



First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
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REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
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ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
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TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, September 27, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Federal Immigration Policies

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lourdes Troncillo, Louie T. Go, Amelia Garcia and others requesting the Legislative Assembly to request the Government of Canada cancel fee increases and instead institute policies that will encourage immigration to Manitoba.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Federal Immigration Policies

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS Manitoba has been immeasurably enriched socially, economically and culturally by immigrants and their families, and;

WHEREAS it was for this reason that successive provincial and federal governments have encouraged immigration to Manitoba, and;

WHEREAS since 1993, the current federal Liberal government has reversed these policies by instituting a series of changes making immigration more difficult; and

WHEREAS the 1994 changes in quotas for family reunification class of immigrants were unfair and punitive; and

WHEREAS the fee increases for immigrants instituted in the 1995 federal Liberal budget are neither fair nor justifiable and border on racism, and;

WHEREAS the new \$975 fee being imposed on adult immigrants is more than many immigrants make in their home country in an entire year, and will make it even more difficult for people from these countries to immigrate to Canada;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Government of Canada cancel these fee increases and instead institute policies that will encourage immigration to Manitoba.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Public Utilities
and Natural Resources
First Report**

Mr. Frank Pitura (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources presents the following as its First Report.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Tuesday, September 26, 1995, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the Annual Reports of the Manitoba Telephone System for the years ended December 31, 1993, and December 31, 1994.

At that meeting your committee elected Mr. Pitura as chairperson and Mr. Sveinson as vice-chairperson.

Mr. Tom Stefanson, chairman, Mr. Bill Fraser, acting president and chief executive officer and Mr. Barry

Gordon, vice-president, network services, provided such information as was requested with respect to the annual reports and business of the Manitoba Telephone System.

Your committee has considered the Annual Report of the Manitoba Telephone System for the year ended December 31, 1993, and has adopted the same as presented.

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

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am privileged to present the Annual Report for the year 1994-95 of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): I would like to table the Annual Report 1994-95 for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation and the Manitoba Housing Authority.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): I wish to table the Annual Report for the Department of Natural Resources for the year 1994-1995.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Department of Labour 1994-95.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): I am pleased to table the Quarterly Report for Manitoba Telephone System for the Second Quarter ending June 1995.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): I would like to table the Annual Report 1994-95 for Rural Development and also the Annual Report 1994-95 for the Manitoba Water Services Board.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today a delegation from the Parliament of India led by the Speaker of that Parliament, the Honourable Shivraj Patil.

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

Also seated in the public gallery this afternoon, we have from Skownan School, twenty-eight Grades 4 to 6 students under the direction of Ms. Corrine Park. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Telephone System Board of Directors' Remuneration

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier.

Madam Speaker, yesterday at committee we learned that the Manitoba Telephone System had increased—the government had increased the amount of remuneration to the politically appointed board members of the Telephone System by some 90 percent.

This increase took place of course after the election and represents a very, very large percentage increase. The morale of people that knew about it, the employees of the Telephone System, has been affected in a very negative way, Madam Speaker.

I would like to ask the Premier, does he think it is appropriate that his government should raise the rates of politically appointed board members by some 90 percent at the Telephone System at a time when many other employees are being required to take very, very stable, if not decreases, increases?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, as the member probably knows, that increase to the remuneration of those members of the board amounted to an increase that was the first in 14 years. If they had received the same increases as the employees had, they would now be getting double this new rate—double this new rate.

So the recommendation of course came from the Crown Corporations Council which had surveyed similar appointees in both the public and private sector and had concluded that if these people were in the private sector, for running a corporation of this nature, for being on the board, they would be in the \$20,000-plus range.

So, Madam Speaker, the stipend that is paid them, the remuneration that is paid them is substantially less on all counts than it would be in any other respect.

Mr. Doer: The Premier never answered the question about the huge percentage increase.

I would like to ask the Premier a further question. The Hydro Board, politically appointed board members, again after the election, went up some 36 percent in terms of the remuneration for those board members. The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation has gone up some 107 percent in terms of increases to the remuneration of board members.

Does the Premier not think that this is inappropriate at a time when he is ratcheting down the salaries of public employees, ratcheting down the investments in groups like antipoverty organizations, when he is potentially decreasing the amount of money going to children that are on social assistance? Does he not think that this is sending the wrong message throughout the province of Manitoba, one rule for Tory-appointed board members and another rule for the rest of Manitobans?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I repeat the same analysis that the member opposite obviously did not listen to. Based on the recommendation of the Crown Corporations Council and the analysis that they performed, the increases still leave them less than half of the rate that they would be paid if they were in any

other similar corporation as a director. If they had received the same increases as the employees of those corporations, again, they would have been receiving increases far in excess of what they were given.

Based on that analysis, the Crown Corporations Council asked for that increase to be given.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: The government and the Premier, in answers to questions dealing with very, very serious situations such as the doctors' withdrawal of services here in Manitoba, have continually used percentage increases and talked about one percentage increase versus another.

Does the Premier not think that for massive increases, in some cases of over 100 percent for politically appointed Conservative-appointed board members like Arni Thorsteinson and other people that are working on a part-time basis on a board of directors in a Crown corporation, having 100 percent increases in some cases for those people sends the wrong message out for people like doctors and others that are trying to deal with the provincial government?

It is inconsistent, it is unfair, and it is a double standard.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, that is why we do not have politically motivated kinds of decisions being made by the member opposite.

These are people who have not received an increase in 14 years. Any other comparative analysis of the employees would have given them a substantially bigger increase, substantially larger increase if they had received the same increases as the employees had year upon year upon year. That is the point that the member opposite wants to ignore for his own political purposes, and that is why he is on the other side of the House.

Emergency Physicians' Strike Government Action

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): My question is to the Minister of Health. Of course the logic does not

apply to doctors who are the lowest paid in emergency rooms in Canada. That logic does not apply.

My question to the Minister of Health is, can the minister explain why, according to the mediator involved in the doctors' strike, that it was the government that refused to budge on its position, thereby forcing the talks to break down? The government went out, they met with their negotiators of MHO and refused to budge, refused to move from their minus-2 percent position and that is why the talks with the doctors have broken down.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, after the physicians received a 26 percent increase two years ago and now ask for 15 percent more, does the honourable member want to tell the nurses and other health professionals who voluntarily accepted a minus-2 percent that those demands are reasonable?

Binding Arbitration

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, will the government stop bargaining in bad faith, because I believe they are bargaining in bad faith, and will they agree that in order to stop this strike and serve the public of Manitoba that the government today will agree to binding arbitration to get this matter solved?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): As I recall, Madam Speaker, when the nurses and others accepted minus-2 percent, it was not on the basis of some binding arbitration process.

I would ask the honourable member to understand, and others to understand, that we are working in a very different kind of climate than the honourable member conjures up for all of us where we can afford a 15 percent increase for doctors who got 26 percent just two years ago. Our bottom line here is to provide services for Manitobans. It was not our idea, Madam Speaker, that this strike should have begun in the first place. We were there. We would have been available to continue discussions as long as it took to arrive at a resolution.

Mr. Chomiak: My final supplementary to the minister: Will the minister stop refusing to answer the question? Will he simply try to solve this situation for the benefit of all Manitobans and agree that the government will go to binding arbitration in order to resolve this issue?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, it has never been our wish that we be in this situation in the first place. We are attempting to operate extremely important services for Winnipeggers and other Manitobans. We have put in place a contingency plan which we hope will continue to work, and we would continue to urge the MHO and the MMA to carry on discussions so that we can resolve these matters.

Social Assistance Food Allowance

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, last week the ministers responsible for social programs met in Winnipeg.

The federal government's budget earlier this year cut 24 percent for three categories of programs after the Canada Assistance Plan is eliminated but only 7 percent for other department programs. In spite of this, not one minister from Manitoba went to Ottawa to protest these cuts.

In view of the fact that Manitoba is going to lose hundreds of millions of dollars starting next year and the year after, why is this minister continually talking about the advantages of flexibility, including, in her speeches and in Estimates and in the communique from the conference? What good is flexibility when there are hundreds of million dollars less for social programs, including the budget for food for children?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for that question because it does provide me with the opportunity to indicate to the House today that ministers of social services right across the country, regardless of political stripe, are experiencing difficulty in coming to grips with the cuts that will be coming in next year's budget and subsequent years. In fact, there was a general consensus by ministers from New

Democratic Parties across the country and Liberal Parties across the country that we as provinces would not be able to backfill upon the cuts that have been made by the federal government.

