



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.
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DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
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DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
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EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
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FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
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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.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 12, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Joyce de Dios, Angel O. de Dios, Jolanda A. Huertas and others requesting the Legislative Assembly to urge the Minister responsible for Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and it complies with rules and practices of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

THAT emergency health care services are the core of Manitoba's health care system;

THAT Manitobans deserve the greatest possible access to this care;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for Health (Mr. McCrae) consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

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 His Excellency Stanislav Chylek, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Canada.

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

Also seated in the public gallery, we have 31 Grade 5 students from Springs Christian Academy under the direction of Karen Spragg. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Health Care System
Private Clinics**

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

The deadline posed by the federal government of October 15 to deal with the so-called two-tiered health care system is approaching. Apparently two provinces are refusing to move at all on their position of allowing for the provision of private health care clinics or private fees for health care services within the public health care system, which could, according to the federal government, put in jeopardy some \$400,000 in transfer payments to the Province of Manitoba.

The Province of British Columbia has just agreed to ban all private clinics and provisions of health care services. We think that is a good announcement in terms of the Province of British Columbia, good for the health of infants and all of us.

* (1005)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Adults have a worse reaction.

Mr. Doer: We try to get any reaction from you, Madam Speaker. If we get you standing up once we will be happy. We got more answers from the—however, I will continue to ask my question.

I would like to know from the Premier, is he going to maintain the position of allowing for a two-tier health care system or is he going to move in a similar way to the province of British Columbia?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae).

Mr. Doer: The Premier is the Minister of Federal-Provincial Relations. He is the Premier who represented us at the Premiers' Conference, where strong statements were made, and this issue was on the agenda.

The people of Manitoba do not like a system of health care where Matt Dunigan gets his examination taking place within a few hours because he has money through the football team and other people have to wait weeks and weeks and weeks.

I would like to ask the Premier, as Minister responsible for Federal-Provincial Relations, will we be negotiating with Ottawa? Will we be taking a cutback of some \$400,000?

Or will we do as British Columbia has done and ban the private clinics and deal in a one-tier health care system with Ottawa?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, one of the major areas of beneficiaries of that particular scheme that the

member refers to in terms of Matt Dunigan is that some of the unions in Manitoba, who, through their unionized workforce agreements, get exactly the same kind of access to the use of CAT scans and MRIs when they are not in use under a private health insurance scheme that has been awarded as part of a union agreement.

They get precisely the same kind of access as Matt Dunigan did. So he ought not try and make this some sort of class struggle.

The second part of the question, I say to him that the negotiations and the discussions with respect to this issue did not take place at the First Ministers' table. They took place at the table of the ministers of Health of Canada.

I will take that as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae).

Mr. Doer: We on this side are opposed to a two-tiered health care system, to lineups for anybody—union, nonunion, Matt Dunigan, non-Matt Dunigan. We believe in one publicly funded health care system with equal accessibility for all our citizens. That is what we believe in.

I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact that presumably the Minister of Health answers to the Premier and answers to cabinet and presumably the Premier is on top of these issues of federal-provincial relations, can he tell the people of Manitoba, what is our position going to be on the October 15 deadline? Are we going to lose \$400,000, which is equal to the amount of money we put into dealing with the waiting list prior to the election?

On March 7, Madam Speaker, we put \$500,000 in to deal with the waiting list. Surely we cannot lose \$400,000 out of our health care system and not affect the quality of care to patients in an already squeezed system.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I will take that as notice as well on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae).

**Health Care System
Emergency Services**

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I have before me a document that has come from the Department of Health that ought to be of concern to all members of this Chamber. It concerns the procedures that have been adopted at community hospitals since the government unilaterally closed the community hospital wards at night.

This protocol indicates that there ought to be a designated person at each hospital that is going to tell patients who come in from 10 to eight at night that it is closed, however, giving them alternatives, like to go to doctors' offices or community clinics that are also closed, of course, during those hours, and I quote: If the person is unable to transport themselves to the Health Sciences Centre or St. Boniface Hospital or is too ill or requires immediate attention, the patient should be given immediate attention and an ambulance called for transport to Health Sciences Centre or St. Boniface General Hospital.

Madam Speaker, putting aside the stupidity of this particular policy, can the Premier explain to me whether or not that designated person at the community hospital will be an emergency doctor? If they are an emergency doctor, why are you closing the wards and, if not, how can they provide those immediate services to people requiring that?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Acting Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae).

* (1010)

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, my supplementary is, how will people be diverted to doctors' offices or to community health centres that are closed during those hours and in fact direct people to emergency wards? How will people be diverted when in fact there is supposed to be a designated person at the community hospital that allocates where these people are supposed to go? Is that not the most inane and stupid policy that has—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Speaker, without accepting any of the preamble of that question, I will take that question, the technical aspects of that question, as notice for the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae).

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, my final supplementary is to the Premier.

Can the Premier explain how he allowed his Minister of Health and his cabinet to close emergency wards, put in place inoperable and ridiculous policies at the community hospitals, and no one, the Premier, the minister responsible, has any explanation for how these services are going to work?

How can you subject the people of Manitoba to potential harm and serious health risk and still call yourself someone who is going to protect health care? How can the Premier do that?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae).

**Department of Natural Resources
Staff Biologist Transfer**

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the people of the Swan River area have been very concerned with the changes that will come about with respect to increased logging, in particular to the effect on the wildlife and their habitat. The residents have been very appreciative of the work done by the wildlife biologist, who has been very progressive and outspoken on what steps should be taken to protect wildlife.

I want to ask the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) why this biologist is being transferred from the Swan River area and whether he will intervene and reverse the decision, as has been requested by the many people of the Swan River area.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I have approximately 1,500 people that are working in the Department of

Natural Resources on a full-time basis, and I allow the process of the running of the departmental staff basically is done by my deputy minister. I do not personally get involved in every position that is being dealt with out there. If there is a matter of major concern related to this one, I will check into it.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to ask the minister, since people have called his office about this transfer, if this biologist is being transferred from Swan River because he has recognized that clear-cutting harvest of hardwoods will have a negative impact on many birds in the area and has expressed these concerns and has made recommendations to retain wildlife habitat that has been objected to by the people who are doing the clear-cutting.

Is he bending to the people who are doing the work or is he listening to the people of the area and standing up for wildlife habitat?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Speaker, I find it sort of interesting, the questions or the angle that the member is coming at from this thing, because I would have thought the location of Louisiana-Pacific out in the Swan Valley and the jobs that are being created out there would be a plus that everybody recognizes; certainly that member should.

In terms of clear-cutting, I would suggest that the member maybe avail herself of the information that is being brought forward by Louisiana-Pacific when they basically file their 10-year operational program. They have to do that. There is an environmental process that will have to be gone through. They have to file these things. They are gone through, and one individual in my department does not have a bearing on that. It is done on a much bigger scale than that, Madam Speaker.

Forestry Industry Wildlife Protection

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Since the minister mentioned Louisiana-Pacific, I want to tell him that we are appreciative of the jobs, but we also want sustainable development. We want sustainability right through, and we have said that.

I want to ask this minister when we are going to see some guidelines that will protect the wildlife habitat and see a sustainable harvest as we have seen in British Columbia.

When is this government going to start to be progressive and put forward some sustainable guidelines to protect wildlife?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, that is what the whole plan is all about. That is why they have to file a working plan, a 10-year plan, a 20-year plan, which basically addresses the sustainability of the forest resource, addresses the sustainability of the wildlife resource, addresses the sustainability of the fish resource.

That is what this whole program is all about, and that is why we do not carte blanche issue licences. The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) goes through a very extensive process before a licence is issued for these purposes, addressing these specific concerns.

* (1015)

Youth Crime Intervention Team Gang Surveillance Strategy

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question is for the Minister of Justice.

We have asked the Minister of Justice to explain the three councils on crime that she goes around talking about that do not exist, Casper's councils. Let us see. There was the provincial council on youth crime, there was the youth advisory council and there was the Crime Prevention Council. Well, over a year and a half ago the minister also promised increased surveillance of gang members through what she called the Youth Crime Intervention Team, comprised of police, Prosecutions, Corrections and child welfare officials, a concept we support.

Madam Speaker, in response to a question in May of '94 asking whether a strategy was in place, the minister said, certainly the strategy is developed at this point.

I want the minister to now confirm information given to me by her department that, while city police estimate the number of gang members in the city has skyrocketed from 400 to 900 and while we have become the street-crime capital of Canada, there has been absolutely no interagency surveillance by this team.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, this government has taken a very comprehensive view and action plan in the area of youth crime as we have also in the area of property crime, as we also have in the area of violent crime.

In the area of youth crime, one of the strategies is a surveillance team approach. The importance of that approach is the sharing of information among individuals who may have that information, individuals from Education, from Prosecutions, from Justice, from the City of Winnipeg Police, and that is operative. The member in this Chamber very often would like me to speak very specifically about security issues and about issues on the gathering of information. That simply would not be helpful to the cause.

