Bifrost, I indicated to them that the department certainly did not, in any way, not agree with the importance of the project to that area. It is a question though of having the necessary fiscal resources to proceed on into the second and third phases of that project.

I indicated to the council members that we are in the final throes of putting together the budget for the years '93-94. I understand that date has been announced. On April 6, the budget will come down

and give me kind of final authority in terms of the kind of resources available to the department.

Madam Chairperson, let me take this opportunity, and I welcome this opportunity, quite frankly, to have the matter raised and discussed in the Chamber as we deal with Interim Supply. I have made no secret of the fact that I believe, generally speaking, the Department of Natural Resources—and of course I am not alone. I know that any one of my colleagues in the different ministries would make the same statement that there are many things we would like to do and do more of, but we have all been asked, and we do it willingly because we are all members of the same Executive Council and Treasury Board members, recognize the priorities of this government in maintaining those essential services that we get asked about every day in this House.

In fact, Madam Chairperson, we are now into the 35th sitting of this current session. This is the first opportunity that either the member, as a member of the official opposition, or as I, as the minister responsible, have had an opportunity of discussing the drainage question and the water resources activity in this Chamber. I do not fault the honourable member. I only trust that he does not fault me that the priorities, as expressed in this Chamber, day in and day out, are those important human services of health, of education, of family services. Those are the demands that this government faces every day, whether it is in this Chamber or on the front steps of the Legislature, as services that have been very modestly kept in check in the sister departments of Family Services or Health or Education.

Education has announced a 2 percent global reduction in their budget, but that has not stopped most teachers in this province from enjoying a 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 percent increase in their salaries this year. As in the case in my shop, I asked the member to go back to his records. He will note that it was only three or four years ago when the Department of Natural Resources had an overall budget of \$100 million to \$104 million and is now operating with a budget of \$84 million to \$85 million. That is about a 15 percent reduction in the overall resources that the Department of Natural Resources has. So that has forced myself as minister to do some very heavy prioritizing of those available funds.

My Estimates are not before the honourable member. I appreciate that, but in the appropriation for reconstruction or new construction of drains,

there is a relatively modest amount. It is in the order of \$2 million. I am in a phase of concluding four or five projects that were in much the same situation as the Washow Bay project. They were three- and four- and, in some cases, five-year projects that the department has been engaged in, in phases. We try to do about \$300,000, \$400,000 worth of work on a project in a given year.

With the pressure on the funds that I have, understandably, we are trying to complete these projects where we are either well started or halfway concluded. There are not that many left, fortunately, in the province to do. Washow Bay is and remains one of the priority drains in the programming of the department, and it is my hope that we will be able to commence, if not in this coming fiscal year, then for sure in the coming year.

Mr. Cliff Evans: Madam Chairperson, I want to thank the minister for those comments. I would like to emphasize what he has just said, that during Estimates last year we discussed Washow Bay. I do not have the Hansard with me, but from memory the minister indicated a few projects that are within the area to be completed. From what I can remember, I can understand that these projects will be completed in this year. I would like to see the minister, when the budget comes out, deal with the matter as to the projects that have to be completed and then deal with what is left and take it into consideration to put those funds to the Washow Bay Phase Two project. So, at least, even in small increments, we can get this very important project moving in a direction that the area and the people will understand that they are not being forgotten by this minister and can appreciate that the minister then signed that agreement and he is staying by his word and the government's word with the agreement. I would appreciate that very much.

I also would like to say that I am very, very pleased that as regards the Gaza Bridge (phonetic) the minister's department is proceeding with that and, hopefully, it will be completed this spring. I look forward to being with the minister for the opening of the bridge once it is completed. I want to say that he and his department have listened to the people of Bifrost and the community in putting this project, the Gaza Bridge, as a priority for the people. I thank him for that.

Last Estimates, the minister and I discussed the turning over of campgrounds to private individuals or organizations. I just want to quote. I would like

to quote the minister, June 18, 1992. The minister says: "We take our time about assuring ourselves that the proponent can, in fact, and is eager to and is willing and has the resources to continue to operate the facility in a fashion that would be acceptable to most Manitobans."

In specifics, Madam Chair, I am referring to the campground at Wanipigow. There have been letters sent to the director of Parks. There was a letter sent to the minister. The letter to the director of Parks was sent in September of 1992. I would like to say that this letter has not been answered by the director of Parks.