The reality is we will have less money to spend, not more, and the reality is also right across the country that we are going to have to find new ways of delivering services to people that are most in need right across Canada.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if she or her government has decided how they are going to make these cuts and whether or not they are going to be spread out evenly over the whole government or those three departments, or whether people on social assistance and child daycare are going to take a disproportionate amount of those cuts including children on social assistance because this minister intends to reduce their food allowance.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, the decisions around where the funding will go will be as a part of the Estimates process in next year's budget announcement.

But I want to reiterate that we are not the only province that is in this situation or circumstance. There is not any government or any minister that was at the meeting last year that had all of the answers to the problems that will exist. I also want to say once more that all provinces right across the country said that they would not be able to backfill upon former commitments that were made through funding from the federal government that will be cut in the future.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services why she intends to cut the food allowance for children when at the same time last week Manitoba hosted a dinner at Le Beaujolais Restaurant. Why does this minister have money to treat 125 people at this restaurant when, at the same time, she has no money for the food allowance for children on city social assistance? She has money for chateaubriand but no money for children.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, I reject totally the preamble of my honourable friend. In fact, he does not

have his facts correct. Indeed I indicated in my previous answers that every province right across the country is experiencing the same difficulty and the issue—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (1350)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Family Services, to complete her response.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, every year there is a minister's meeting in a different province right across the country and it has been customary that there is an event that takes place, a dinner one evening through that conference. It was Manitoba's turn to host that and we hosted that. I reject the numbers and the comments that were put on the record in the preamble by my honourable friend.

I want to indicate, Madam Speaker, that the issues that are facing us are issues that are facing all ministers, all governments of all political stripes right through the width and the breadth of this country.

Social Assistance Housing Costs

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, the people of Manitoba are not impressed when this government raids the cupboards of low-income families and then has a seven-course meal for the ministers of the provinces across the country.

I want to ask the Minister of Family Services a very specific question: Does the minister know that a single parent with one child on social allowance receives \$387 for rent including utilities, but the average two-bedroom apartment in Winnipeg rents for \$559? Does the minister know this?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I thank my honourable friend for that question, too, because it does allow me to indicate that we believe as a government that the best form of social security is a job, Madam Speaker. That is why we are undertaking new initiatives in co-operation with the

federal government under Taking Charge! which will indeed address the issue of trying to solve the problems and the issues around single parents being on welfare and not in the workforce.

Madam Speaker, we are working aggressively to try to ensure that the economic climate in the province of Manitoba is such that single parents will have the opportunity to be independent of social allowance and part of our workforce and contributing in a positive manner to our community.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister then is admitting that this government's economic policy has failed and that is why there are thousands more people on social allowance in this province—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Radisson, please pose her supplementary question now.

Ms. Cerilli: Would the minister admit that what she is in essence saying is that social allowance recipients have to choose between eating and having a decent home to live in?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I totally reject the preamble to the question or the content of the question that was asked by my honourable friend.

I have to indicate to you, Madam Speaker, that there are less single parents on social allowance today than there were under former administrations. The numbers are not increasing. As a matter of fact, they are decreasing.

I want to indicate to my honourable friend that she should have been present at a graduation ceremony that I attended this summer where 16 single parents, social allowance recipients, were trained as a result of an initiative between several different government departments and the private sector that trained on the job 16—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Family Services, to quickly complete her response.

Mrs. Mitchelson: At the end of the training period, there were 13 more single moms employed in the private sector with permanent jobs as a result of one small program, and that is only an example of the kinds of things we are doing as a government to try to address the issues of single parents.

Ms. Cerilli: There were in 1993 over 56,000 adults and children on social allowance in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Radisson once again. This is the third question I have recognized the honourable member for, the second supplementary question. There is to be no preamble on supplementary questions.

Would the honourable member for Radisson please pose her question now?

Ms. Cerilli: Can the minister tell the House how many of the more than 56,000 Manitobans on social allowance are using their food allowance to subsidize their rent?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, the choices that we want to provide for single parents are the opportunity to enter the workforce and feel better about themselves and contribute in a positive way to our community and to our economy. Those are the issues that we are attempting to deal with through the new programming and the new initiatives that we are putting in place.

Gaming Commission Report Tabling Request

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance, the Minister responsible for Lotteries.

Over the years this has been a government that has taken great pride in terms of the amount of revenue that has been generated through gambling. What they have been somewhat negligent on, Madam Speaker, of course, are the social costs of gambling. Prior to the election they commissioned a report headed by Larry Desjardins, a former NDP lotteries minister, and I quote from the press release that the then-minister

issued: The working group will prepare a report outlining its findings and respond to government by October 1.

My question to the Minister responsible for Lotteries today is, will he be having that report by October 1, and is the minister prepared to be open with the public of Manitoba and table that report?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the last time I had an opportunity to discuss this issue with the chair of the review commission, Mr. Larry Desjardins, he indicated they might be slightly late from the October 1 deadline but not very significantly. I will be talking to him again shortly to confirm when we can expect that report.

I want to tell the honourable member, he noticed a couple of weeks ago that we released the Volberg report. We released the annual report of the Lotteries Corporation. We released additional information on the community-by-community breakdown for more VLT sites.

We have committed to release the KPMG report on the economic impact of gaming here in Manitoba. We are meeting at committee tomorrow, I believe, to deal with the Lotteries Corporation, and I will certainly undertake to provide him a more definitive date, but I do expect that report fairly shortly.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would look for the Minister of Finance to give a commitment to this Legislature that in fact he will table that report publicly so the public will have the information before this particular session adjourns. Will he make that commitment today?

Mr. Stefanson: Firstly, Madam Speaker, I have no absolute assurance that the report will be available, but I will be contacting the chairman and confirm what his best date is now for the report.

As I indicated, he did indicate he might be somewhat late but not overly significantly late. Once we receive that report, obviously we will review it and we will determine how that report moves forward in terms of helping formulate policy around gaming in Manitoba.

Report Standing Committee Review

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, given the fact that this government made a commitment by October 1, will this minister ensure that there will be a standing committee that will deal in depth—for example, we have a standing committee where Manitoba Lotteries is in tomorrow, and we want to see an assurance from this minister that the members of this Legislature will have the opportunity to hold this government accountable for whatever the recommendations that might be coming out of that Desjardins report. Will he ensure and give us his commitment today that we will have that opportunity before this year comes to an end?

* (1400)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am sure many opportunities will be available over the weeks and months ahead to deal with issues such as the report of the Larry Desjardins committee, such as other information that has been provided around gaming.

I have already indicated we have provided significant information over the course of the last few weeks; we will be providing more very shortly on the economics of gaming. Once we receive the Desjardins report, as I indicated, it will form a basis for assisting our government with future gaming policies and decisions here in our province.

Student Financial Assistance Application Processing

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, this morning I very carefully studied Hansard and noted that on Monday the Minister of Education informed the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) that student aid had surpassed its old performance and so she implied that indeed student assistance applications were being expeditiously processed. Yet one of my constituents, a single parent on social assistance who is trying desperately to get off, who is due to begin training on October 30 and who will be cut off city welfare on that date, has been informed that because of computer back-ups at student financial assistance and because of the

effects of this on processing her application, she will likely not have any money for a period of one-and-a-half months.

My first question to the minister is this: Can the Minister of Education tell the House what recourse is available to this young woman so that she can begin her course with sufficient resources?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, the information I provided to the House on Monday was correct. The computer system was up and running and indeed any student who applied before the end of June 30, which is the guarantee that has been in place for many years, got their results before school start-up as they always have. Indeed, the applications ultimately, once caught up, surpassed the point they were at the year before. More applications were processed year over year once the computer system was up and running.

There was a slight delay mid-summer. Late applications then had a slight delay. That has been caught up and surpassed. The university has deferred the late fee for anybody that seemed to be caught in difficult circumstances. I will finish the rest of the answer with the next question.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, given that city welfare states that its offices had, quote, nothing but trouble from student assistance and especially with long delays like this one, would the minister undertake to examine the relationship between city welfare and student assistance and report back to the House?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, the two departments, Family Services and Education, work very closely together on a number of initiatives and a number of focuses, one of those being moving people from welfare to work through a number of avenues such as education and training. So we have a number of joint projects, Taking Charge! and a number of others.

In matters involving student aid there are co-operative procedures put in place to ensure that social assistance students are assisted as they go through university. Those processes have not changed. They

are still a very important focus of both departments of Education and Family Services.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, since the young woman in this situation either receives her student financial assistance and the opportunity for training and employment or she stays on welfare discouraged and dismayed, would the minister please instruct student assistance to process this application right away?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I should indicate that the Department of Education, as I indicated before, is ahead this year of where they were last year. I have said it three times today and I said it three times on Monday. The Department of Education does not let applications be dealt with in a tardy fashion.