Mr. Mackintosh: A very simple question to the minister: Would she confirm, a year and a half later, that this team has no surveillance strategy, it is not even on their agenda, they do not plan to do it? The only thing under surveillance is the groups' agendas and minutes.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I totally reject what the member is attempting to put on the record. Let me again tell you that there is a process of information sharing. We have found that the process of information sharing, as it can be shared among professionals, and I understand that there are limits in doing so, that certainly is a very—[interjection]

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

Mrs. Vodrey: Apart from the increased surveillance, which of course is operative, there are additional action plans, which go even far beyond the nine-point plan, which are in place.

Very specifically, we are looking at the addition of more police officers on the street, additional police officers operating with the RCMP as well.

Mr. Mackintosh: My question to the minister: Who are Manitobans to believe, members of her department and members of the so-called team, or this minister?

Will she now confirm, there is no surveillance strategy, there is no surveillance by this team? Why was the person that I contacted not even—never even heard of this team?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, of course the member does not have the courage to say who he contacted. How can I confirm? Let me, however, assure the people of Manitoba that the initiatives of the nine-point plan are ongoing and have in fact been increased.

I have spoken additionally about initiatives that we have had relating to The Highway Traffic Act and the success that we have had in dealing with people involved in auto theft and auto vandalism.

The latest statistics that I have are that there are at least 20 young people who are not yet able to have a licence who will not be able to get that licence when they turn 16.

The training programs that are in place to work within the community to deal with peer mediation, I go back to the greater number of police officers which are on the street, and I go back to the legislation which governs the behaviour of young people, that is, the Young Offenders Act, and the very strong position that this government takes and continues to take to ask for the strengthening of the Young Offenders Act.

* (1020)

Desjardins Report Completion Deadline

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Lotteries. Prior to our most recent provincial election, due to a tremendous amount of public pressure, this government came out with the Lottery Policy Review

Committee. At the time, the Minister responsible for Lotteries made a commitment that there would be a report back October 1.

When I posed the question to the current Minister of Lotteries, his response to me was that he had indicated—he being Mr. Desjardins—to this particular minister that they might be slightly late from the October 1 deadline but not very significantly.

Madam Speaker, our research office, with our limited resources, did check with the gambling committee, and we have found out that in fact it is going to be considerably late. In fact, it could be as late as the end of December.

I am wondering if the Minister of Lotteries can indicate to this House why this report is not coming down in October for us. Was there a request for—

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

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for that question. I did intend to get back to him after he asked that previous question in the House.

Upon checking with the chair of the commission, Mr. Larry Desjardins, and their office, December 15 is the date that they now expect to complete the report.

Our objective and our direction to them throughout the whole process has been to do a complete and comprehensive report in terms of all aspects, addressing both the social and economic impacts of gaming here in Manitoba, including consultation with the public. That is the time they have indicated they require to give it the kind of comprehensive report that we all want to see on this very important issue.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister responsible for Lotteries assure this House that then, come December 15, that will become a public document?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I expect, like many reports, that upon receipt it will be reviewed initially.

I would anticipate that ultimately, yes, it will become a public document, that it will be a very important document for helping to form the policy and future direction of gaming here in Manitoba but, in terms of the timing of the release and so on, if the member is looking for a definitive date today in terms of that release, I cannot provide him with that.

Obviously, we will go through the report in a great deal of detail upon receipt and deal with the ultimate release and public dealing of the report subsequent to that.

Standing Committee Review

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, given the timing of the release of this report, my question to the minister is: Would the minister make a commitment to allow this report and the author of the report to come before a standing committee so that there can be a thorough discussion and debate on the report itself? Will he recommend that?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): I ultimately expect a full and complete discussion of the report here in this Chamber, probably at committees of the Legislature, amongst the public, other organizations and so on, but, in terms of the specific question, those are usually matters left to the House leaders to discuss in terms of the timing of our committees and so on.

I will certainly leave those decisions in those very capable hands, Madam Speaker.

Winnipeg Jets Operating Losses

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Last week, in the House, the Minister of Finance gave Manitobans assurances that they were fully protected in the signing of the \$17-million man. The minister knows, Madam Speaker, that \$17-million men hire armies of accountants to make sure that they do not pay taxes. That is obviously a concern about all professional salaries.

If the minister is so sure that Manitobans are protected from the effects of this salary in the first year, will he table the signed agreement with Messrs. Burke and Gluckstern to their commitment to picking up this salary?

Will he table this agreement of which he was so certain when he spoke last week?

* (1025)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the member for Crescentwood has this obsession with agreements and signed agreements and so on.

Our discussions on this issue have been with the current majority owners of the Winnipeg Jets Hockey Club. We have also had some discussions with the prospective owners. The assurances that we require have been received from the current majority owners. Obviously, we have a series of issues that we have to deal with them on. This is certainly one of them.

They have indicated to us the financial impact in terms of the 1995-96 budget and what it ultimately relates to in terms of the costs that are applied to the operations that are covered by the city of Winnipeg taxpayers and the Province of Manitoba.

I am confident, as I outlined very clearly in this House last week, that that contract will be spread over the five-year term of the contract, in fact, that the one-fifth for the upcoming season will in fact be reduced by equalization payments received by the Winnipeg Jets from a sharing of foreign currency.

Again, we have those assurances from the current owners and the prospective owners, and I have no reason to doubt whatsoever that that is how the situation will unfold.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister then confirm that in fact there is no agreement to purchase the Jets, that there is no protection for Manitobans from the \$17-million man's salary in the first year, that we are exposed to yet another year of losses potentially and that these so-called agreements and commitments

are nothing but a mirage, there is no agreement in place at all?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I will admit to no such thing.

I have outlined here in this House how the issue of that particular contract will be dealt with. Negotiations are taking place right now with prospective owners. Members in this House have heard the comments of the current majority owners, that it appears as though a final agreement will be reached very shortly, and certainly all the information we have been provided in discussions we have been a part of would confirm that fact.

I am very confident, as I have already outlined in terms of the impact of this particular contract and the fact, as members know full well, that the Winnipeg Jets Hockey Club have to function in the bottom one-third of the operations of the NHL and that at the end of the interim agreement here in Manitoba our Treasury will be ahead by some \$8 million, as a result of that agreement, from taxes exceeding our share of losses and that when the team is ultimately sold, Madam Speaker—[interjection]

The Leader of the Opposition continues to chirp from his seat. He has been opposed to trying to save the Jets from Day One. We know that, Manitobans know that, and he should be embarrassed by that, but that—

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): A point of order, Madam Speaker, I am opposed to the Filmon government supporting a \$17-million contract with taxpayers' money, and he should be embarrassed.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the official opposition does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Finance confirm that the calculations on which he bases his \$8-million net revenue figure are in fact simply averages that would be derived from averaging salaries

of people if they were fully exposed to taxation and are not in fact based on case-by-case, player-by-player salary contracts, that this individual data does not exist, his estimates are simply estimates based on a back-of-an-envelope calculation?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, again the Leader of the Opposition was incorrect and did not listen to my answer to the previous supplementary question in terms of how the \$17-million contract with Keith Tkachuk will be handled.

So, as usual, on this issue, he does not listen to the answers, and he only comes with a view of not trying to find solutions, which has been a consistent pattern in terms of dealing with the Winnipeg Jets.

In terms of the specific question of the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), we have had the input of the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics; we have had the input of members of our Taxation Division. I have an awful lot—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Unless my hearing is failing me, it is coming from all sides of the House this morning. The honourable Minister of Finance, to quickly complete his response.

* (1030)

Mr. Stefanson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was going to conclude by saying that I, and I believe all Manitobans, have an awful lot more confidence in the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics and our Taxation Division than the calculations which have consistently been inaccurate from the member for Crescentwood.

Environmental Levy Beverage Containers

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for calling the members to order, all members to order.

My questions are for the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings). Since January 1, this government has been collecting an environmental tax on beverage containers. It has been estimated that they receive over

\$400,000 per month collected from residents of Manitoba through this environmental levy program.

My question is to the minister. Where has this money that has been collected from the citizens of Winnipeg been spent here in the city?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Well, to be specific, there would probably be about \$800,000 that will be eligible to be received by recyclers in the city in the present and near future.

Mr. Dewar: My supplementary question to the same minister:

Why did this minister agree to create a situation where 30 percent of the residents of the city of Winnipeg pay this levy without receiving any services in return for the taxes that they contribute?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Speaker, I think we should go back to what the fundamental tenet of this recycling program is, and that is, the fund is there to backstop curbside collection that will be established by municipal authorities.