The letter states the terrible condition that this campground was left after the September long weekend. It was not taken care of properly. Staffing there was absolutely nonexistent; the cleaning of it was nonexistent; the maintaining of it was nonexistent. The dock there was left out over the winter. Supply sheds were left open with equipment in it. Fish remains were all over the area.

The minister indicated that they would monitor, even though they are stepping away, in a way they are monitoring and making sure that whoever does take the campground over do it within proper conditions, so that the campground is maintained.

I can read a few comments made from the September '92 letter. Beer cans were heaped in a pile at the office building residence lawn. Recreation vehicles dumped their sewage tanks on a roadway at the garbage dump. The screen fish cleaning shack had a garbage container half full of rotting fish remains.

* (1120)

Although camping by visitors is continued on a regular basis, there is no one in attendance at the campground office, and to the best of our knowledge, there has not been anyone working since the Labour Day weekend. The former park attendant's derelict vehicle remains parked in front of the office building and along with its flat tire offered in a way moot testimony to the condition of the park and how things have deteriorated.

I would like to ask the minister, who indicated in Estimates last year that these campgrounds in parks that he is turning over to private people or private organizations would be maintained—I want to know why the department has not responded to the situation, why the minister has not responded to the people writing to him, the Wanipigow West Cottage

Association. How can the minister allow this type of situation to occur?

Mr. Enns: Madam Chair, I will undertake to provide the honourable member and, more importantly, to the cottage owners association at Wanipigow with a response to the issues raised. I am somewhat concerned that he indicates that correspondence has not been answered to, and certainly I will undertake to examine that situation.

You know when I say that we have made, or are making and continue to make, every attempt to ensure that when these divestitures or privatizations, if you will, of campgrounds formerly operated by the department are put into private hands, there will be every effort made to ensure that the level of service, the ability of camping opportunities remains at a similar or higher level than when they were within the operations of my Parks Branch.

The honourable member has to acknowledge that there will be some instances, no doubt, where that quality may not always be what is offered. The member does not say whether or not—and I am not familiar with the details of whether or not this is a situation where this party who is now operating the Wanipigow campgrounds is doing so under lease or whether that is, in fact, a situation, as there have been some, where it has been an outright divestiture, an outright sale of the campground and property to the parties now operating it. Maybe the member can provide me with that information.

Mr. Cliff Evans: Madam Chairperson, I have a copy of the letter that the minister's office received yesterday, addressed to the minister, addressing this fact and the condition of this campground. I would appreciate the minister's staff looking into this. The letter is there.

I would appreciate the minister take as notice why the director of Parks, since September of '92, has not replied to this association. That is not the way a department should be handled, especially from a director of one of the departments. Once the minister has an opportunity to discuss and to go over the letters, I would like to further discuss this with him and find out just what direction we are taking.

I would like to ask the minister—and I have some correspondence here from the LGD of Armstrong who the minister was good enough to meet with yesterday with regard to another matter in the LGD.

It is in regard to land transfer, land exchange with the province.

In meeting with the reeve and council, they have indicated to me that they feel everything has been completed on their side and they are wondering why the department is holding back, or what is the problem as to why the land exchange and the titles change hands, why can that not be expedited and proceeded with—if I may, if the minister will directly look into this and let us get the exchange moving so that the LGD can continue. They are losing money with this.

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairperson, I can assure the honourable member the arrangements that exist between the Department of Natural Resources and my Crown Lands branch in accommodating requests for land transfers with the LGDs is a fairly routine process. These were lands that originally were in the domain of the LGDs but were, for different reasons, usually problems of inability on the part of the LGD, in years gone by, to look after these lands that came back to the province but with the understanding that at the request of the local government districts they would be returned to them. I do so on a regular basis with different LGDs around the province; it is a fairly standard item on my cabinet agenda that I bring forward.