If there are unusual circumstances with this particular applicant's application, if the member would like to draw the specific details to my attention, I will have those unusual circumstances looked into. But if it is simply a matter of applying late, because people are still applying, if someone has applied at the end of August, there is a certain amount of time it takes, naturally, for a turnaround.

If the member would like to contact me with specific details, I will look into it.

Student Financial Assistance Application Processing

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, my questions are also for the Minister of Education.

At the end of last week, according to student financial aid officers in the universities and student associations, there were 500 students at the University of Manitoba, 600 students at the University of Winnipeg, including some who had applied in June before the deadline, and 300 students at Brandon who had not received the necessary information to know whether or not they were going to get a student loan. This is in the fourth week of classes.

I want to ask the Minister of Education, does she still intend to assure the House, as she did on Monday and as she did today, that there is no—and I am quoting from

her reply to me on Monday—that there has been no ultimate delay in student assistance?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, there has been no ultimate delay in student assistance. I do not know how many times I have to say it before the member recognizes it. The pattern this year remains unchanged, in fact a little improved over previous years.

There is always a certain amount of turnaround time that is required. That turnaround time has not changed. It is in fact less than it used to be.

As well, I should indicate to the member that there are students who apply late. Those students' applications are currently being processed. Again, they are also ahead over where they were previous years.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, could the minister then confirm that at the moment, this week, student aid officers are receiving loans which were when people applied on July 26, they are now receiving notification there?

It is in fact, as we speak, a 10-week turnaround. Under the old system it was an average of seven weeks turnaround.

Mrs. McIntosh: I rose when the question was put, and I should indicate to the member, I did explain there are a certain number of weeks required for turnaround. The applications that are currently being processed are indeed the applications that were submitted for first-time perusal at the last week in July and the first week in August. That is the normal turnaround time that has been in place before.

The only guarantees that have ever been in place, not just this year but in previous years, for students to receive full notification before the beginning of school, are those applications that are put in place before June 30. It has always been that way.

Ms. Friesen: I would like to ask the minister again to make a commitment today to give us a date when students will know whether or not they have the loan that will enable them to continue their studies so that

the bookstores who have been giving credit for four weeks now will know when they will be paid and so that student loan officers who on a daily basis have been giving out emergency funds to students will know when they can begin to rebuild their funds.

Mrs. McIntosh: I know we are not to be repeating our answers. I know the member is also not to be repeating questions. She has asked the same questions now four times. It is against the rules of the House, but I will answer it again, if you will permit me to once again repeat what I have said before.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

* (1410)

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I think the Minister of Education was reflecting on my questions and perhaps she did not hear that this was a different question, asking for a date when bookstores—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Adjusters—Review

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for MPIC.

An organization called Support Autopac Victims Association, with their growing membership now approaching 400, has serious concerns about the treatment received from some Autopac adjusters and in some instances find the experience very intimidating. Would the minister review the practices of MPIC adjusters under the new no-fault system and satisfy himself that all staff are providing fair and courteous service to Autopac claimants?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Absolutely, Madam Speaker, and

further on that point, I would encourage the member to share any information he might have with me because I cannot think of more than less than half a dozen letters that I have received over the course of the year. We have dealt with those in what I thought was an appropriate manner, so I would appreciate any information he might have.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I will be pleased to share a lot of information with the honourable minister, Madam Speaker.

Advocacy Service

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): My supplementary question: Would the minister now consider establishing an advocacy service to help Autopac claimants who wish to appeal? This is similar to the worker advocate service in the Workers Compensation program. There is an internal review board which I believe includes legal professionals. So in order to make the review process fair and more equitable, would the minister consider establishing an advocacy service to help the clients?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, we have always indicated that as soon as would be seen reasonable, we were quite prepared to review all aspects of the program. When this was brought forward it created a significant change in the way we handle claims in the province, and we are always interested in making improvements.

As to a system such as the member is suggesting, I would suggest that we would be more likely to wait and consider that among a number of other changes that might possibly be proposed.

Funeral Expenses—Review

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I wonder if in the interim would the minister undertake to review the level of certain specific benefits paid under the no-fault system to ensure that they are adequate and fair? I give one example. Would the government, for example, review, raise the

payment for funeral expenses from \$3,500 to \$5,000 as was suggested when the no-fault legislation was first introduced into this House?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, as I recall there was some debate at that time. By most levels of judgment, our program is equal to or exceeds the standard of benefits that are offered in other jurisdictions and under other systems. As I said, we have indicated from the very start that we will undertake a full review of the system once we believe that we have sufficient time to assess how it is operating and the fairness of it.

Winnipeg Development Agreement Urban Safety Programs

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, among the initiatives announced on August 4 by the three levels of government as part of the five-year Winnipeg Development Agreement are two programs under urban safety—community-based crime prevention and an urban sports camp pilot project. The accompanying press release states, and I quote: that community groups, organizations, businesses, public agencies and government will be invited to submit project proposals.

My question for the Minister of Urban Affairs is, what method of invitation, other than the August 4 press release, is going to be initiated by this government in order that community groups and other organizations can make proposals under these projects?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): I welcome the question by the member for Wellington in the fact that with the announcement there is a lot of excitement for the fact that the urban safety initiative is being addressed by this government and by all three levels of government in trying to formulate a better approach to the safety and the concerns of the citizens of all parts of Winnipeg and not just the certain areas of Winnipeg.

What has happened since the press release, we have had very positive results from phone inquiries. We are

averaging from four to six inquiries per day for applications and for some more information as to when the programs and what the eligibility criteria will be.

The applications that the member is referring to are in the process of being at the printer right now. The member should realize that because we are dealing with three levels of government, there has to be an approval process by all three levels. That takes a little bit of time and a certain amount of bureaucratic red tape to handle, but we are trying to do it as expediently as we can.

Ms. Barrett: Why does the Minister of Urban Affairs not take a different approach from his colleagues, a more proactive approach and actively seek out community groups to apply for these programs, his colleagues who talk the talk but will not walk the walk when it comes to crime prevention in particular, an essential part of this government's supposed crime prevention strategy, why does he not actively encourage community groups to apply?

Mr. Reimer: Again, Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question because strangely as it seems, within the first week to 10 days of the announcement of the program, the first three groups that I went to see were the Gilbert Park residents, the Lord Selkirk Park residents and Rossbrook House outlining the program, outlining the areas that we are directing towards urban safety.

They were very supportive of the initiative. They were very thankful of the fact that those were the first three groups that I contacted on a personal basis, sitting down with the people and explaining the program. I asked them to make sure there is a proposal or a direction toward some sort of proposal on urban safety coming through their initiative. So we have been very proactive, not only with the forms, but in going to seek the problem areas and the groups that could benefit.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wellington, with one very quick supplementary question.

Ms. Barrett: So am I to understand from the Minister of Urban Affairs that the only proactive action that has taken place by this government to inform community

groups is the few groups that he actually decides to talk to rather than—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put. The honourable Minister of Urban Affairs, with a very short response.

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, the three groups that I mentioned to you are groups that approached me and asked for some information. I will go to any group that is wanting information. If there is an invitation that is put forth for a further explanation by this department or by this minister, I will talk to them.

There are a lot of groups that are out there that are asking for information. The information is going out through the department. The response has been very, very positive. These three groups were the groups that approached me first. I will still go out to any group that approaches me wanting to get information, or someone from my department will go out, even if there is an MLA who wants to get information.

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

Does the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs have leave to revert to Tabling of Reports? [agreed]

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report for the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 1995. I would also like to table the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board Quarterly Report for three months ended June 30, 1995. I would also like to table the Quarterly Report for the Communities Economic Development Fund as of June 1995.

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

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I would like to make some committee changes.

I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows:

The member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger); the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) for the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck); the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst); the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay); the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

Motion agreed to.

* (1420)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, would you please call Bills 5, 17, 2 and then the balance of the bills as listed in the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 5—The Education Administration Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), (Bill 5, The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire), standing in the name of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) who has 19 minutes remaining, standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) and standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing?
[agreed]

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to continue my comments in debate on Bill 5.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am having great difficulty hearing the honourable member. Those members who want to carry on a conversation can do so in the loge or outside in the hall. The honourable member for Transcona to continue.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to continue my comments in debate on Bill 5. When last we had the opportunity to speak to this bill, which is an amendment to Education and changes to the Education department in this province dealing with three specific areas, I outlined for members of the House some of the difficulties that had been relayed to me during my conversations with the principals at the various community schools for the Transcona-Springfield School Division No. 12. I had the opportunity, as I indicated, to talk with several of the principals in the community because this legislation, I believe, will deal with and will impact greatly on principals and their duties and responsibilities. Therefore, I thought it was only fair that we had the necessary discussion with principals to find out more about their job, and what we would see by way of impacts on their job.