The City of Winnipeg chose to begin with the single-family dwellings, but I in fact agree with the member that they should proceed as quickly as possible to extend the service to the multifamily dwellings and all citizens of the city because, as soon as that is done, 75 percent and as high as 80 percent of the householders in this province will have access to curbside and readily available recycling capabilities.

That is the objective and, as soon as the municipalities are able to put that program in place, we will achieve it.

Mr. Dewar: My final question: When will this minister collect the over \$863,000 in fines referred to in the Provincial Auditor's Report from soft drink companies that fail to meet their waste reduction targets?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Speaker, that number has been an issue for some considerable length of time, as the member has rightly pointed out.

During the setup process, which has taken about two years in this province to achieve the position that we are now in, which is a national leader in terms of a multimaterial collection system with a stewardship model that is in fact being mirrored and copied by many other jurisdictions, based on the first year of start-up that is now occurring, those dollars were eligible to be charged as a fine if in fact the corporations responsible for the production of those products did not work towards a viable, provable numbers recycling program.

They have worked towards that, but we still have not reached a final determination on what or how much of that money may in fact be waived.

Housing Starts Provincial Comparisons

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

In the first nine months of this year, urban housing starts have declined 30 percent from the same period last year. In September urban housing starts dropped 39 percent from last December while nationally housing starts have risen. We will be fortunate to reach 1,100 or 1,200 units for 1995, which is only a small fraction of where Manitoba used to be in the mid-'80s when we were around 6,000 or 7,000 units per year.

My question to the Minister of Finance is, can the minister explain why Manitoba's housing industry is in such poor shape?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, in terms of our analysis of housing starts right here in Manitoba and across Canada, there is a consistent pattern of housing starts being down across Canada, in part because of the interest rate spikes that we have seen in the last several months with some uncertainty around various situations facing our country. So it is not something unique to Manitoba.

I want to remind the honourable member that for the last three and a half years, in terms of housing starts here in Manitoba, we have consistently outperformed the national average each and every year during that

period of time. Again, we are projecting and expecting to exceed the national average next year.

So, on an overall basis, Manitoba's housing start performance compares very well across Canada.

I certainly encourage the member to ask me other economic questions about other economic indicators facing Manitoba. He has chosen one.

There are about 15 others, and I hope he asks me some questions about jobs and retail sales and so on, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Will the minister acknowledge that this decline in new urban housing starts results from a deterioration of affordability caused by lower household incomes, as observed by the Royal Bank in one of its recent Econoscope reports?

I note that in the first half of 1995 the inflation rate in Manitoba was double the rate of wage increase and, therefore, real incomes have been dropping.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I do not accept that for a minute.

Again, even in terms of the decline here in Manitoba in terms of housing starts, our performance is still better than the national performance right across Canada. I am pointing out to the member that it is a national situation in terms of decline in housing starts, and I want to remind the honourable member, and I will certainly provide him with all of the details, in terms of how well Manitoba has performed in terms of after-tax disposable income increases. I believe we led the nation in 1994, are projected to be in the top two in 1995 and, again, amongst the top few provinces in 1996.

So our performance here in Manitoba, by not increasing personal income taxes, by not increasing retail sales tax, has allowed for the opportunity to leave more tax dollars in the pockets of Manitobans, because we believe they know best how to spend those dollars.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Will the minister have his research staff study this situation and verify that

declining real incomes are a major cause for the decline in new residential construction in the past several years? Specifically, can you determine that the inflation has exceeded wage increases since 1990?

Mr. Stefanson: No, Madam Speaker, I will not have my officials undertake that kind of review.

Again, it appears as though the member has not listened to the answers to the first two questions that he asked. I pointed out to him what the situation— [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance, to complete his response.

Mr. Stefanson: I pointed out to him very clearly in terms of how we compare across Canada. Even though this is a poor year for housing starts, we are performing better than the Canadian national average. We outperformed the Canadian national average for the last three and a half years. We are projected to outperform it again next year.

When you look at the economic indicators that most economists use, Manitoba is either leading the nation or is in the top two provinces in virtually every economic indicator: in terms of jobs created, 14,000 more jobs in Manitoba year to date; retail sales up 5.3 percent, the second-best growth rate in all of Canada; our exports to the United States and other parts of the world leading the nation.

So, in terms of the economic performance, the opportunities for Manitobans and dollars being left in the pockets of Manitobans, this province is leading all of Canada.

Pukatawagan, Manitoba Housing Shortage

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my first question is for the Minister of Health, but, in his absence, I would like to address the question to the Premier.

Madam Speaker: I would remind the honourable member for Flin Flon that he is not to make reference

to the attendance or absence of any member in the Chamber.

Mr. Jennissen: My apologies, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Jennissen: A year ago our caucus asked the Minister of Health to send the Chief Medical Officer to investigate the water situation at Pukatawagan. That was done, and it was declared an emergency situation.

The housing crisis at Pukatawagan and other reserves in the North is just as serious.

Are the Minister of Health and the Premier prepared to consider working with the Mathias Colomb First Nation at Pukatawagan and have a health investigator investigate the impact of overcrowding on the physical and mental health of the people of Pukatawagan?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Acting Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice for the Minister of Health.

* (1040)

Logging Rights

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): My second question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Is this minister prepared to review logging rights in the vicinity of Pukatawagan in order to allow local residents, many of whom are unemployed, to harvest logs in this area?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I do not really know why they would or would not be allowed to log. We have a quota system in place. If they have a quota system for the area out there, they can certainly go out and log.

The other thing, Madam Speaker, is that we have major companies like Repap and Louisiana-Pacific that are established up in that area that are looking for

people to basically do logging for them, so I will have to find out whether there is a quota system available for the people from Pukatawagan or not. I will review the situation.

**Dwayne Archie Johnston
Parole**

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Yesterday we raised the issue of Dwayne Archie Johnston. We were incorrect in saying that he was in fact receiving temporary absences; in fact, the situation is that he is on day parole now. There is a federal law, Madam Speaker, called Bill C-36, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, which came into effect in June of 1992. It stipulates that inmates, people coming up on day parole or full parole, would give victims of crime an opportunity to serve a rebuttal in these hearings. Also, victims and other persons may attend parole hearings at the discretion of the parole board rather than the offender's discretion.

I thank the Minister of Justice for her response to my questions yesterday. I would like to ask her today whether or not she will speed up the process of intervening on this matter and keep all Manitobans informed about the progress she is making.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, yesterday I said the issue had been raised with me directly, that I have directed my department to look at any methods open to us or available to us as a provincial government to look at intervention. We are certainly doing that as quickly as possible. We have in the past raised the issue of parole with the federal Minister of Justice. We believe that it is important that victim impact statements are available, and also we would like to see in many cases the original criminal act be considered during the parole process.

**Museums
Funding**

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

As the minister is no doubt aware, the Department of Canadian Heritage's Museum Assistance Program will be cut to \$7.9 million, down from the \$10.17 million announced in February's federal budget. That is an average of 27 cents per Canadian. These cuts will have immense negative impacts on Manitoba's museums and have already affected the Association of Manitoba Museums, which has been forced to cut its hours and will now be forced to make changes to its basic level certification program, a program which offers training in museology and museological concerns.

My first question, Madam Speaker: Given that museums along with art galleries are key points of interest for tourists and given our recent lacklustre record in tourism, has the minister met with the Association of Manitoba Museums to work out an action plan which could help prevent a crisis and so protect not only museums and galleries but also our staggering tourist industry?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, she references the federal government's lowering of grants and support for museums in Manitoba, and this is consistent with what the federal government is doing across the board with many of our departments.

We have expressed that concern in this House. We have expressed that concern to federal ministers, that Manitoba is going to be severely impacted by these cutbacks. We have met on a regular basis with the museums across the province and are giving them whatever support we can within our resources.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENT

Project Green Tree—Chancellor School

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, may I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Justice have leave for a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased today to recognize the students of Chancellor School in Fort Garry School Division and their Project Green Tree. Project Green Tree is a project that the students, through a Sustainable Development grant, have been able to look at beautifying their immediate surroundings of their school. I am extremely proud of the student group who took leadership in this area. These students worked with the whole school in planning where the trees would be planted. In fact, every student participated in a drawing of where these trees should be. These students then met with professional people who could advise them on the type of shrubbery and greenery to beautify this area.

Yesterday, Madam Speaker, the students and the teachers and the community of Fort Garry celebrated Project Green Tree, and they opened up and began the digging and the placement of these shrubs. It will truly be a beautiful project. These are young people engaged in a very positive activity, taking a leadership role, and we are very proud of the students of Chancellor School.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would ask if you could please call for Debate on Second Readings, the bills as listed in order on the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

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

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, Bill 2, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), 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 Emerson, who has 13 minutes remaining.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to continue the discussion and the debate and put some more comments on record in regard to our balanced budget legislation. As I said yesterday in my remarks, there was a reason why this government chose to implement or put forward this kind of legislation, and I believe that there is a reason why the opposition members are so paranoid about supporting this kind of legislation. That is simply that they do not have the will, nor have they ever had the will, to live within their own means.