I can assure the honourable member that there is no reason why the department would not facilitate this request. It does take some time. There is a fair bit of paper documentation that has to flow. As I know my staff is taking note of the honourable member's questions, we will certainly check with my director of Crown Lands and move this on, unless there is some reason which the honourable member does not indicate, that there is some area of dispute, but I take the member's word that seems to indicate that this is a fairly routine land exchange. I will undertake to see that this matter moves along more expeditiously.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Chairperson, my questions are to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) regarding the government's decision to close the Flin Flon Crisis Centre. I want to begin by saying that I rise almost on a matter of privilege. Certainly, I think the generic matter of privilege because yesterday in this Chamber—pardon me, the day before in this Chamber, when I asked the minister whether he would have the time or whether he would be willing to come to Flin Flon to explain to the people of Flin

Flin why the crisis centre in Flin Flon, the only crisis centre to have its funding withdrawn, why that centre was chosen.

The minister then indicated that, although he would not attend to explain his decision, he did say that someone from the department would be in attendance. There was no one from the Department of Family Services in attendance last night to explain the government's position contrary to what the minister promised would happen, contrary to what the residents of Flin Flon, the chairperson of the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre, community residents who attended the meeting last night were led to expect would happen. Instead, what they got was a faxed letter from the minister which said the crisis centre was closed; it provided no explanation and said that the alternate service would be to have transferred crisis calls to the shelter in The Pas.

Madam Chairperson, there is a chronology to this particular event, which, I believe, is an indication of bad faith on the part of the minister, on the part of his department and on the part of the government.

On March 4, 1992, after a series of difficulties at the crisis centre, Ms. Marg Britton, the then-chairperson of the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre, received a letter from a Marlene Bertrand, who was the director of, I believe, the Family Dispute Services branch, in which the letter indicated that the No. 3 point, that evaluation of the crisis centre and services will be sponsored by the government and will consist in the assessment of services of the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre, as well as an evaluation of other funded services in the Norman region and a needs assessment to be conducted on a regional basis.

* (1130)

It went on to say, point 4, the department will provide an opportunity for the board of the centre to have input into the study and the choice of an evaluator.

Point 5. That once the results of the assessment are known, the centre will examine their service delivery and develop a plan to tailor services to meet their demand.

Madam Chairperson, when the minister first announced or first tried to justify the decision to close the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre, the only one that was attacked in this round of budget cuts, he said there was a review. When I challenged the

minister to table any part of that review, when I challenged him to show me any objective evidence which would have justified the decision to close the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre, he backed away. All of a sudden there was not any formal review. All of a sudden it became less clear why this decision had been made.

I certainly cannot express the anger and the frustration that existed at the meeting last night that was attended not only by the staff and the board of directors of the Flin Flon Crisis Centre but attended by the mayor, by representatives from HBM&S, from every service group in the community, from the broadest possible array of community representatives who understand how important that service was.

Madam Chairperson, I do not need to tell you how angry they were that this minister has tried to confuse the issue, to mislead, misinform the people about the rationale that was used to close the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre.

He first said there was a review. There has been no review; there has been no evaluation. The staff have not been consulted, as was promised in March of 1992. None of that took place. The minister is not being honest on this issue.

The minister then said that the decision was based on the availability of other services, and he mentioned in particular the Northern Women's Resource centre. The minister should know or should have known or knows now that the Northern Women's Resource centre does not offer parallel services at all. They offer a completely different set of services. They are not prepared to take crisis calls. They are not prepared to shelter women. They are not prepared to provide any of the other services that the crisis centre now provides.

Madam Chairperson, what is more frustrating for the people in Flin Flon are the difficult circumstances they find themselves in right now. The bed-night usage of the crisis centre has doubled in the last year. This minister should know and this government knows that the circumstances in Flin Flon are uncertain at best. There are hundreds of people facing layoffs, there are people moving in from the community of Snow Lake into the community of Flin Flon. There are people being asked to give up their jobs. There is a great deal of uncertainty, a great deal of pressure on families, on women, on children in Flin Flon today.

I cannot tell you how frustrated and angry and unforgiving the people in Flin Flon feel today as a result of the minister's callousness. I want the minister today to either table some objective information that would justify his decision to close the Flin Flon Crisis Centre, which has no other services available within a 150-kilometre radius, as opposed to making the other hard choices with respect to other crisis centres in the province or other services, other grants that this minister has.

I want him to justify it once and for all in some sort of objective fashion.

Hon. Harold Gillleshammer (Minister of Family Services): I always sort of admire the member for Flin Flon's (Mr. Storie) skillful use of words, and the way that he can attempt in his own mind and, with that skill, frame things.