This legislation, as we said before, will impact on three specific areas, the three specific changes that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) is proposing in this bill. One is the impact on the duties and responsibilities of principals. We all know that principals are having a very difficult time in, I am sure, meeting the requirements of their job. It is, I am sure, not easy trying to administer the activities of the school and deal with the problems that are encountered, because there are so many more social problems that are brought to the school, as well as the educational problems that would be encountered, that the principals would have to deal with.

Another area that is being dealt with by this legislation is with respect to the school advisory councils. I know that the principals whom I have spoken to have indicated to me that they are quite concerned that there does not appear to be a clear definition on the word "advisory" and how that is going to be structured, and the meaning that is attached to the word "advisory" can change the intent of how community parent councils have their responsibilities assigned to them.

Some parent councils, because we have had parent councils in our community now since 1978, have worked, I believe, very effectively in advising the principals and the school board trustees. If the minister means that the advisory bodies are going to take on a much more administrative role in the fact of being able to be involved in the hiring and firing of staff, including principals, teachers and other divisional staff, then I have a great deal of difficulty with that concept. I know in talking with teachers, parents and principals in my school division, they also have difficulties with that concept, so I hope the minister is not meaning that the advisory councils will take that role.

A couple of principals have indicated to me that they were quite concerned that there was opportunity, if the minister meant the parent councils that she is proposing or will be mandating will play that administrative role in being able to hire and fire, that we could potentially see that there would be special interest groups coming forward and actively seeking out and gaining control of these school parent advisory bodies, and that would therefore put forward their agenda and would override the concerns and interests of other parents who have children in those schools.

So there is that problem, and there were specific groups, which I will not mention here, that some principals had mentioned to me that could create some difficulties both from an education perspective, an interest perspective and perhaps even a religious perspective that may not be reflective of the overall general population for the community. That does cause some concerns for myself and also the parents, principals and teachers of my division.

The problem that we have had in our division, and when I talked with the principals I asked them how much disposable budget they had for discretionary spending, and all of them indicated to me that they have very, very little room to maneuver.

The FRAME Report requires that the school division report back to the Department of Education, and there are very specific criteria that the trustees, the elected trustees, have to report back on, and that outside of those monies that are allocated through department legislation and policy, there is no way or very little

room for the principals to even bring in the parent councils to have some say in how those budget monies are spent.

In fact, one principal just last week told me that their discretionary funding is as low as \$200 to \$300. So I do not know how, first, the parents are going to have some input into that discretionary spending because the other part is mandated by the province, and secondly, whether or not the parents in the community that may wish to be representatives on the parent advisory councils would be able to find the time to take part in a process of budget deliberations. Not everyone is interested in that. In fact, I suspect there would be very few who would wish to be involved to that detail. I am not saying that there will not be some, but I suspect that there will be very few.

One of the other areas that I have received a number of calls on again this August and September, as I have every year since I was first elected in 1990, parents are calling me and our offices relating to the transportation of students. Now we, fortunately, in our school division have had over a number of years been able to provide a level of student transportation that exceeded, I believe, the minimum requirements of the province, and it met the needs of the parents. Over the last number of years, and in fact in particular since 1993, this government has cut back public school funding by 2 percent in 1993 and then in 1994-95 cut it back by a further 2.6 percent. Then just this past budget, the government indicated that they were freezing funding once again for the public education system in Manitoba.

This has put our trustees, our duly elected trustees in the Transcona-Springfield School Division under very difficult circumstances, I believe, in that they are now having to find ways and areas in which they can cut back their services that they have provided.

The trustees have indicated that they do not want to cut back on the educational instruction for the students and have decided to put the funding that they have left available to them into the hiring of teachers. We know that they have cut back on paraprofessional support by several hundred thousand dollars as a result of cutbacks in payments from the province. Now we are finding

that the trustees in the division which I represent have had to cut back on student transportation, bus transportation for the students.

* (1430)

One of the things that I mentioned last time was that the government has had a policy in place for some time that says that students living beyond 1.6 kilometres from school, regardless of hazards, safety hazards in the path of the student on the way to school or the age of the child, because some children as young as five and a half years of age can start Grade 1, not to even mention kindergarten in these cases, would be required to walk that up to 1.6 kilometres to school with no other considerations being given.

What I suggested to the minister when I last had the opportunity to talk on this bill, perhaps we need a graduated system in place to take into consideration that children perhaps from the ages of five and a half to eight years of age would be provided bus transportation if they lived perhaps one kilometre from the school if there were certain hazards in the way such as open areas where possible weather conditions could impact or that there were certain hazards such as high traffic vehicular corridors that could pose a hazard to the children or other hazards that I am maybe not aware of at this time?

There also needs to be consideration given for other circumstances that I have not been made aware of or unaware of at this time that perhaps should be considered as well. So perhaps the minister can take those comments back to her department and see if there is a way that a graduated student transportation system could be put in place?

I have put this idea to the parents in my community in one-to-one and group conversations. The parents seem very supportive of that position. In fact, they would like to see some action in those areas. So I make that recommendation to the minister.

The other area that I have had the opportunity to talk to principals with in particular, because it is the principals that deal with the suspension of students from the schools, this is an area that the minister has

indicated that there is going to be some changes in dealing with suspensions for students. I know that the principals now currently have the ability within the Transcona-Springfield School Division 12 to suspend students. The minister had originally indicated that she was going to allow teachers to suspend students from the school, and quite frankly I had some difficulty with that.

I was happy to see that the minister had changed her position on that and had gone back to a system that would have the teacher play a role in advising the school principals of a matter that was serious enough to cause a teacher in the first place to consider such action as suspension. But since the teacher in many cases could be at the point where they would be emotionally involved because of some circumstance happening in their school classroom that it would be better for the school principal to deal with matters such as suspension of students and that would allow the principal, in consultation with the teacher and involving the parents of the child that is involved and if necessary the school trustees, to make a decision on the suspension of a pupil from school.

One of the things that I would not like to see happen is that the pupil would be suspended from school or in fact even expelled from school without some other means of providing for the education of that student where possible. Because I think it would be the wrong step to take to expel students from the school without making provisions for the continuation of their education.

Expulsion or suspension of students does not assist with the education and that there is obviously some other areas dealing with behavioural difficulties for example that perhaps could be dealt with by other persons either in the school body by way of guidance counsellors or other professionals in the community that could assist with the for example behavioural difficulties that the student may be having. Perhaps there are home life difficulties and that there needs to be some talking with the student not just suspension of the student with no consideration of the causes.

This legislation as I have indicated will impact on those three areas. I listened in Question Period here

today to the questions that were posed by the members on this side of the House dealing with tuition fees for students in university. I find that we have received calls in our constituency office from students who are quite worried that there has been no resolution of these matters dealing with loans to students and that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought the member was debating Bill 5. He may be re-putting again the question that was asked four times in Question Period and the answer to that is that last year at this time 55 percent—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Reid: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the minister may be sensitive to this issue, but I only raise this—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Education is indeed sensitive to wasting time when bills are to be debated to go off topic consistently when we have real work to do back in our offices instead of listening to irrelevant debate on topics that have already been covered thoroughly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister does not have a point of order. I have clearly been listening to the debate. The honourable member has been speaking to the bill.

* * *

Mr. Reid: Mr. Deputy Speaker, perhaps the minister thinks that student loans are irrelevant to education to students, but we find it a very serious matter. I only

raised the issue because I have had representation made to my office by students who are waiting for processing of those loans, those loan applications, and at the same time principals have indicated to me in my discussion to them that this is a very important part in dealing with the overall education.

When I was talking about Bill 5, when I was dealing with Bill 5, I had the opportunity to talk with principals on a wide range of issues, not only dealing with the duties of principals and dealing with the student advisory councils and dealing with the suspension of pupils, but also the fact of continuing education in post-secondary education through community colleges and universities.

Student loan applications formed a component of the discussions I had with those principals in my consultations with them over the last two or three weeks.

So that is why I raised the issue that this is an important issue, not just the small areas confined to Bill 5, but the other areas as well.

So I raised this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are several areas here and I have raised my concerns with the minister that I think that are important to the people of my community. I ask that the minister take these requests seriously, that I have raised the matters here with her, and that she take those issues back to her department for a resolution and perhaps she can report back to the House at some opportunity that she has.