I think it is about time that we discussed the realities of the economic situation in this province in real terms, and I think it is time that we determine what the impact of the misappropriation—I would call it—of funds or of tax dollars that have been raised by the opposition parties when they were in power and the huge debt load and the cost of the huge debt load that has been foisted upon taxpayers in this province time and time again. We are now seeing the effect of those kinds of actions.

I think it is important to note that when you look at it, to illustrate a detailed example of what has been said is that the impact of the debt in any given year or excess spending that government does of the cost of borrowing is truly demonstrated in a chart that has been prepared by the department.

But I believe that one of the most important facts is that for every hundred million dollars that we can decrease our debt in this government, you set aside roughly about \$800,000 of interest cost. Now, when you translate that into the total cost of the debt of this province of some \$7.5 billion and you multiply that, it is easy to see that if you could retire that debt within a given period of time, the huge saving of \$650 million annually would be attributed to the taxpayers of this province. Would we then choose as a government to keep the tax formula as it is today, would we not lower the taxes any more than they are currently, we would raise an extra \$650 million of revenue that could be spent on services to families and communities.

* (1050)

I think that addresses, in a large part, the questions that have been put before this House by opposition members over the last couple of days. We have talked about the needs for housing, and there has been considerable questioning about why the needs of housing are not properly addressed in some of our northern communities. Madam Speaker, it leads me to an issue that was brought to my attention so vividly about the impact of some these settlements that have been discussed and debated by our government, land claim settlements that have been discussed and debated by our province and our government over the last eight years. It is important to note that the opposition members when they were in government simply refused to address in a meaningful way those issues. That in itself has caused the aggravation that is currently prevalent in many of our northern native communities.

I think it is important to note that the Roseau Indian Band, the Roseau River Indian Band has settled their differences with the federal government, has settled their land claims issues, is now \$12.5 million to the betterment and is utilizing some of those funds to build 20 new homes on their reserves. Now I say this in respect to what the needs of some the communities are, but I believe that there is a willingness now by both levels of government, both federal and provincial, to make settlement on many of these kinds of claims and thereby reduce the debt to communities, thereby increase the housing in those communities and increase an allowance, set up an allowance to allow for those communities to better their own employment opportunities and to, in fact, probably even generate industries and businesses on their reserves. That, of course, is what our government has constantly put forward.

That, Madam Speaker, is the whole essence of the legislation that is being put forward here in Bill 2. When you consider the impact of communities taking control of their own economies, provinces taking less of their net revenues and allowing those people to utilize those revenues within their own communities and build on their own abilities to fend for themselves, I believe should be supported in a very dramatic way by all parties in this House.

I find it very, very interesting that the honourable members opposite will sit and flail their hands and voice severe opposition to this kind of legislation that in my view will only enhance the ability for individuals to take control of their own destiny, contribute less to government spending, contribute less to the welfare of the financial institution and look after the needs of the general taxpaying public of this province.

I would propose to you that 20 years hence people are going to rally across this province and laud the efforts of our Finance minister (Mr. Stefanson), the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of our province and indeed all colleagues in this government for having taken on the initiative to make sure that the kind of legislation that is being proposed here was in fact enacted and that there was political will to enforce limitations of spending upon the Executive Council of our own government.

That is really what is behind this whole thing. I think that is the main fear of the opposition members because they think that some day their party might be elected to power, and the legislation that is currently before this House would set some severe limitations of taxation and their ability to raise taxes indiscriminately or at will and that they would in fact have to go out and ask the general public whether they could increase taxes. That is their fear, because up to now there have been no limitations put on that kind of power. And we are saying it is time that the people were given more say in the actions of government when it comes to spending their monies.

Now what does that do to the institutional side of government? It really adds a whole different power structure to government, does it not? It really says that we as legislators are willing to share in a meaningful way in that decision-making power.

Our socialist friends on the opposite side of the House simply cannot see themselves having to lower themselves to appear before the tax-paying public and putting forward those kinds of questions and being scrutinized by the general public in the interim between elections, and I say to you, Madam Speaker, that it behooves all of us to, first of all, question whom we

represent, why we were elected and what our obligations are in the long term.

I propose to you that our main priority should be: to provide the most economical services to those that cannot fend for themselves; to provide for those that need to be institutionalized from time to time because of health reasons; to provide the kind of infrastructure that is needed to enhance and encourage economic development in all our communities, whether they be northern Manitoba, southern Manitoba or central Manitoba or our urban centres; then to encourage the freedom amongst the general public to be able to express their views clearly and definitively over the needs of where government should be.

I would propose to you that this legislation will in fact drive less government for future generations because politicians will not be able to indiscriminately propose to the tax-paying public that they will spend, spend more during election campaigns, and it will force politicians to really think twice about promises that are made sometimes without much thought given to them about what they will spend in given areas at given times.

That, of course, will allow the general public to have a much greater say in policy setting and future directions of government.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, it has been a great pleasure to address this issue and this piece of legislation, and I would encourage all members to review what they have said so far in this debate and think again about the legislation and support it.

This is meaningful legislation; this is responsible legislation; this will, in future, direct responsible government and drive honesty and integrity within the political community.

Madam Speaker, I thank you very kindly for giving me the opportunity to address this issue in a meaningful way, and I would ask that the opposition members sincerely reconsider their position and support this legislation.

* (1100)

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): On Bill 2, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to speak on the subject of Bill 2, which is the main piece of legislation before the House in the current sitting. Its purpose is to set out a requirement that the province balance its current and capital expenditures with its income in each fiscal year.

There are three exceptions that the government notes: for natural disasters that were unanticipated, the outbreak of war, a 5 percent or greater reduction in revenues from all sources—and I assume this also includes the federal government.

The bill provides for financial penalties for cabinet members if those requirements are not met and requires an offsetting surplus for the following year to match the deficit incurred. The bill also sets up a debt retirement fund to eliminate the current debt of the province in an orderly fashion. Beginning in 1997, the province must deposit a minimum of \$75 million in the fund each year. This \$75 million must be included in the current expenditures of the province and offset by current revenues in order to balance the budget.

The surpluses on the operating account are to be used, first, to replenish the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, established in 1989 with the only surplus this government has ever had. That was the one left to them by the Eugene Kostyra budget—to use that to replenish to a level equal to 5 percent of the expenditures of the operating fund and from then into the credit of the debt retirement fund.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, the bill provides for the so-called taxpayer protection. If the government proposes to raise the levy for health and post-secondary education, the sales tax or the income tax, it must put this to a referendum.

I want to consider this bill in the context of other jurisdictions where similar legislation has been put in place. In Canada, there are similar bills, in Saskatchewan, in Alberta, in New Brunswick, and most

of the states of the United States have something similar. Massachusetts and California are the ones most frequently spoken of, and they were really perhaps the earliest to bring in this kind of legislation.

So there really is little new here, though I think it is one of the more unthinking pieces of legislation in that category across the North American continent. Its real purpose, of course, is an abdication of responsibility. It says that the government itself is incapable of responsible budgeting. That is the purpose of the legislation.

Its second purpose and, I think, also a fundamental purpose is that its purpose is to cut public service, to cut the role of government, to cut the role of the community in economic life and in the social life of this province. Its real context is the Free Trade Agreement and the triumph of government by monopolistic and powerful and unaccountable multinational corporations. Its long-term real effect will be to enhance private gain at the expense of the principles and practice of public service which serve all of our community.

Madam Speaker, the taxpayer protection legislation is a very narrow section and narrow in purpose in the bill, and it offers a rhetoric of local control. Like much of the so-called reform that we have seen from the Department of Education, it offers an illusion of local power whilst in fact strengthening the hands of the central government. The Department of Education in Bill 5 and Bill 6 and in earlier bills before this House has done exactly that as, of course, have the changes to The Child and Family Services Act as well, a rhetoric of local control, a rhetoric of citizen control but, in fact, a much greater enhancement of the central powers of the provincial government and, in the case of this bill, of the abilities of unaccountable multinational corporations to govern in areas of immense economic power. I will come to that in a minute. I want to talk about the absence of protection for Crown corporations.

The tax increases are indeed possible under this legislation. The previous speaker, the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), made great play, I think, in his last 10 minutes of his speech about the importance of

democracy and the importance of going back to the taxpayers to find out what they will pay for. I respect his opinion on that, but I am really not sure that he has read the bill.

I have waited. The member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) is one of the few government members who has spoken on this bill, and I commend him for that. I have a great deal of respect for that because we have heard from so few members of the government on this bill, and I am beginning to understand the reason why, because, when they speak, they do display what seems to me an incomprehensible ignorance of the provisions of the bill. The member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) had three opportunities to go back to the bill and look at it. I believe members on our side of the House spoke to him about the absence of protection in certain parts of the bill, and each time I listened to what he had to say to see in fact if he had gone back to read the bill and to understand the provisions of it.