I used the word "review" in one of my answers, and I indicate to you at no time did I ever say that there was a formal review conducted of-

Mr. Storie: Your department promised one.

Mr. Gillleshammer: We are talking about two different things. I am telling the member in my answer that I did not say that there has been a formal review, and that is what the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is trying to have this House accept and believe.

In doing our Estimates for this year, I have indicated that we reviewed all of the things that we do within our department and part of that review was the work that is done by Family Dispute Services. After that review, we made some very, very difficult decisions and I acknowledge that. I have indicated to him and to the House that this government, like all governments across this country, have very difficult decisions to make.

The member references the meeting last night and the fact that we faxed a letter to the executive director of the agency. We received that invitation by fax the day before and in answering that in the quickest possible way indicated that I would not be available to attend. But we have had two staff in Flin Flon working with the agency. The member is shaking his head and indicating that there were not two staff there. There were two staff that have been in Flin Flon working with—[interjection] Well, the member first says there were no staff there. Now he says, well, there were staff, but they were junior staff. We are prepared to send up the staff member that the member referenced in his comments.

Marlene Bertrand is available to go up there to work with the shelter. In that fax yesterday afternoon, I indicated because of my duties here in the House I would not be able to attend that.

The member acknowledges the fact that there is a Northern Women's Resource centre in Flin Flon. I am well aware that the northern women's resource centre does not provide parallel services, but it is one of the continuum of services that is delivered in that region. We have women's resource centres in a number of places in Manitoba, some of them doing different work albeit, but it is one of the service providers in that particular Norman region.

The member talks about the fact that bed nights have doubled. Part of the reason for that is that for a period of time, the shelter was in fact closed from—I can just find the date there—it closed at the end of March, I believe. The fact is that there have been difficulties there and if he wants to use figures, I think he has to acknowledge that the shelter was closed for a time.

At any rate, we acknowledge that very, very difficult decisions are made in government. His member has referenced that a number of times. I think if the member is aware of budgets that have come down in Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, preliminary budgets in other jurisdictions, there are difficult decisions that have been made.

I have told the member that we have looked at the services provided in that area on a regional basis and that there are services, including the northern women's resource centre as well as the shelter at The Pas. In addition to that, I have indicated that recently the Victims' Assistance Fund has provided the RCMP with funding to develop a victims' assistance program. The detachment in the town of Flin Flon received funding for a half-time co-ordinator. While program responsibility is at the local level, the RCMP headquarters has indicated to the branch that if victims require assistance to access shelter, the victims' services program would have volunteers to fulfill this need.

So there is a continuum of service within the Norman region, with a shelter, a resource centre and a victims' assistance program. So let not the member say that there are no services there.

Now he wants to reference the fact that in northern Manitoba it is more difficult sometimes to provide that service, and I acknowledge that. Whether it is Health, whether it is Education,

whether it is services provided through Family Services, because of the distance and because of some remote locations, certainly it is more difficult to provide some service, just as it is more difficult in western Manitoba to provide services in some areas than it is in the city of Winnipeg. That is one of the items that the member has to acknowledge that occurs in rural Manitoba. So there are difficult decisions to make. I acknowledge that. We have reviewed this within our department and as a result made some of these tough decisions.

* (1140)

Mr. Storle: Madam Chairperson, in all of that, since I began to ask questions on why the Flin Flon Crisis Centre was picked, was targeted, why those decisions were made, what rationale there was, what objective evidence, I have heard none.

For the minister to stand and say, well, there are not parallel services but there are other services available to women in crisis in Cranberry, Sherridon, Pukatawakan, Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, Creighton and Flin Flon is ludicrous.

Madam Chairperson, if the minister wanted to use that as a criterion, he would have closed the shelters in Winnipeg where there are literally dozens and dozens of support groups, groups similar to the Northern Women's Resource centre. That would have been the decision. He would not have chosen a community that is isolated. He would not have chosen a community where an equivalent service is at least an hour-and-a-half or a two-hour drive away. He would not have chosen an area that is underserved by Family Services, by Probation Services, by all of the other government services that are lacking in northern Manitoba.