I thank you for the opportunity to raise these issues and to discuss and debate Bill 5. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to add a few words to this debate on Bill 5 regarding the Department of Education and The Education Administration Amendment Act as it is specifically called.

It is a very thin piece of legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It does not take you too long to read it. I wonder, though, I ask myself though about the significance of it. Sometimes very short pieces of legislation are very significant and sometimes big, fat

pieces of legislation do not amount to very much. I am afraid in this case I do not really know whether this legislation has much significance to the educational system of Manitoba.

I know it proposes some changes with regard to discipline, and I appreciate that the reference is made to establishing advisory councils, and I am not suggesting that advisory councils are necessarily a bad thing, but I really wonder if this legislation is necessary. You know, one definition of bad legislation is legislation which is not necessary.

I think some historian or some political scientist could perhaps study legislation of this Legislature and others and determine just what pieces of new legislation really make any difference or whether it should be brought in in the first place.

I think legislators and governments in particular who have the ability to bring in bills that have money implications—that is something that the members of the opposition cannot do; we cannot bring in pieces of legislation that have any monetary aspects, but, nevertheless, the government therefore takes the major responsibility in bringing in legislation.

I ask this question; I think it is a legitimate question. Is this piece of legislation absolutely necessary? Would our school system fall apart without it?

I was attracted to an article that appeared in the Stonewall Argus newspaper earlier this year, this summer, when an Interlake School Division Superintendent, Mr. Paul Bergan, was quoted as saying that some of the proposed amendments in this act will see teachers—he observed that the act was supposed to see teachers and principals taking on new responsibilities, but he says he does not agree with some of the proposed amendments. He says, although the primary thrust of the proposed amendments would expand the authority of school principals to ensure that the safety of school and its students is not compromised by individuals deemed to represent a threat and to make sure that the learning process is not interrupted.

Even though that is the case, he wonders whether we are really suggesting anything that is not already being

done. In fact, he says that this measure in large part is uncalled for. I am quoting Mr. Bergan.

He says, the amendments are definitely designed to empower teachers and principals but, as it exists now, principals are extremely busy with just running the school and handling the daily problems that arise from that. I cannot see them taking on any other duties. This is according to this Interlake School Division superintendent. He said that the proposed amendments would also give teachers the ability to suspend a pupil from the classroom which, in a sense, is already policy in some schools. So if it is policy in some schools, I do not see what prevents other schools from bringing in this policy if that is deemed to be advisable.

* (1440)

The original concept was for teachers to have the ability to suspend the pupil from the school if they were becoming a problem, but further consultation showed there was not any interest in this idea, according to this information and statement made by this superintendent. He says that any teacher in the Interlake School Division already has the right to take a problem pupil to the principal for a discussion on behaviour and if suspension from the classroom is warranted then that is the course of action that is taken.

I am quoting here. I am not sure what these proposed amendments actually include because the press release we have is not detailed in that respect, and in some cases, like the suspension of the student, the policy is not changing, Mr. Bergan said.

Again, I ask, is this legislation really necessary? Mr. Bergan said he thought that the revisions to the act were designed to set out a standard of rules governing the problem areas that schools are facing today. Of course, one of the problem areas being revised apparently is with respect to fines for disturbances and so on.

Well, without going into a lot of additional detail, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is that this legislation does not have a great deal of substance to it. I note, though, that the Manitoba Teachers' Society generally supports the bill. Well, at least it supports the concept

of school advisory councils and makes reference to the government's initiative to empower teachers with greater control of the classrooms, but they do have some reservations about how these concepts and initiatives may be implemented. The society supports parental involvement in children's education, and they welcome any regulation that helps parents maintain close communication with the children's teachers and fosters consultation and collaboration between them.

They recommend certain guidelines for the operation of these advisory councils. First and foremost, they should be governed democratically; one would think that would be understood however. A majority of council members should be parents of children in the schools. Another guideline that they recommend is that teachers who are also parents should have the right to be elected to the council as parent members, and that other school board employees who are parents should have the same right. Teacher representatives elected by the teachers of the school should be voting members of the council. The school principal should be a member of the council, they suggest. The council's vote shall be advisory only.

Then they go on to refer to the role of the school board. The school board has to maintain total responsibility for personnel, subject to legislation and provisions of the collective agreement, and, of course, the school board must maintain final responsibility for student placement in schools, subject to adequate consultation with the teacher's concern. They also suggest as a guideline that advisory councils must be legislated or regulated to act in a fair and reasonable manner at all times.

You know, having read the guidelines suggested by the MTS, I still have a very fuzzy notion of what these councils are supposed to do. Their role is very, very vague. I really do not know how effective they are going to be. I do not know whether they are going to be more effective because of a reference made in legislation.

It is possible that if the government is prepared to put some money on the table for these councils to operate, maybe they will be more effective. In other words, for a council to operate, they have to advise the members

of meetings. There will be certain expenses involved in operating the councils: paperwork, secretarial work and so on. So the question arises whether they will have a budget made available by the government or whether the school division will be required to make monies available.

For the life of me, I really do not understand why we have to legislate councils. I recall, and I am sure many members in this Legislature would recall, that we have had parent-teachers associations in Manitoba, indeed right across this country, who have arisen from time to time and have had the active participation of parents and teachers and have dealt with all kinds of matters to make their particular school a more effective school, to help raise the standard of education, to improve the environment of the students in the school and so on. Parents have taken it upon themselves to act in a voluntary way to help through these organizations.

Many years ago they used to be called home and school associations, but whether you call them home and school associations or parent-teacher organizations or advisory councils, whatever, the idea is the same. I recall the home and school association, I had a bit of involvement with many, many years ago, and I would say that we played a role in helping to make that particular school a better school for the students and for the teachers and for the community. There are all kinds of things that a home and school association or a parent-teacher association can do without having to have a legislated organization into being as this particular bill would do.

This bill would legislate, would create, legally create these advisory councils who I cannot see doing anything other than what the old home and school or parent-teacher associations would do. There is a problem in my mind. I do not know how they are supposed to interact with school boards. I mean surely we are not proposing that they take the place of school boards. I am sure that is not what the minister intends.

I would like the minister to address therefore the question, the more important question, how do you help to make the school boards more effective than they are today? When I ask that question, I am not in any way wishing to criticize the operation of school

trustees in this province. As a matter of fact, I salute those citizens who are ready to give their time, energies and talents to be on various school boards in this province and to help run the public education system that we have, assisted incidentally, which is still of fairly high standards but which has been under attack unfortunately in some ways by this government by underfunding.

It is regrettable that we have seen education cuts to the public school system while at the same time this government has seen fit to increase subsidies to private schools. I understand the private schools are now to receive an extra \$100 per student. They have not been cut at all. They have had a 150 percent increase in the past five years, yet the public school system is suffering financially because of the policies of this minister and of this government. That is a very sad state of affairs. Having said that, I would observe we still have a fairly good, high quality public education system in this province, but we have to be very vigilant and protect that school system and ensure that it thrives.

* (1450)

Part of that system of course involves the school boards. The school boards, of course, under legislation play a very specific role. But what I do lament is the fact that the community—and not any one community, but I think I can make this as a general observation—does not take the interest in the operation of the school on an ongoing basis except when a particular crisis arises, a crisis that may arise in terms of some parents' minds by proposed boundary changes of school divisions, a crisis that may arise in terms of its changes in transportation of school students or a crisis that may appear to arise in some people's minds because of some particular teacher being fired or some change of staff or whatever.

When you have these particular problems then the community gets involved, then you get meetings, you get demands from parents to meet with the school board and, of course, you can have some heated discussions, heated meetings, and these are well reported, usually in the media. Unfortunately, when it comes to election time you find that the turnout of the electorate for school board elections is very, very low.

I recall in Brandon, with an electorate of about 10 to 11 percent turning up, only 10 or 11 percent of the total eligible electorate turned out to cast the ballot to choose a school trustee.

Yet when a problem arises, people are demanding the heads, in a sense, of some of the school trustees. Many of these people I think who demonstrate and who attend the meetings and rallies perhaps did not even bother to vote in the school board elections.

So there is a serious concern we have about getting the public at large to be more interested in the operation of the school and show that interest by participating in the electoral process and going out to vote and to ensure that they have the people who they want to have on their particular school board.

But with the formalization of some kind of an advisory board, it does throw into question the continuing authority of the school board. There could be, once you have sort of given the advisory council some sort of a quasi-legal status, there could be problems. I hope I am wrong. In fact, I am sure the intent is really to supplement what the school board does, but at the same time there could be disputes, and so on, arising. The question then is asked, well, who is calling the shots? Who should have the responsibility for changing the policies in a particular school or in a particular school division?