Now, in his final submission on this bill, I think his indication is that he believes that taxpayers will have the opportunity to speak upon all taxation that would be opportune, but that is not the case under this bill. The taxpayers are being offered a referendum on certain areas but not on all. They will not be offered any voice in fuel tax. They will not be offered any voice in the property tax or in tax credits, and we know that the last two of those in fact are ways in which this government has chosen, relatively secretly, to increase the taxes of every Manitoban.

I do commend to the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) that in fact he go back to the legislation and he examine very carefully the very limited voice that people are being given over their taxation, and look at the record of his own government on this. Which taxes have they raised? When did they raise them and how did they raise them, and did they do it knowingly? Because they did, and we have submitted the memos and the briefing notes for the Premier which show the relationship between the increases that the tax credit, the property tax credit that the government introduced, the relationship between that and an increase in the sales tax. Of course, it was considerable. The Premier knew it. The government knew it. The member for Emerson must know it, and yet still they want to

maintain the fiction that there is some aspect of local and citizen control over taxes. It is not so. It is there in part, but is not there for the kinds of taxes that this government has always chosen to raise.

Madam Speaker, in 1992 the government used both the property tax credit and the extension of the sales tax and brought changes that amounted probably to about an increase of \$400 a year for every Manitoba family. This is at a time when we know that the incomes of Manitoba families are declining in real terms. We know now that this has been happening for some time, but in 1992 it was already evident, and the growing gap between rich and poor, the ability of some people to afford that \$400 and the great inability of many people to afford that \$400. Yet what was so appalling about that was the way in which the government tried to hide it, the way in which they tried to deny it, and they are doing it again in this bill. This bill in that sense is a deceitful bill, and it continues the same kinds of deceptions that the government has proceeded with in the past.

It is also possible under this bill, Madam Speaker, that the present graduated income tax could be replaced with a flat tax of 25 percent or any other amount that raised the same amount of money and would not be subject to a referendum because it is revenue neutral and does not fall under the referendum provisions. Again, I ask the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), the only person who has spoken out on this bill, to go back and look at that. I do not know whether the member for Emerson or the finance minister are flat taxers. I know that there are some flat taxers on the other side of the House, but flat taxers there probably are as well.

As I read the Fraser Institute bulletins, and I know that they do too, as I—frankly, actually I do not read Alberta Report. I do see the cover from time to time raised by various ministers on the front bench over there. I am sure that the Alberta Report also has an interest in the flat tax principle. It is something that really is on the next stage of the agenda for the kinds of people who influence and develop these legislations, some Chambers of Commerce, not all, but certainly the right-wing think-tanks that this government listens to.

Those who are most hurt by flat taxes, of course, are the poor, the small businesses and those on fixed

incomes, exactly the people whom the Tories have targeted in the past two years.

* (1110)

Madam Speaker, I draw the members' attention to a column, I believe in an Ottawa paper, by Dalton Camp, a man who used to be associated with the Tory party. Perhaps we might say that he is more—what would I say?

An Honourable Member: Long in the tooth.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, he is long in the tooth.

An Honourable Member: He has gained knowledge as he has grown older.

Ms. Friesen: He has gained wisdom indeed as he has grown older. But, no, actually I do not think that is the case. I think Dalton Camp does come from a Conservative Party. He comes from a party of Duff Roblin. He comes from a party even to some extent of Sterling Lyon, but I submit that the Tories that we face across this House are not that kind of a Conservative Party. There may be elements of it, but what they have become—and it is to their great detriment and to ours and the loss in fact of that conservative, and I say it with a small "c," ideology across Canada—is a great loss.

There were elements of Duff Roblin. There were elements of others, of Stanfield, for example, which I think fit well into the kind of communitarian. I would call it social democratic; other people would have different labels for it. Dalton Camp, I think, comes from that kind of society which sees that there are important national and provincial economic levers of power which must remain in the hands of the community at large. It was a progressive conservatism, and he speaks from that perspective. I am, I think, greatly disappointed that there seems to be no one to speak for that perspective in Manitoba at the moment.

He speaks of the political reactionaries, and I expect he is speaking of the people in his own party, at this point, who demand less for the poor, the unemployed and the powerless, and bemoan their own misfortunes

and yet seek more for themselves. These are the people who are now calling, he said, for yet more privilege in the form of a flat tax. This would impose the same rate of payment on all taxable incomes, a marvel of simplicity. It is also—

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): A great idea.

Ms. Friesen: The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) says, a great idea. Dalton Camp says, it is a model of regressive tax policy.

Obviously, the flat tax takes more from the upper income taxpayer as a percentage of income. Almost certainly, he says, the flat tax would yield less revenue; even if not, the continuing decline of tax monies from corporations will drive the government to find added sources of revenue from other regressive taxes.

I have Progressive Conservatives speaking, someone who knows full well what the next agenda is of the right-wing think-tanks in this country and some of the more extreme of the Chambers of Commerce. It is the flat tax. This bill does not protect Manitobans against the flat tax, one of the more regressive measures that we shall inevitably see in this government.

Again, I commend to the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) to go back and look at this bill and look at the very limited range of opportunities that are being offered for a popular voice on the nature of taxation. But it is, of course, Madam Speaker, a fundamental tenet of the kind of Tories that we face across this House that they give money to the wealthy because they believe that they will spend it and create more wealth.

I can put perhaps the most benevolent aspect of their philosophy. It is very much the same, as George Bush and Ronald Reagan said, a rising tide of wealth will lift all boats. They are, of course, dead wrong, and they have been proven dead wrong over the last decade—

Mr. Enns: That is not what Abe Lincoln said.

Ms. Friesen: Well, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) wants to quote Abe Lincoln.

There are many speeches by Abraham Lincoln which I think are worthy of quoting. I do not think the minister is choosing the one I would quote. They are, of course, I believe, over the last eight years what experience has shown, is that the transfer of money to the wealthy has also meant the transfer of money offshore. We look at where the banks, who have been one of the greatest benefactors of the actions of Tory governments, are putting their money. We are not finding it in small businesses in my community nor dare I say suggest the community of the Minister of Agriculture.

The ability of the banks and the willingness, the political willingness of the banks to invest in Manitoba and small communities everywhere, I think is something that we all need to pay attention to. In some parts of the United States they have indeed created legislation which has enabled the banks, encouraged the banks, enticed the banks to invest in the urban areas of the United States and in some of the small communities, where much of the energy, what the government would call entrepreneurialism, what I would call an energy and inventiveness, co-operation, where all of that exists.

Finally, Madam Speaker, this legislation allows Crown corporations to be sold off to balance the budget, just as the government did last year with McKenzie Seeds. Those Crown corporations that Manitobans built up and nurtured through several generations can, under this legislation, under the actions of this government, under the experience that we have of this government, simply be discarded at a moment's notice at any price in order to meet the imposed guidelines under the balanced budget legislation.

It will be an illusion. There is a limit to the number of Crown corporations that we have. There is a limit to the number of Crown corporations that they can sell off. Apart from being a wrongheaded and counter-productive policy, the public policy, it can only work for a limited number of years. Then what do you have? You have not balanced your budget. You have nothing left in the cupboard. You have few levers of economic power and you have deceived the people. I believe that this is what this bill does.

No one runs their household in the way that this budget bill proposes. As families, we support our young people. We help them with their education. We invest in a long-term strategy that would enable them to be productive in the future. We support our old people, who invested in us and who most importantly invested in the public institutions which have enabled everyone in this Legislature to become the person they are today. The public health service, the public education system, all of those are the—we can go on to talk about the credit unions and the co-ops. The institutions that are community based in Manitoba and which are open and accessible to all have made every one of us the kind of citizen, the kind of educated, articulate people that we are in this Legislature. These are the institutions, these are the community-built institutions that this government is set to privatize. That is what they are going to do, one by one.

We know the shopping list they have, and I will refer to that later. The province is choosing to limit its ability to engage in long-term planning and investment, in construction, in roads, in housing, in seniors facilities, in college and university building. Health and education facilities are funded somewhat separately, but the calls that I hear from the back bench really give me great cause for concern. That is why I listened with such interest to the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), because they do seem to believe that they can continue to invest in these kinds of public infrastructure on an amortized basis, but they simply cannot. Health, yes. Hospitals and schools, yes. There are different ways of financing those, but that is not the case for roads. It is not the case for universities and colleges. It is not the case for seniors housing. It is not the case for so much more of public infrastructure, whether it is related to tourism or whether it is related to the infrastructure of northern Manitoba, and other areas where the challenge of distance and transport is so vital.