Madam Chairperson, this was a callous, politically motivated, disgusting decision. On behalf of the people of Flin Flon and the surrounding area, I beg the government to reconsider, to reinstate the funding so that someone's life is not put in jeopardy because of this ridiculous decision.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, I have already acknowledged that it is difficult to deliver services in some of the remote areas of the province, but I do not accept the fact that the Norman region is underserved in the services provided by Family Services.

The member's solution to this is to close the Winnipeg shelter, which is ludicrous. We have 600,000 people living in the city of Winnipeg. It is

the largest shelter that we have in the province. It is the busiest shelter that we have in the province. The member says that the solution is to close the Winnipeg shelter. That is ridiculous.

The member does not acknowledge the fact that it is more difficult in remote areas of the province. We compare various regions. The Westman region has one shelter in the city of Brandon. People have to access that shelter from diverse areas of the province like Melita, Russell, Killarney and Boissevain, and the shelter serves those needs.

The member has named a number of northern communities. If he thinks that we can put shelters in all of those communities, that is not being realistic. The Norman region will be served by a number of services, including a shelter in The Pas.

Again, these decisions are not taken with any glee. We have a difficult deficit position in the province, and we have to make some of these decisions. I think if the member looks at what is happening in other jurisdictions, he will see that difficult decisions are being made there too.

Part of the difficult decisions is also to increase taxes. In our neighbouring province of Saskatchewan, which is very similar in size to Manitoba, the retail sales tax has now gone up to 9 percent. That is the solution the member is offering us, to raise taxes like the sales tax and personal income tax so that we can have shelters in every community across the province. That just is not realistic.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Family Services also. I appreciate we have a time limit. I know some others want to speak, so we want to be as expeditious as possible.

This is a very serious matter as all the matters are that have been raised by this side. I want to quiz the minister about the rationale for closing the Victor House. We discussed it in Question Period, but there are people in Brandon who just simply do not understand the rationale of the government in this matter.

The minister this morning referred to Victor House as an institution. The information I have—I was there, I met with the staff. I have had correspondence with psychiatric nurses in the community. They regard it as a facility and as a program to help people stay in the community, certainly not an institution. There is great concern

that the loss of the facility will create personal hardship for the individuals involved.

We have information that many of the people who are helped by this program suffer a great deal of insecurity. They have already indicated, one resident already is apparently very upset and is going to be looked after in the home of the manager. He said he simply is not going to allow him to go off on his own without support. So I wonder if the minister realizes that this is a community service to support people who live in the community. It is not an institution. I believe he visited Victor House once. I was told that he did.

The people involved in mental health and helping the mentally challenged in the area just do not understand the rationale, especially when they hear the Minister of Health talk about a community-oriented mental health program. I understand the Minister of Health is suppose to come to Brandon within the next week or two to announce expenditure money for community services.

So I ask the minister if he would reconsider this or, failing that, if he does not have money, would he negotiate with his colleague the Minister of Health to see whether the Department of Health could finance the continuation of this program.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member wants to make some distinction of whether it is an institution or a facility. I am not sure what distinction he is making. Our objective is to provide individual community living circumstances for these individuals. They are not going to be thrown out into the street. They are not going to be abandoned. Staff from the department are going to find community living accommodations for them, and we will work at that for however long it takes. Whether it can happen in a week or a month, staff are committed to finding those community placements for them. That certainly would seem to me to be the philosophy that that member's government portrayed not too many years ago, although it is getting to be a few years ago, when they were in government.

The member talks about the personal hardship. It is not the intention of the department to see individuals go through personal hardship. Accommodations will be found, and the department

and staff will work with those individuals until appropriate accommodations are found and afterwards as they adjust to living outside the institution or facility that the member references.

Certainly, he reads from *The Brandon Sun* that one of the clients there was upset. I do not dispute that. The change can be difficult for anybody. The changes that take place with people who have been in a facility or an institution like this, sometimes there is an adjustment period, but this was not intended to be some lifelong housing arrangement for individuals. It is a transition. What we are saying is that we are going to transition these people into the community, into individual living circumstances. Some of them will be accommodated in parental homes; some will be in foster home placements; and some will be in supervised apartment living, so there will be every effort made to accommodate these changes.

As well, I would assure the member that there will be community supports in place to work with these individuals.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I might alert the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that I would like to ask a few questions of him since he is in the House right now.