So I really wonder whether this particular bill is going to do anything of significance in improving our educational system, in improving our public school system. Perhaps it addresses a question of discipline that has to be addressed in a different way but, as I said, one particular school superintendent does not particularly feel that this legislation means anything in his division because many schools—well, schools operate differently. They do not all operate the same, but many schools are already doing some of the things that are being referred to in this legislation. As I said, the other part of it, the establishment of school advisory councils, tends to be very, very fuzzy.

I know the bill will pass because the government wants to see it passed. It will be an interesting exercise in the future to see just how effective these school

advisory councils are or whether we are just creating another group of organizations or group of councils that may not do anything that could not be done anyway by a voluntary home and school association or voluntary parent-teacher association.

I suppose this could be an opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to talk at some length about the quality of education in our public school system and the problems that we are facing, not only financial, but the problems of violence, for example, and other problems that we read of today in the paper. Generally speaking, this legislation does not offer us much to chew on. It is a fairly light piece of legislation and one wonders really whether it is necessary.

With those few words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to further debate on this and to the vote on the question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, the matter will continue to stand in the names of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) and the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Bill 17—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), Bill 17 (The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? [agreed]

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the interesting components of Bill 17 are the provisions which enable the City of Winnipeg to regulate firearms and guns that are currently not dealt with in part 3 of the Criminal Code of Canada. In particular, those provisions are dealing with pellet guns or BB guns or what are commonly known as air guns. I will restrict my comments to that provision.

It was back in 1993 when the issue of the threat of pellet guns really came to the fore. My predecessor, the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), and then myself, publicly called on the government and the Justice ministers in particular, both the current Justice minister and the former Justice minister, to take action to deal with this rising threat of pellet guns. What we noticed and what we were hearing was that pellet guns were becoming a weapon of choice particularly among youth who were willing to engage in criminal activity or public mischief.

When we first called on the Attorney General to take action, the minister at that time responded that he really was not that concerned, and he is paraphrased in the newspapers of June '93 as saying that he had not heard of concerns, at least from the police, about low-velocity guns such as pellet guns. Yet at that time there had been a series of incidents involving youth using and discharging pellet guns within the city of Winnipeg.

As time went on in the course of 1993, incidents involving pellet guns grew and grew and grew in the city of Winnipeg to the point where by November the City of Winnipeg police were saying, and I am quoting from a television interview, statements by the police to the effect that pellet guns are used in many of the armed robberies that we see happening. They are used in the drive-by shootings that we have to go on from time to time, and they are used to commit significant property damage.

The police were telling us that they had seen pellet guns pierce a person's skin. They had seen people over the years with eye damage, and we have received quotes to the effect, and I quote: Pellet guns have become a significant enough problem that we have to look at getting the legislators to put some controls on the use and purchase of pellet guns.

Newspaper reports were becoming very common about pellet gun incidents in the city. Indeed, in November one newspaper article began by saying pellet gun shootings are becoming everyday occurrences in Winnipeg, and indeed a review over the course of a two-week period in November indicated that in every paper, or in every day's paper, there was an incident regarding pellet guns.

The police were saying we worry about pellet guns because there is no way for us to tell if they are real or not. A relatively recent incident in I believe Elmwood showed just how serious a problem this was, where a young individual was seen in an automobile with a gun and, as I recall, the police actually shot that individual believing that the pellet gun was a firearm as defined in the Criminal Code.

* (1500)

Well, in November 1993 we raised the issue through news releases and public appearances calling on the government to take immediate action. We were making the point that many pellet guns appear to be manufactured to get around the current federal regulations on firearms which restrict weapons on the basis of velocity. We have to recall that in Canada there are no restrictions regarding pellet guns. In other words, the Criminal Code provisions in part 3 do not affect pellet guns because of the velocity of those kinds of weapons.

It seems unusual that something such as a pellet gun, which is used to cause damage, which is indeed designed, manufactured and sold to cause damage, has no regulations. You can be any age, you can have any background and yet you can purchase a pellet gun, a pellet gun which can be just as effective in frightening an individual or succeeding in a robbery. I think from the public safety point of view, pellet guns are a real threat to the well-being of Canadians.

You know we have outlawed lawn darts, high-decibel whistles, certain chemistry sets—I think Etch-a-Sketch—and yet a pellet gun, with its purpose being the infliction of injury, goes without any regulation. It may be that the person using a pellet gun is the most likely to get hurt, but from reading all of the incidents in the newspaper and reading about how often pellet guns are being used in robberies in this city, we must also be concerned about the fear and indeed the injury that can occur.

It was in 1993 that there were two incidents in the province of Newfoundland, one involving a 14-year-old girl who lost her eyesight or lost the vision at least in one eye to the discharge of a BB gun. There was a

study by the University of Ottawa recently done that concluded that BB guns are the leading cause of eye loss among children in Canada—the leading cause.

The Janeway Child Health Centre in St. John's released a report in November of 1994 which showed that 13 percent of 550 child patients admitted to the hospital were injured by BB and pellet guns. Of those hit by BB fire, 62 percent were shot in the eye. As a result of this issue and the public awareness campaign that we were involved with, the current Minister of Justice did respond and apparently in late November of 1993—I think within a week after several public appearances or public presentations from this side—she wrote to the Minister of Justice at Ottawa and demanded restrictions on pellet guns. From what I understand from discussions in Estimates, the minister continues to raise this issue with her federal counterpart.

Now, when the gun control proposals were introduced in the Parliament of Canada by the federal Justice minister, he said that he was also concerned about this issue and agreed to undertake a consultation process to look at amendments to the Criminal Code, perhaps with a view to requiring FACs when one purchases an air gun, perhaps legislating an entire ban. It was my understanding, and I could be wrong, but it was my understanding that the federal Justice minister was only prepared to look at that issue once the current gun control legislation had been enacted and perhaps proclaimed. In other words, it was my understanding that the federal Justice minister was looking at one issue at a time.

In the meantime, action has to be taken. We undertook in November of 1993 and subsequently introduced legislation, at least the legislation went on the Notice Paper, and we worked with Legislative Counsel to design effective legislation for Manitoba to govern pellet guns or air guns in general. It was at that time that the federal Justice minister said that he was looking at solutions using the Criminal Code. I think the Criminal Code solution was critical there should be a national approach to this issue. In fact, I think there may be some arguments that the province is limited in its powers to deal with air guns given the federal presence in this area under the Criminal Code.

The legislation that we were looking at, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we were developing, was based largely on by-laws from the City of St. John's, Newfoundland, and the City of Toronto which both have by-laws governing the use of air guns within the city limits. We are aware that the complaints and the incidents of pellet gun use are restricted to the city of Winnipeg. At least we are not aware of a growing concern outside of the city of Winnipeg.

The legislation that is before the House is directed at the City of Winnipeg and what it does is simply allow the city, if it sees fit, to prohibit or regulate the sale, the display, the offering for sale, or the possession or transportation of pellet guns or air guns in general. What we have to do is look to the City of Winnipeg then to take meaningful action. We will be asking the minister in committee whether he has been involved in discussions with the City of Winnipeg and the current administration there and whether the current administration or legal counsel to the city has been developing by-laws for enactment at that level. Because it is one thing for this Legislature to enable the city to do something which is a vital and urgent concern, it is quite another to know that the City of Winnipeg will welcome such an amendment.

We will be discussing this issue with the minister and if discussions have not been taking place with the City of Winnipeg, we will certainly be urging that those discussions take place and take place now. We do not want to see, as we have seen with the maintenance enforcement legislation, this Legislature diligently passing legislation on a timely basis and meanwhile there being no ongoing or simultaneous consideration by those who have to actually implement the legislation. We want to see this legislation developed quickly at the city level and I hope that is taking place as we speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1510)

With regard to the wording in the bill, we will be asking the minister and the officials as to whether there should also be a prohibition specifically against the firing or discharging of an air gun in the city of Winnipeg just to make it absolutely clear that that kind of behaviour is not tolerated.

I am also concerned about the lack of definition of the words "gun or firearm," and I want to ensure that in no way will the words "gun or firearm" be interpreted narrowly to mean only what those words mean under part 3 of the Criminal Code. I also want to ensure that replica weapons or replica guns are included in the definition.

With those comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we support this provision of the bill, and we will look forward to the answers to questions and any representations that may be made to the committee.