I really did have cause for concern when I listened to, I believe it was, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) speak about the abilities under this bill to amortize those kinds of public infrastructures. That is why I would challenge the government to speak on this bill. Tell us what you really think it is, because I am very concerned that you have seriously misunderstood

the provisions of this bill, unless the intention of this government is to create a series of special operating agencies under which these kinds of provisions for amortized infrastructure building can be done. Is that the case?

I understand the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) nodded in approval. I did not see it. Whether he is considering it as an idea or whether he understands it to be one of the principles behind the bill, I do not know. Perhaps he will be able to tell us at a later date.

* (1120)

I do think that is an important question because, if that is the case and the government is indeed creating special operating agencies at quite a rapid rate, if that is the case, then this bill is a sham. It is even more of a sham than I think at the moment because there will be debt, and the ability to hide the debt, to conceal it, to not report it, to have it under separate auditing agencies, to have it under separate reporting agencies is completely different. [interjection] The minister says that I am on to something. I think he—[interjection]

The sheer genius of the bill, the Minister of Agriculture said. That is the sheer deception. It is a sheer sham. It is, I think—it is always difficult, Madam Speaker, when you are speaking extemporaneously, perhaps not to be carried away with vocabulary. I will choose my words carefully when I speak of the government's intention in this bill.

If its intention indeed is to create special operating agencies so that it can syphon off the debt of Manitoba into those, hidden, concealed from the votes of Manitobans and from the accountability to Manitobans, then indeed my view of this bill, I think, is even graver, more serious than I had originally anticipated.

We do not run our households like this. We support our families, and we support our seniors. We do support the public institutions that have enabled all of us to become productive citizens. We take out loans to build businesses and to pay for education, but I am concerned that this is not the road that this province is following. The province is choosing to limit its ability to engage in long-term planning. The road ahead in

Manitoba will be open to only those who can finance their own education, their own roads, their own seniors housing, their own tourism infrastructure, their own art galleries, their own museums, their own personal libraries.

Who amongst us can do that without the collective support of the community? Madam Speaker, we know, in Manitoba—we are a small community—there are few of us who can, and there is a majority who cannot. There are some who can enter schools. There are some who can enter colleges. There are some who have the opportunity and the money to enter private facilities of all kinds, but the great majority of society cannot.

Once we have moved to that two-tier society where, when you cross the threshold of the emergency room, if we have any left at the end of this year, or you take you child to kindergarten, everyone in this society is equal, and that is the kind of society that this government is set to destroy. They have a clear, ideological perspective on that. Some of them are clearer about it than others, but certainly the majority seem not to be clear about the functions and purposes of this bill.

Madam Speaker, we all want to see a balanced budget. Indeed, we are waiting for one from this government. This is the government which has never produced a balanced budget, never ever produced a balanced budget. The second year in government they had the opportunity to use the Eugene Kostyra surplus, and they used it. They used it to create a Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Fair and good, it was a surplus, and they were left with it. Perhaps they used it wisely, but it was not a balanced budget, and every subsequent year since then the debt has gone up and up and the deficit has always been there. This bill is brought to you by a group of people who have never ever in their lives produced a balanced budget, and I think that should give every Manitoban pause for concern.

Many provinces have now set about balancing their budgets in very short order, as has the federal government. We all recognize, I think, that the federal debt is much larger and more difficult to deal with than that of many of the provinces, but we recognize too that the federal government has far greater powers and far

greater tools and implements at its disposal for balancing its budget or for the economic conditions which will enable it to balance its budgets. But we all of us want to see those budgets balanced in all the provinces and in the federal government. We believe that government should be a sound steward of the people's money. It does not come easily, and especially in Manitoba now to people who are on fixed incomes and seniors, it does not come easily at all. It should be used where it can benefit most in a fair and a just way, and it should benefit the majority of our citizens, not the narrow minority, not the multinational corporations, not the unaccountable sources of power in this country.

Madam Speaker, I look with some pride at the accomplishments of the government of Saskatchewan which has balanced a budget. That was their first priority when they came to power, and they did it. They did it without selling Crown corporations. Indeed, their legislation would not permit that. They did it without the wholesale destruction, such as is happening in the social services in Alberta, for example. They had an enormous problem when they came to power in Saskatchewan. They followed upon a government of Grant Devine, an unfortunate name, but Grant Devine had wheeled and dealt his way around for Saskatchewan for some years, and the coffers were bare. There had been grants for hot tubs. There had been grants to friends. There had been grants for golf club memberships—was it not?—in Chicago for heads of Crown corporations.

Grant Devine, you have to admit, certainly had imagination, and for a while he was able to persuade people to vote for him. But the destruction of community which generations of Saskatchewan people had built was coming close, and finally people recognized that. I think this government should take a warning from what happened to the government of Grant Devine. People understood gradually what was being sold out from underneath them, the kind of community which they had built over several generations.

It is in that context that the work of Premier Romanow is even more impressive and that the ability of the people of Saskatchewan to see the importance of both long- and short-term solutions is also significant,

for their recovery has not been without pain. There is nobody in Saskatchewan who will not tell you that. It has been difficult. To undo the damage and destruction of Grant Devine in a few short years was an enormous challenge, and Romanow and the Saskatchewan New Democrats met it. But they did it in an honest and forthright manner and the people of Saskatchewan returned Romanow to government.

Madam Speaker, I contrast that in my mind with the charlatan approach of this government and in particular this Bill 2. Remember that this bill is brought to you by the same gang who not only did not balance the budget when they came to power in the province, but they did not balance it when they were in city government either. They sowed the seeds of disaster for Winnipeg with their grandiose borrowing for capital projects when they were at City Hall.

The member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson), the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst), the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay), the former member for Riel and the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), all of these were people who extended the debt when they were at City Council, who extended the infrastructure, in fact, have left us with a very dispersed city in which people, the taxpayers of Winnipeg, who are now continuously having their incomes reduced through a property tax credit of the same provincial government, are finding it very, very difficult.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): I voted against that budget, Jean. Jean, I voted against that budget.

Ms. Friesen: The member for St. Norbert tells me he voted against that budget. That is an important footnote, and I will enter that. I am glad to hear that from him. It still leaves a lot of others of the gang sitting on the front row of this government, does it not?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would caution the honourable member for Wolseley to pick and choose her words carefully.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, the same people who are at City Hall and who laid the foundations for the

great debt problems of the City of Winnipeg are now for the most part in the cabinet in the Province of Manitoba.

These are the same people who are increasing the grants to private schools, as they decrease the funding for public schools. These are the people who give so-called training grants in the private sector, many of them of dubious merit. In fact, I always like to remember Clayton Manness trying to talk about a course that was offered under Workforce 2000. I think it was called Six Thinking Hats.

Even Clayton had trouble saying that without laughing, but still I believe they went onto greater glory, and Workforce 2000 is still distributing unaccountable grants to a variety of private industries.

Madam Speaker, the same people who now bring us Bill 2 are the same people who told us before the election there was only \$10 million for the Jets, and then somehow we found out later that they were tossing out another \$20 million, another \$50 million, a nod and a wink in River Heights and Tuxedo. It will be all right, boys, hang in with us, and we will keep the Jets in town at any cost—at any cost.

That is what they were saying on the streets, brought to you, Bill 2, by the people who put up signs before the election to tell you they had not raised your taxes, when most Manitobans knew that their property taxes had been raised by this government.

Even then the government's own briefing note told the Premier that his property tax credit changes were equal to large increases in the sales tax. He knew, the cabinet knew, their ad agency knew, and they still tried to tell you otherwise.

That is why I contrast it to the straightforward and honest approach of Premier Roy Romanow, and he was I believe dealing with the people of Saskatchewan in a straightforward and honest manner. I believe that there are elements of this bill, Bill 2, which are as much a sham as so many parts of this government's policy.

Should we, do we, can we believe what these people have to say about balanced budgets? Do we trust

them? Do we trust them to not misrepresent the facts for Manitobans?

* (1130)

To me, Madam Speaker, the answer is clear, but fortunately we do not have to rely on my words. We do not even have to rely on the government's well-massaged words in its weekly press bulletins. We can rely upon the tones of the Dominion Bond agency which has raised questions about the reality of the government's last claim to a balanced budget. Not true, said the Dominion Bond agency. Again: Bill 2, brought to you by a group of people who have never balanced a budget. Should we, can we believe these people?

The Canada West Foundation equally found fault with the government's budget presentations. Now the Canada West Foundation is not what I would call a nonpartisan voice on many issues, and it is certainly one that is far closer to the government than it is to my perspective, but the Canada West Foundation has a cautionary tone in speaking of Manitoba's budget. It gives the Manitoba budget a 60 percent or a C. It says, the debt schedule is both incomplete and, worse yet, inaccurate. More accurate estimates are needed. The reported budget balance does not relate to the change in the province's debt as reported by other analysts. Does Manitoba really have a deficit? This relationship needs explaining. Detailed forecasts of prior years' revenue and expenditure would be helpful.