He is coming forward asking for some money to support the operations of government for the next period of time. I wonder if he can tell us a little bit in his opinion how the province is doing financially. Are we coming out of this problem we have been in, or are we going deeper in?

* (1150)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the question is general but still a very important question. I take it the member is specifically referring to the cash-flow status of the finances of the province.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

As I will indicate in my budget the week after next, revenues still continue to be pressured. I have been in conversation with other Finance ministers across the country and the problem on the revenue side continues. This should not surprise anybody.

What we are into is a period of significant structural change, although manifest in somewhat impressive economic growth numbers. We are into a situation not an awful lot different than my own

industry, agriculture, has experienced over the last 20 years.

Let me expand. Through radical restructuring and incredible technology coming forward, you have a situation where there is incredible productivity gains, and of course that is reflected in economic growth numbers.

That is no different than my industry went through over the last 20 years. We used to grow 20 bushels an acre of wheat and that looked pretty good; today we are growing 40 to 45 bushels an acre of wheat. The reality is in doing that we are contributing greatly to the nation. That is reflected in productivity numbers.

However, when you look at agriculture, and now you are looking at a lot of other industries, in doing that the result has been a reduction in employment numbers and corresponding to that, Madam Chair, there has been no increase, if not a falling profitability situation. Of course, as profitability of your firms and your businesses do not increase, obviously, government is going to experience problems. So we will be in this for some period of time, and that will be reflected in my budget.

As far as Manitoba per se, we will bring down a deficit that will be reduced from last year. Let me also say, cash-flow-wise we are in good shape, and matter of fact, Lehman Brothers in New York put out a piece just a few days ago saying that if there is one province in Canada that has a chance of being upgraded as far as credit rating, Madam Chairperson, it is the Province of Manitoba.

Our efforts are being seen as obviously being impressive in their own rights, but I do not minimize for one moment the difficulty that all the governments in this land will have on the revenue side.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I would like to reference two things though that I thought were interesting. The first is just a general question about sales tax revenue; we have spoken in the House about that. I wonder if the minister could tell us what his latest forecasts are, whether they are appreciably up or down from the most recent quarter.

The other thing I noticed in, actually it is in Maclean's magazine and I do not want to suggest that that is perhaps as reliable a source as one of the financial papers or The Economist, but nonetheless it showed Manitoba, relative to the rest

of the provinces in Canada, being in a relatively healthy position, given its debt-to-GDP ratio and yet its credit rating was somewhat lower than other provinces with an equivalent or worse debt-to-GDP ratio.

I am wondering if the Finance minister can explain what the difference is.

Mr. Manness: The credit rating in that case obviously was the Dominion Bond Rating agency of Canada. That is our so-called only credit rating agency.

I am here to tell you that within the world of finance the DBRS is not that highly regarded but, nevertheless, we take them seriously also. I would think that what concerns Walter Schroeder of DBRS when he looks at Manitoba primarily still is the tremendous social programming that we have vis-à-vis other provinces in the land. As a matter of fact, he has told me that.

When you want to take into account the whole breadth and width of the social programming structure that we have locked in in this province as compared to other provinces of our fiscal capacity size, he is troubled by that. I would think that is probably the main reason he is giving us a midterm rating.

Let me say, though, when you look at the American raters who look even in much greater depth at the numbers and indeed all of the liabilities, all of which are recorded by the way except of course the pension liabilities, we are given a very, very—we are on a credit rating watch but on a positive one. I know that if we had been able to bring down—if the deficit had not escaped on us this year we would have probably been upgraded.

I say to the member, those are my general comments with respect to what he has read in Maclean's. As far as sales tax revenues, they continue to rise slightly, one month down, the next month up a little stronger. I will report more fully on that in the budget coming down.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, to the Finance minister again, then the difference, I mean, with Quebec with 34 percent debt to GDP having a higher credit rating than Manitoba is simply a matter of the social programs, the difference in the number of social programs that we have between Quebec and here?

Mr. Manness: Well, I would not want to be that categorical, but certainly in discussions that I have

had with Schroeder he is mindful that when he looks at our level of programming compared to the other provinces of our size, nobody has the locked-in, the built-in social structure that this province does. He is concerned about it, because he knows that you just cannot move quickly out of it. We have seen the experience of that in the House over the last week and a half. You begin to reduce the program and it is worrisome to some.