I think that this is a good step. I think that legislation should be tailored to deal with the problems at hand and the problem clearly identified so far is the use of pellet guns within the city of Winnipeg. If it was other than that, we would be looking to province-wide legislation, but given the experience to date, the legislation appears to be tailored, and we will support it in principle.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

**Bill 2—The Balanced Budget,
Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Protection
and Consequential Amendments Act**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 2 (The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Protection and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'équilibre budgétaire, le remboursement de la dette et la protection des contribuables et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise this afternoon here and make my comments on Bill 2. Here we have a bill

brought into legislation just prior to election call, and as the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says, I guess it did work, but the legislation was brought in at that time. Something like what they have done over the past few years, just bringing in either legislation or bringing in programs on a huge white horse with a big flag and a lantern saying, we are going to do good for this province, we are the come-all of governments.

Well, here is a government who year after year since 1988 has run deficits and deficits. Year after year, after they were left a surplus, they start running deficits.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Why? They do not really give any reasons, but all of a sudden, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have no more deficits. We will not allow any more deficits. Poof, the deficits have gone away, or are going to go away. What they do not say, and what this bill does not say, is how they are going to do it. How are they going to run a balanced budget province? Now, we all know that whether it be in our own households or whether it be in our small businesses or large business that income and expense, that service, that expense, increase the revenue, perhaps you will have a balanced budget? Perhaps increase the revenue, you will have a surplus. Do not increase your revenues, no surplus. No balanced budget. A loss for the year.

This bill proposes that perhaps if we are going to have a loss for a year or two years that we should cut off our noses to spite our face, that we should not have any capital spending to provide an asset for the future. No, they do not say that. No deficit.

How is this balanced budget going to come about? Some more cuts? Some more job losses? Some more cuts in funding for infrastructure?

We are not sure, and I do not think the government is sure how, after so many years, that they are going to have a balanced budget?

They have said—

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): If we say we are going to do something, we will do it.

Mr. Clif Evans: Well, the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) who just last week indicated to this House that it was not necessary, this balanced budget legislation was not necessary. He said it right here from the questioning from the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

It is not necessary, but it is political will. It is political will; it is not necessary. Mr. Acting Speaker, here we have the senior member of this Legislative Assembly whose wisdom we have all listened to in the past many years tell us that this legislation is not necessary, that we can run this province economically and properly without legislation.

An Honourable Member: We can, but can you?

Mr. Clif Evans: The members opposite say we can but not anybody else. I mean, let us look at the past five or six years when talking about running something properly when we talk about deficits that are the largest deficits ever this Conservative government has brought into this province, \$800-plus million in one fiscal year.

Now if we ran our businesses or our homes the way that this government ran this province in previous years, we would be bankrupt.

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Do you remember Jim Walding?

Mr. Clif Evans: The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) asked me if I remember Jim Walding? Yes, I remember Jim Walding. I did not know him, but I remember him.

But I am sure there are members on that side of the House, government House, that would like to react the same way as was reacted in those days. I am sure there are members opposite that do not believe that the legislation brought in by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) is a do-all for this province, is a do-all to provide a balanced budget for the people of Manitoba.

* (1520)

Again the question is how? What is going to be lost? I think one of the things that probably could be

lost—well, we have got to balance our budget. Something has got to go. What is going to go? Our assets of the future, Mr. Acting Speaker. Our Crown corporations.

Is the do-all over there, Tory government, going to say, well, let us get together? Looks like we are hearing the Minister of Finance say, look, we are going to be short \$200 million, \$300 million, all right. Get together and say, okay, let us sell off MTS. All right. Let us make it, and we are going to show the people we mean business. It is going to be a balanced budget. What has happened? Privatization of MTS or one of the other Crown corps.

The same way they fudged the books to make it seem like a balanced budget or close to a surplus when they sold off McKenzie Seeds. It is going to be the same thing. It is going to be a rotation until everything is gone. How much is going to be left? All the Crown corporations are going to be sold off to balance the budget. On what? On the backs of the people of this province. There are going to be cuts, cuts and more cuts—sell off, sell off and more sell-offs.

This government, who talks about business management and fiscal management, members opposite, who over the past years that I have had the opportunity of knowing most of them here, talk about how fiscally responsible they are. Well, \$800 million-plus does not show me much responsibility to the people of this province. It shows me a lack of credibility, it shows me a lack of responsibility by this government, and now we have the Minister of Finance decide prior to an election call that we are going to bring in balanced budget legislation.

Then they went out throughout the province on their little white horses, their little white cars, telling the people of Manitoba that if you vote for us, we will have a balanced budget. Did they tell them there would not be any more funding for hospitals, personal care homes, doctors, nurses? Did they tell them there would be no more funding for roads and for the infrastructure of our province? Did they tell them any of that? No. Think about it. We have not raised your taxes for six years, six consecutive years. Read my lips: no taxes for six consecutive years.

Well, that is not the message I have heard in the past five years. You go out into the rural communities or you go out to different areas of this province and you will hear, well, why do I have to pay this now, user fee for this, user fee for that?

The local municipality is increasing my tax rate. This house, this property that I have had in my community for the last 20 years, where the basic value for this past year, the taxes are going up; the value of the property has gone down, but the taxes have gone up. Well, you have to pay for services. You want water and sewer, you want a good road in your community. The responsibility, the major responsibility I think is the responsibility of the head government of the jurisdiction, whether it be provincial or federal. They are our responsibilities that we as local jurisdictions and elected members have to our communities to provide those services.

But when there is no tax base, there is no money. It is the same with this balanced budget. If you are not going to generate any revenues, any further revenues, and manage your money fiscally responsibly, you are going to run into a deficit again and again and again. We have seen and heard this government telling us, they bring out the smoke and mirrors. They say the numbers are here, the numbers are over there and the numbers are under the table and perhaps there are some hiding in the closet, but we are going to balance the budget. Lo and behold, poof, again, the Provincial Auditor says, no, no, it is a deficit.

All of a sudden, well, we have to stop, we have to bring down the deficit. So what do we do? Let us take some tax credits off the people of this province. Over the past four or five years they have cut property tax credits. They have extended sales tax on items that are only hurting the people who cannot afford it. This record of no taxes, read my lips, that they have imposed, and it is common knowledge, it is right in the briefing notes that we see the hidden tax increases and a cutting of tax credits to people relates to at least a six-point hike in our income tax and at least an 8.4 percent rate on our sales tax. So over these past many years that they have been government, they have said, we have not raised taxes. We want to be fiscally responsible to the people of this province. [interjection]

Well, just to take slightly away from Bill 2, I want to talk to the Deputy Premier about the bridge to nowhere, as he so eloquently describes it. Why does he not talk to the mayor of Selkirk and the people from that community? Why does he not talk to the mayor and council from Selkirk how they feel about the bridge to nowhere? Let them see what the mayor will tell the Deputy Premier about the bridge to nowhere, and here, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is an asset of the future. Spending on something that will provide an asset and a service to the people of this province on a long-term basis is an asset. If you have enough assets, you have something. When it comes down to the bottom line, revenue expenditures are one thing, but we all know that through accounting—it depends who is doing the accounting—that if you have an asset then you do have something that is worth something for the future.

I believe that this bill is basically taking a very short-term view of the future for this province. You know, long-term vision—I remember some throne speeches and Budget Debates that talked about vision. Especially in my first few years here in this Chamber, Mr. Acting Speaker, I heard that word "vision" from the Conservative government, but what did I see? Not once did I see any long-term vision. I saw deficits at the end of the year. I saw cuts. I saw people losing their jobs. I saw roads being depleted year after year. I saw services to people who needed services, who could not afford it, taken away, and yet, even with all the cuts that they imposed during the period of time, all the jobs that were taken away from this province, all the jobs that would provide services and would provide a tax base for this jurisdiction and this province, wiped out.

* (1530)

I remember in Budget Debate one year when the former Minister of Finance, Mr. Manness—we were in discussion here when I said, if this government would consider looking at job opportunities, vision for the future, building roads, building bridges, building schools, it would provide jobs. A job is income tax. Read my lips though, no serious increases in income tax for six years, but still revenue back to the province with people working. Revenue is something this government has set their mind that the only thing they

know about revenue is VLT machines, but I will deal with that.

Getting back to what the former minister said, why should I or we provide 50 jobs at \$30,000 a piece and only get back so much in taxes? This does not make sense. That is the type of thinking that this government has in their minds. Let us not worry about that revenue. Let us not worry about the fact we have to pay out in social assistance and UIC millions of dollars that come out of the coffers of this province's budget.

No, Mr. Acting Speaker, this government does not take a very strong position on the long term of this province. I would like to quote former Premier Roblin who had said: who can say what the monetary cost is of not building a road, a school or a hospital? Long term. He had some vision.