It records the Manitoba budget as disturbing and confusing—the fact that it is reporting a surplus this year. It too makes reference to the Dominion Bond Rating Service report that, quote, tax-supported debt of the province will actually grow this year. It will actually grow this year. These people not only have not balanced their budgets in any other year, they have portrayed a balanced budget in this year inaccurately, untruthfully, according to the Dominion Bond Rating agency and the Canada West Foundation. The debt of this province will actually grow this year, and, Madam Speaker, I know Hansard does not use capital letters, but I wish it could. The debt of the province this year will actually grow by \$141 million, over \$166 for every single Manitoban. No explanation is given for this in

the budget. Yet the goals of fiscal clarity clearly demand one. Are these the people that we should believe on Bill 2? I think their record speaks for itself.

Let us compare what Canada West Foundation says about Saskatchewan. It says, Saskatchewan has a very good 85 percent or an A minus. It does mention, as it did for Manitoba, that historical data is lacking, and it does want to see more of that next time. It does say that the province presents a detailed, easy-to-read schedule of debt which also corresponds with numbers used by outside analysts.

There is an outside check on what Saskatchewan has done. There is an outside contradiction, fundamental contradiction, of the very principles and practices of this government's budgeting. We cannot and should not believe them.

Madam Speaker, what is the response of the government to these charges? What I have said today is nothing new to them. It is not just the opposition who has made these. The press has made them. The Winnipeg Free Press and its columnists have noted these charges. One would have anticipated that the Finance minister or the Premier might indeed have made some response to these charges because they are serious ones, and they are particularly serious for a government which is resting its reputation on the balanced budget legislation and upon its greatly advertised claims to have finally balanced its budget as it sold off McKenzie Seeds last year to do it.

So it is a puzzle to me as to why they have not responded, and I began to think about the debate in this House, or perhaps we should say the absence of a debate, because there is a distinct lack of interest on the part of the government to use the House as a forum of community concern or as a place for the exchange of ideas. [interjection]

Well, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) says, it never bothers them. Well, it does not bother them because they never open their mouth. We have a flurry of activity in private members' hour, when a few of the backbenchers are allowed to speak, but we have only had one speech on this balanced budget legislation. I think the reason is that the majority of them do not

understand it, and they are on a very short leash from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), whoever, not to speak. Is it that, or is it a distinct lack of interest? I am casting around for ideas, and all I hear, of course, from the other side of the House is great guffaws, not speeches, not arguments, not debate, not responses to the critiques and analysts that have criticized them for their balanced budgets of the past few years. Absolute nothing.

It reminds me, as I thought about it, the absence, the mystery of this absence, of a poem. Many of you might know it as a song, but it reminded me of the Tory cabinet: Macavity, the Mystery Cat, never there when you are looking for them. "And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray. Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way. There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair. But it's useless to investigate—Macavity's not there!"

It is useless to talk about the absence of emergency wards or the cutting of foods to people who are hungry—Macavity is not there. This cabinet is not there. This Premier is taking it all under advisement. "Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity. There never was a cat of such deceitfulness and suavity. He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare. At whatever time the deed took place—Macavity wasn't there!"

The Jets, the Beaujolais dinner, the cutting of emergency wards, the cutting of cancer drugs—Macavity is not there. This Tory cabinet, this Premier takes it under advisement. No answers, no debate, no discussion of the kind of bill which they are presenting today, but, in any case, Madam Speaker, the real authorship lies elsewhere. It lies in think-tanks like the Fraser Institute, the Chambers of Commerce, the multinational corporations. They are the authors of this kind of bill, and they are the ones who will benefit from it.

Their goal is weaker government. Their goal is less public service. Their goal is limited social justice. Their goal is, and they would acknowledge this, the increasing and incremental freedom of the market. This is the world that they have been building for some time in different parts of the globe. The burden of their

changes has been borne by the poor. It has been borne by labour in the race to ratchet down wages and any control of the workplace. The health and safety issues that people have won, sometimes with their lives, over the last 100 years, and that is being torn away. That is what is going to happen as a result of this government. It is the diminution of public service, and that is what they are after.

They said very little. I wish they had said a little more. A few carefully chosen words from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and then nothing other than the hectoring catcalls from the back benches and middle benches which give one little confidence that they have understood what the implications of this bill are.

An Honourable Member: I think they are being muzzled.

Ms. Friesen: Well, my colleague says that they are being muzzled. I do not know that we can say that, but certainly it appears that way. There does not seem to be any evidence of any discussion of this bill.

But then, you know, it must be difficult, if you have never balanced a budget in your life, if you created the debt for the City of Winnipeg and you are now handling the budgets of the Province of Manitoba and if you have not balanced a budget in your entire political career, there must be perhaps a little flush of embarrassment, a little reddening of the neck when you come to speak on this bill and when you come to consider the criticisms of the Fraser Institute, and when you come to consider the criticisms of the Canada West Foundation and of the Dominion Bond Rating Service. There must be just a little hint of uncomfotableness on the part of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and his colleagues.

Is it that they do not understand it or they have not read it, or is it, for example, that, as I suggested to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) just a minute ago, that they actually intend to create special operating agencies which will be exempt from the restraint of debt? What rules do govern them? Indeed, has anyone on the other side actually examined what kinds of rules will govern this balanced budget legislation? What role

will the Auditor play, and what role will the special operating agencies play?

Why does this schedule—one of the things that concerns me very strongly here is the government's schedule for the selling off of Crown corporations.

I mentioned earlier that the Fraser Institute had put out its shopping list and indeed it has. The Fraser Institute says for Manitoba that McKenzie Seeds—well, No. 1, that is gone.

The next one for the Fraser Institute is Manitoba Mineral Resources Ltd., then the Liquor Control Commission of Manitoba—is this the next one?—then Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board, the Public Insurance Corporation, the Telephone System, Western Canada Lottery Foundation, to be followed up by Leaf Rapids, Manitoba Development Corporation, the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation—I think they are working on that one—the Manitoba water supply and Venture Manitoba Tours. This is the Fraser Institute's shopping list. My concern is that it is the government's shopping list too.

* (1140)

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that debate be adjourned.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Johns, seconded by the honourable member for Transcona, that debate be now adjourned. What is the will of the House? No?

Bill 5—The Education Administration Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, Bill 5 (The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), standing in the name of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Madam Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 6—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on Bill 6 (The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), who has 21 minutes remaining.

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing in both names? [agreed]

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 6, The Public Schools Amendment Act.

A short time ago, I had the opportunity to add my comments with respect to Bill 5, which also impacted upon the various school divisions throughout the province relating to the duties and powers of principals and the setting up of parent advisory councils as two of the main parts of that particular bill.

I had the opportunity at that time, as I had indicated in my comments, of communicating directly with several parents in my community, parent councils, the ones that we have, because we have had parent councils since 1978 in the Transcona-Springfield School Division, but I also had the opportunity to talk directly with several, in fact, many of the principals in my community that will be impacted by Bill 5 but will also be impacted by Bill 6.

It was interesting to note the comments that the principals of the community had with respect to the performance of their own individual jobs but, at the same time, to relate to me those experiences so that I might carry their thoughts back to this Chamber and to put on the record the comments that they have. As I proceed through debate on Bill 6 here during my comments today, I will hope to relate some of those

comments to members of this House, so they may too be aware of the intent of this bill and how the performance of the principals' duties will be impacted.

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

This bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since we are talking about the principle of the bill itself, has several components to it. It is not an extensive piece of legislation by its content. It only numbers three pages in total, but it will still have an impact on the activities of the public school system and will in some way limit the activities that take place.

I am not saying that this bill is totally without merit. There are some provisions I believe need to be looked at, perhaps some amendments may be required to this piece of legislation, and I will point out some of the shortfalls of this legislation.

In the legislation, it proposes that under one of the initial sections of this legislation, it talks about selling of goods, where no person would be able to sell or canvass or offer to sell goods or services or merchandise to teachers or a pupil on the school premises without the prior approval of the school board or a designate.

That I find somewhat unusual. I guess in some cases it may be appropriate where there are individuals, perhaps if there are activities relating to individuals selling illicit substances, for example, on the school premises or on the school property, that necessary steps should be taken to curtail, in fact prevent that activity from taking place. I am sure we all want to protect the children of—[interjection] The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) references another matter dealing with the selling of illicit substances. I do not want to comment on it because it was not directly involving schools I believe, or at least I hope it was not involving schools, although I do not know for sure. Maybe members opposite know more about that matter than I do, so I will have to trust their judgment and their knowledge when they relate that to other members of the Chamber.