On the revenue side, of course, he does not see where we have the potential in the natural resource side as Saskatchewan potentially someday might. Yet he is impressed with our hydro. Once Ontario backed away from Conawapa certainly that had some significant negative influence on our own Canadian rating agency.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Chairperson, I have just a number of questions to ask of the Minister responsible for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship with respect to the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

I would ask the minister at this point, does the minister intend on bringing in legislation to repeal the MIC act?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Chairperson, yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate to the Chamber if in fact she is giving any consideration to bringing in MIC possibly in another form into The Multicultural Act?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I think I have indicated in this House and as a result of the Don Blair report and the primary recommendation that we repeal the act and turn the Manitoba Intercultural Council back to the community and remove any government authority, I suppose, over the Manitoba Intercultural Council, we will in fact be repealing the legislation.

I look forward to the Manitoba Intercultural Council's deliberations over the next period of time to focus on their agenda, what they believe their agenda, their role, their mandate, should be and how they believe they should serve the community that they represent. It will be interesting.

I think, Madam Chairperson, that we can look forward to a very strong and active Manitoba Intercultural Council as a result of the community taking that ownership and ensuring that they represent the broad cross-section of ethnocultural

communities and regions in the province of Manitoba. We look forward to their input and their self-determination on what they believe the Manitoba Intercultural Council should be to them in the future.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I have had a number of conversations with different individuals who have participated in the Manitoba Intercultural Council. They have expressed that even if they do not have any responsibility with respect to funding, they are not given any money from the provincial government, the government does not hire the executive assistant and so forth, that there is some merit to having MIC, unless there is a change in name or whatever it might be, but the concept of an MIC having that incorporated into The Multicultural Act.

I am wondering if the minister would be prepared to comment that if the community as a whole felt that that concept should be incorporated into The Multicultural Act, would the minister bring in an amendment to The Multicultural Act to implement such a change?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I suppose that is an item that might be debated at the biennial assembly that has been organized by the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I guess when you incorporate a community body into legislation of some sort, there are powers on both sides. I question whether if there is no government involvement in any organization and government is not given any power over that organization whether indeed there should be legislation. So that is an issue that should be debated.

* (1200)

Along with legislation comes certain powers. There have to be powers for a government. There are powers for an organization and powers for a government. If in fact the community believes, and I think they do, that they do not want government to have any part in determining what the makeup of the board should be, what the role and the mandate should be, then indeed I question whether any organization should be incorporated into legislation. We will look forward to deliberations through the biennial assembly and input from the community on indeed what they believe the role and the mandate should be. I do not anticipate that I will become involved in trying to give direction to them. I believe we have a very strong vibrant community out there

that will rise to the occasion. I have every confidence that they will have a very strong organization that will represent the needs and the concerns and the issues of the community that they serve.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, as I say, the concept I believe is a good one. I believe when the NDP government at the time came up with the idea, had it been handled in a different fashion, that in fact we would have seen a more active body, a more apolitical body, and so forth. We have had this debate for a number of years already, we have had bills, we have had resolutions, talking about how we could depoliticize for those who believe in fact that it has become political. In some part, because of the political appointments, it was perceived as a political body. That is unfortunate.

This is why I am encouraged when the minister said that previously when she was looking at a multicultural act that she wanted MIC to be a part of that multicultural act. We had assumed that the minister was going to be taking into consideration at least a number of bills and resolutions that I on behalf of our caucus had introduced into the Chamber, and those suggestions the minister has in fact followed. But she has gone that extra step by taking MIC out of legislation, period.

Now, there are merits. There are a number of merits as to why I believe MIC or the concept of MIC should be incorporated into The Multicultural Act. Like the minister, I, too, go out to a number of different events and you hear continuously, Madam Chairperson, of things in which MIC or the concept of MIC could be dealing with, possibly in an advocacy role which can be a positive thing, possibly as an advisory role to the minister or to the Legislature or to politicians as a whole.

We have seen excellent examples of MIC performing or having first-class reports, such as the combatting of racism to the bridging of the different communities, the different ethnic communities, that are out there. This is one of the reasons why we feel that it is ultimately imperative that this minister do not rule out the possibility of bringing in an amendment to The Multicultural Act. The minister can comment on that if she so chooses, otherwise I am going to go to the government House leader just to wind things up.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, from time to time, all acts of the Legislature are amended and

there is no exception to The Multiculturalism Act in the future. So I will just leave those comments and look forward to debate through the Estimates process on this issue.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I only have just a couple of questions with respect to Bill 4, to the government House leader.