Former Premier Mr. Schreyer had vision for the future on putting in something for the future, of having an asset for the future, spending correctly, getting a return on a long-term basis, not on a short term. Do we buy a house if we do not have money? Yes, we do. We mortgage. We go to the bank, we take out a loan and we try to make do. We try to balance our family budget day in, day out, week in, week out.

Mr. Downey: You never balanced a budget in your life.

Mr. Clif Evans: The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) says I have never balanced a budget in my life. The Deputy Premier likes to chirp about whether we can or cannot balance any budgets or whether I personally can or cannot. We all know that day to day we must work as families to balance our books, income, expenditures.

So this bill and this government says, well, if you have two cars, if you are fortunate enough to have two cars, it does not matter what year they are or what condition they are, but if you have two cars and one breaks down, then sell the other one to fix that one. Sell an asset to repair an asset. It does not make sense. That is what they indicate. That is what they would like to see. We cannot overburden ourselves as families. We certainly cannot. And we should not as families. We should be fiscally responsible as a family.

We should try to do our best as small-business men, small business people, to maintain a level. If you have a small business and you are doing your best to keep the business afloat and provide jobs and the building needs repair, do you lay off two people to save that money to fix your building? No. If it is possible, you go to an institution and you borrow that money on a long term, because it is an asset. It is for the long term. The longer the building stays in good shape, the longer you can maintain your business and pay your property taxes, pay people to work in your business, buy the commodity that you are trying to sell in your business.

We talk about the future. I see future as the people in this province. We are the asset. Our people are our biggest asset. We have our resources in this province. We have other things, but our people are our assets. We can provide to these assets stability. We can provide them with opportunities. That asset will more than return the cost that you have put in.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what are we and what should we expect? Should we expect an extension if toward the end of the fiscal year the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and the government of the day sees that they are not going to have a balanced budget? What are we going to see? What are we going to expect from this cut-and-slash government? What are we going to expect from the days of Clayton Scissorhands? What are we going to expect? Are we going to expect cuts?

Mr. Enns: Fairness, compassion and consideration.

Mr. Clif Evans: The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), the one that says, it is not necessary to have this bill, talks about fairness and compassion.

I look over there, I do not see any fairness and compassion, but what are we going to expect? What should we expect? We should expect more cuts in health care. We should expect more cuts in education. We should expect more cuts to infrastructure. We should expect more cuts throughout the labour force everywhere. We must balance the budget according to this legislation and according to this government. If we

do not, then we are going to take 20 percent of a minister's salary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when a government does nothing to generate further revenues except through the one way that they have in the last three years, they do not generate any revenue. There are no people working in this province, when there is no revenue whatsoever, so we will see further cuts in the spending.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we might have also is a plan within cabinet that will say, we are not going to run a balanced budget this year. We are going to be running a deficit. We do not want the Minister of Highways to lose 20 percent of his salary, so let us cut more out of highways, let us cut more out of roads. Let us not maintain the roads in the North. Let us not maintain the roads in rural Manitoba. We want to save the Minister of Highways 20 percent of his salary.

Well, the Minister of Health, do we want him to lose 20 percent of his salary? We might, but his colleagues do not. So let us cut some more in health care. Let us not put those needed personal care homes up. Let us not provide doctors in rural Manitoba. Let us take away nurses from hospitals. We do not want the Minister of Health to lose 20 percent of his salary.

Then, do we want the Minister of Education to lose her 20 percent? Well, no, we do not. The cabinet will say, no, we do not. We are not going to be running a balanced budget. We are going to be in deficit, and we do not want the Minister of Education to lose 20 percent, so let us cut some more in education. Let us take away some more from public school funding.

Do we want to see our ministers or their ministers losing 20 percent of their salaries? No, we do not. Where would we go to get this money? Well, let us take a little bit more out of the VLT fund, but then if we take more out of the VLT fund, then perhaps the Minister of Rural Development will lose his 20 percent.

So I ask the government, when the crunch comes down, how will they determine if it is a balanced budget or not? Will they do it on the basis of the numbers that the Minister of Finance comes up with at the end of the year, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

those numbers that I had indicated earlier about coming from different places and going to different places. Or are they going to actually deal with the budget on what the Provincial Auditor has to say? We are not sure.

* (1540)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government in its proposal, this government in its legislation that they are trying to put through, it is a fact, they are trying to overcome the lack of fiscal responsibility in running this province for the past few years with this legislation. They have neglected the real needs of this province for their own benefits. They have neglected the fact that they had a \$58-million surplus. Oh, sure, that perhaps is our way of fighting back at the ways and means that this Conservative government has run this province.

But \$58 million—the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) probably spent that at Ducks Unlimited alone, and this was left to this Conservative government in 1988-89. Who said that?—we said that all along, but no, no, they kept jumping back at us saying no, no, no. The Provincial Auditor had to say so. So left to them by the Pawley administration.

Whatever way we want to look at it, over the years these Finance ministers from the Conservative government have made a mockery of the budget and a mockery of the financial situation in this province that is providing this province and its people for a future. This government is hoping that the smoke and mirrors that they brought to the people of Manitoba will become a reality. But the only reality that we will see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the reality of more job losses, a reality of more cuts, a reality of our assets being destroyed and sold away, our assets of the people, the people who really have an important part to play in this province and whom this government should be looking at when they are talking about our assets for the future.

If Premier Roblin could have built Roblin's ditch for the future—and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember having lived in Transcona during the time that Duff's ditch was being built.

An Honourable Member: You used to live in Transcona? We could have been neighbours.

Mr. Clif Evans: We were neighbours. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says we could have been neighbours. We were neighbours, but I kept that side of the window blocked off. [interjection] Well, the member for Inkster says I have to hug him. I do not think I have to hug him. It is just a pleasure knowing him, is far enough for me.

If I may continue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The inflexibility of this legislation means that services that we provide as government will not be able to withstand any fluctuations in the economy or in the revenue of this province.

The result of cuts to this province will become a vicious circle. Fewer people working. Fewer assets. What is going to go next? MTS tomorrow? Hydro the next day? Venture Tours the next day?

An Honourable Member: Is that what you are recommending?

Mr. Clif Evans: I am not recommending anything. I am telling you, is what you are going to do. The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) is trying to make points. He is going to be listening real hard because this is what he is already planning. He is saying, now, how did Clif get into our briefing books? How did he know we were going to do that to balance the budget? Did the member from Neepawa tell me? No, it is common fact.

Everyone knows that that is what is going to happen. Everyone knows that at the end of the day and at the end of the year we are not going to see a balanced budget without it costing the people of this province. It is not going to be a balanced budget without it costing us our assets of the future. It is not going to cost the ministers anything. It is going to cost the people of this province.

As I said earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we as a family could not operate in the way that this proposed legislation will make us operate. Could not do it. We could not do it. We all, most of us, not we all, most of us have to borrow money. We are borrowing for an asset. We are borrowing for a house. We are borrowing for a car. We are borrowing for a home for

our children, for our education. We are looking for the future. We are looking toward the future.

* (1550)

Families work very hard to balance their books. We believe that a government—I believe that any government should work toward balancing. I do not think anybody has ever said that we are against it, that anybody is against it. Balancing your books, balancing your budget is something everybody strives to do; however, how it is done is like trying to balance my books and quitting my job. It does not make sense.

The proposals that this government is putting in place does not make sense. I should go buy a new car and take out a mortgage on my home and then quit my job. That does not make sense. Just like this legislation does not make sense the way it is put forward. [interjection]

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says, what is one method of making it better? Bring in and generate revenues. If he has had any type of business experience, he knows that (1) you need the revenue to be able to cover your expenditures and bring in more revenue, increase your assets, increase your services so that it can come around in a circle and come back.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I am going to send your speech out to your constituency.

Mr. Clif Evans: I forget what minister of—the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst) says he

is going to send my speech out. Well, I will do that for him. I will even pay for the stamps if he so wishes.

An Honourable Member: To your constituents.

Mr. Clif Evans: To my constituents, certainly. [interjection] That is right. If I do that, there goes my debt.

An Honourable Member: You will have to borrow.

Mr. Clif Evans: Then I will have to borrow money, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

All I can say in closing is that we have had seven years of deceitful government when it comes to balancing their books. We have come to seeing seven years of cuts, seven years of lost jobs, seven years of lost services and now, bingo, they are going to have a balanced budget, certainly a proposal and legislation that this member will not vote in favour for. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, when this matter is again before the House, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there may be a willingness to call it six o'clock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being six o'clock, this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, September 27, 1995

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