There are two points here that I am trying to balance in my mind with respect to this particular section or

clause in that schools quite often do fundraisers. I know the children of my own family, and, of course, the children in the schools in my community are currently involved in school fundraisers. It can be involved in selling products, such as chocolates or other items, as a means of fundraising for various school activities. Does this particular section then say that the schools themselves, the teachers, the pupils in those schools, will not be able to go forward within the school and not sell those school fundraiser items, such as chocolates, for example, within the school premises without first contacting the school board or designate, perhaps the principal in this case, if the school board so wishes to sell that product on the school property?

I know schools require a significant amount of funds to continue their activities or any extracurricular activities in particular, and this is one way that they do that fundraising. Does that mean they would have to leave the school premises or the school property to have the exchange of those goods that would be done in good faith and would not be illegal under the laws of this province?

I see no designation; perhaps that is something that is going to occur under regulations when the minister and the department sit down to identify items that can and cannot be exchanged on school property. I throw that out for the minister's consideration because that is one of the issues that came to my mind directly when I read that clause for the first time.

Now, members of my own community, I am sure, like many other members, other parents of the province whose children are attending the public school system in our province, are obviously worried and concerned about the things that we see in our media, whether it be issues relating to violence where there are weapons that are involved, whether there is gang-related activity. I do not think that the community which I represent is much different from a lot of the communities in the province. Occasionally, from time to time, we have had our difficulties, but they have been dealt with. In talking with the principals of the various schools, including the junior highs, elementary and high schools, the principals have related to me experiences that they have had where people have come onto the property and have been under the influence of various

substances, for example, and the principals have had to deal with it.

They, quite fortunately, have a good experience in being able to call the local police, the City of Winnipeg police, who have responded quite quickly and the matters have been dealt with quite effectively and quite efficiently. By the experience that is there, we see that the police respond quite readily to any calls that the schools may make for anyone who may be creating a disturbance within the school.

Now I am not sure what effect this is going to have, and I know the minister in this legislation indicates that there is going to be an increase in the fines. In fact, there are going to be two sections dealing with fines relating to those who trespass on school property because this bill is related to persons that trespass without approval or, in fact, create a disturbance within the schools or on the property.

In the first section, under Offence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it refers to subsection 1 where an individual would sell goods on the school property. It says that the fine is increased up to \$1,000. Now I believe that is increased from \$100 that is currently in place. Does that mean that if a teacher or one of the students is selling the chocolates in the school and they do not have authorization from the school board—and I am not being facetious in this matter—but these individuals will then be subject to prosecution and perhaps fined for that activity and not receiving prior approval for it? So I am not sure what effect this is going to have on those people who are undertaking legitimate activities and to what length and what degree the school boards and the principals are going to go to give approval or to curtail this type of activity.

*(1150)

Also, under the legislation, it indicates for the other sections that, where people trespass or create a disturbance on school property, the fine is going to increase up from \$100 to \$5,000. To some, that may be a deterrent if they have money. Of course, there are, I am sure, situations that occur and the principals in my community have raised it with me, what happens with an individual who comes to the school, creates a

disturbance, or, in some cases, by-passes the principal, goes directly to a classroom and wants to see the teacher because they are quite concerned about the way certain matters have been dealt with, perhaps not to the liking of that parent or that individual or the guardian who has come to see the school? Does that mean that these individuals, perhaps maybe unemployed in some cases and have no employment earnings—how are they then going to be able to pay or afford the \$5,000 fine, and what kind of deterrent would it be to them?

I would perhaps like to see in place that we have some means or mechanism whereby the principals would have the opportunity to have the one-to-one discussion with the individual coming into the school facility. I know one principal in particular, whom I have known for quite a number of years in my community, raised the issue with me where a parent came to the school. It was an elementary school, and the parent was quite incensed with the way a matter had been dealt with and by-passed the principal's office.

Well, there are ways of dealing with that whereby, I believe, it would involve an education of the parents, because I think the parents have a responsibility in cases like this, if they have concerns, to bring them to the attention of the principals of the various schools and to sit down and talk face to face with the principals on these matters. Perhaps then an appointment can be arranged, get the teachers involved and, if necessary, get the student involved and sit down and talk about the matter face to face. I believe it involves an education of the parents in cases like this as well.

I have to think, to the increase in the fines or the level of fines that would be issued to individuals, whether they violate the subsection 1 or subsections 2 or 4, where you have a variance in the fine amounts, whether or not we are putting in place or using a hammer to swat a fly. You know, that was an example that was used. It seems to be excessive, particularly in light of the fact that not all people would be able to afford those fines, and I am not sure how the courts would view matters where that would be the case. In fact, would community service be an avenue or some other means that the courts would use to discourage that type of activity?

We currently have, from my understanding, a Petty Trespasses Act in place in the province of Manitoba that does allow, for individuals that trespass on property and are knowledgeable that they are trespassing, for a fine or penalty of \$25. So there is some deterrent there. Quite frankly, in my discussions with the principals in my community's schools, they have indicated to me they do not know, in their recollection, in all their years of service, both as a teacher and as a principal, when The Petty Trespasses Act was imposed on anyone for trespass on school property or for creating a disturbance in the school. So we are not sure if this new provision is even going to be imposed or implemented where we see increased fines, since the principals themselves indicated that the current provisions are not enacted.

The other matter that comes to my attention, dealing more broadly with the policy that is in place—now, not all school divisions have a wide-ranging use, and this is one of schools, through various hours of the day. This is one of the things that has bothered me because, in a lot of cases, I suspect that school premises are going underutilized in the off hours. I see a large number of young people, not only in my own community but in other communities throughout the province, that are looking for things to do. I sense that we are missing a real opportunity here, where we can be utilizing the school facilities to allow for activities to take place involving young people, to encourage them to be involved in there and to move away from other activities that may be, in some cases, destructive, where there is vandalism involved, where there is graffiti involved.

They are looking for an avenue, an outlet for their energies, and I think that if we utilized school facilities for that—since they are in many cases. In particular, school gymnasiums that may be sitting vacant throughout the evening hours, why can they not be utilized to assist the young people and allow young people to partake in activities utilizing those particular facilities?

I have a hard time understanding how the minister who is now, under Bill 6, indicating that there are going to be greater powers, I believe, given to a principal or person authorized by the school board, to

direct a person to leave the school premises. I mean, public schools are public property. Does that mean that I as an individual then cannot go forward under this legislation, should it be passed without amendment—that I cannot go to that school without phoning ahead and getting an appointment with the principal or with a teacher? Would I be, in fact, trespassing on that school property? I am a member of the public. I would be going there in the performance of my duties or to talk with the school officials as a parent, but does that mean that I would be trespassing if I did not call ahead and arrange an appointment?

You know, it leaves a doubt in my mind whether or not—[interjection] I am sorry, I did not catch that. [interjection] Well, if I am an invitee, and I drop in unannounced or uninvited to have some discussions, does that mean that the principal then would say that I am an invitee and would the same rules apply to everyone? It is a question that is in my mind. [interjection]

Well, I know the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), of course, has some I believe legal background working for the government of Manitoba and his previous employer is Great West Life where I believe he was legal counsel as well—

An Honourable Member: The Attorney General's department.

Mr. Reid: The Minister of Labour references that he worked for the Attorney General's department, and I believe that to be accurate.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the honourable member is detracting from the actual issue that we are debating, and I would suggest that you would ask him to retain his comments to the subject.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the honourable member for that advice.

The member for Kildonan, on the same point of order?

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe the member was referencing the fact that one of the factors in the bill is the attendance of an individual on school property, and I believe he was discussing the legal ramifications of such. I think that is clearly relevant to the topic and the debate about the bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the honourable members. The honourable member for Emerson did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Reid: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am indeed trying very hard to be relevant to Bill 6, and this, in fact, does—these legal issues that I am debating here today and responding to the comments by the Minister of Labour, who has some legal background and has made comments on the comments that I have made, I think, are relevant to Bill 6. It is an issue that needs to be dealt with, and I am sure will be debated at more length when we move into the committee hearings on this bill. I do not know why the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) took exception to the comments that have been made here. I am only referencing the comments that his own colleague had been asking me of. Therefore, I am just trying—

An Honourable Member: An internal split.

Mr. Reid: Yes, it does appear to be a bit of an internal split on that side of the House. Perhaps after the sitting hours today the members opposite could get together and discuss the issue and try and resolve the difficulties that they are having.

I noticed that the Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties that has, I believe, reviewed this legislation

has raised several issues. Now members opposite, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), who seems to be offended that this public body would be commenting on this legislation—I do not know why he would take that tack, but I guess that is his personal choice. Anyway, the Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties has suggested that perhaps this legislation should not affect, or does not affect, the normal and legitimate rights of individuals being on school property.

Now, as I have raised a few moments ago, the fact that I as an individual could go to any school in my community and talk to the—

Point of Order

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): I am here on a point of order. My only concern in respect to the statement that was made, that MARL was a public body. It is not a public body; it is a private lobby group. I just want that clarified.

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

* * *

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 22 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 12, 1995

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