Madam Chairperson, we passed the bill into the committee. The bill was never brought to committee. If Bill 23 is brought in and introduced, we have seen other cases inside this Chamber that what happens when a bill is introduced and another bill—it has been private members' bills—was related to that bill, that the bill was in fact ruled as being out of order because there is a bill that is taking it into account.

I am wondering if the government House leader has consulted with the Clerk's Office or the Speaker to find out, if Bill 4 is not dealt with prior to the introduction of I believe it is Bill 23, will in fact Bill 4 become nullified?

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairperson, that will become self-evident quickly in due course. I am here to assure you, though, that we have sought legal advice as to whether or not Bill 4 could be subsumed. We sought legal advice to whether Bill 4 could be dropped. The reality is, we want to proceed with both bills simultaneously. We have done that after seeking Legislative Counsel advice.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, can the government House leader tell us or indicate to the Chamber if in fact Bill 23—or there is any requirement for Bill 4 after April 5? Would not Bill 23 override it?

Mr. Manness: As you say, I know it is out of order, but the member should ask me this off the record. It will all become clear in short order.

Madam Chairperson: Shall the resolution be passed?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Madam Chairperson: Pass? The resolution is accordingly passed.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means has adopted a resolution

respecting Interim Supply, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 21—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that leave be given to introduce Bill 21, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993 (Loi de 1993 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), and that the same be now received, read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

* (1210)

SECOND READINGS

Bill 21—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that Bill 21, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993 (Loi de 1993 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), be now read a second time and be referred to a Committee of the Whole House.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill 21, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993 (Loi de 1993 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), for third reading.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill 21, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993; Loi de 1993 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, for third reading, with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 21—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. The Committee of the Whole, please come to order to consider Bill 21, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Madam Chair, I will take only about a minute, but I feel it is incumbent that I say something about the bill. What the bill is seeking is interim authority to provide interim spending. The amount of authority requested is \$1.77 billion roughly, being 35 percent of the total sums voted in The Appropriation Act, 1992. This amount is estimated to last until approximately the end of July 1993. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Chairperson, I wonder if the minister could explain how this concurs with previous requests. Is there anything unordinary about this particular request or is this normal, traditional? Is there anything unusual about the request as per this Interim Appropriation Act?

Mr. Manness: The short answer is no, and I believe the long one would be too. There are contingency clauses that have been built into this as indeed other Interim Acts, Supply bills have had built into them. I have chosen to seek authority until the end of July, not knowing how it is this House might conduct its affairs over the course of the next two or three months.

That was about all that I have entered into this bill as far as a judgment, specifically the 35 percent factor.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to consider the bill clause by clause, or is it the will of the committee to block the clauses?

An Honourable Member: Block the clauses.

Madam Chairperson: Block the clauses?

Clauses 1 to 10—pass; Clauses 11 to 14—pass; Preamble—pass; Title—pass. Is it the will of the committee that I report the bill? [agreed]

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION**Committee Report**

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 21, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993 (Loi de 1993 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), and has directed me to report the same.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT STAGE**Bill 21—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993**

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, with leave, I move, seconded by the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger), that Bill 21, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993 (Loi de 1993 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) have leave? [agreed]

Motion agreed to.

THIRD READINGS**Bill 21—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993**

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, by leave, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 21, The Interim Appropriation

Act, 1993 (Loi de 1993 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) have leave to for third reading of Bill 21? [agreed]

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL ASSENT

Mr. Speaker: I am advised that His Honour the Administrator is about to enter the Chamber. All rise.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and faithful subjects, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba in session assembled, approach Your Honour with sentiments of unfeigned devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty's person and government, and beg from Your Honour the acceptance of this bill:

Bill 21—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1993; Loi de 1993 portant affectation anticipée de crédits.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The honourable Administrator doth thank Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, accepts their benevolence and assents to this bill in Her Majesty's name.

* (1220)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, April 5, 1993, at 1:30 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 12:30? [agreed]

The hour being 12:30, this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until Monday, April 5.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 26, 1993

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