



Third Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 25, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): I must inform the House of the unavoidable absence of Madam Speaker and therefore, in accordance with the statutes, would call upon the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

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

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling and Substantive Motion

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When the House adjourned yesterday, I was receiving advice respecting whether or not the matter of privilege raised by the honourable opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton) met the conditions of privilege. As indicated then, I am prepared now to hear any additional advice members may wish to offer.

I believe this is a very important matter, and seeing as the House would not want it hanging in abeyance, as moved by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the ruling of June 24, that the words: "He was not happy enough lining the pockets of the Bay Street brokers and his political friends," in reference to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), were in contravention to Beauchesne, not be a precedence of this House and that "this House has no confidence in the Speaker of the House."

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will just speak for a moment on the main motion as opposed to the advice that we put on the record yesterday. We, of course, opposed the decision of the Speaker, and I want to say today that I regret that we again have to put a motion of nonconfidence in on the Speaker of this Chamber.

The matter that was taken as notice by the Speaker was taken last November, in 1996, a matter that she

took under notice. To choose to bring back a ruling and a decision months later and report that ruling on the coincidence of a day in which the same member had moved an emergency resolution in this Chamber and had given the Speaker proper notice by putting that emergency resolution into her office beforehand is, in our opinion, a continuation of manipulation of this Chamber and of members of the opposition. We will not put up with manipulation by the Speaker, and so we again have to put this motion forward.

One must ask the question with this Speaker in dealing with this nonconfidence motion: Where is the ruling on the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his statements made to the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), something along the lines of kicking someone's lights out? Where is the ruling from the so-called unbiased Speaker dealing with a simple matter that took place months ago? We have not heard from the Speaker on this issue, but yet we see again manipulation after manipulation of the rules of this House and the traditions of this Chamber, and that is why I will be voting for the nonconfidence motion with free conscience again today.

* (1335)

I would also say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we believe that the decision on lining the pockets of brokers and other friends of the Premier is quite in order. It is on the public record that brokers did quite well after the sale of MTS. In fact, it is so well noted that Jaguar sales went up, according to the newspaper reports, with brokers purchasing Jaguars after the government broke its promise to sell the telephone system.

I will be voting for the nonconfidence motion, and so will our caucus. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all, I have to say that yesterday when the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) stood up after the ruling and recognized the position of the Chair even though he disagreed with the person who sat in that

position, it made me proud to be a member of this Legislative Assembly, and I give him full credit for that. However, I will not be voting for this nonconfidence motion with that member.

When we see matters of privilege, three in two days, it really denigrates the importance of matters of privilege, and when it becomes nothing more than a tactic—

An Honourable Member: Phoney tactical . . .

Mr. Kowalski: —to be used, as opposition uses many tactics, I have to say in general often the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, a matter of privilege is a very serious matter, and the Premier from his seat was saying it was phoney tactical crap. I am wondering if you could ask the Premier to withdraw those kinds of comments and allow us to listen to the member for The Maples on what is a very serious matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): On the same point of order, I was agreeing wholeheartedly with the comments of the member for The Maples who identified, much to the embarrassment of the members of the New Democratic Party, how they are abusing this House and its rules and its institutions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by standing up on phoney points of privilege as a means of venting their frustration and anger against individual members of this House, and I stand by that comment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I will have to listen to the Hansard—or read Hansard and see if the honourable First Minister's comments were picked up. The honourable First Minister did state that he stood behind “phoney,” but the word that the honourable member for Thompson had concerns with, I will have to see if those words were picked up.

An Honourable Member: C-R-A-P, yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Well, I would like to see if those words were picked up, but if they were picked up, then I will come back to the House.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for The Maples, to continue.

Mr. Kowalski: I often find myself in a quandary in these Chambers in that often my positions on policies and stuff on a number of matters is in line with what the official opposition—more often than not, they agree with me. More to their credit. But I often find, more often than not, I am in strong disagreement with the tactics used by the official opposition in these Chambers. I agree with their policies, but the tactics that are often used here I cannot agree with. When matters of privilege become nothing more than a tactic to be used to bring forward the MTS issue one more time, it reminds me of the one-trick pony.

This session has not been a very successful session for the official opposition. Because of the flood, because of the federal election, there has not been a lot of attention to this session. Possibly one way of trying to, in the waning days of the session—is bring up from the last session, which was very successful for the official opposition, I will grant you. They got a lot of attention. I am sure that in the polls, as a result of the previous session, they might have even increased. This session has not been. So they have gone back to their successful session and brought the one issue that they received the most attention to, MTS, and are trying to bring it forward again by using this matter of privilege.

Now they talked about the coincidence that the ruling came down on the same day that the Speaker was notified of a MUPI, but could I also look as to why in Question Period on that day the matter of MTS rate increases was brought forward when I believe the documents that the NDP brought forward were in their possession for more than one day. Could it be because they knew the ruling was coming down? Who knows? You can make assumptions. You could put facts together or perceive facts and assume that there are certain conspiracies that are not there. So, as far as the

timing of the ruling coming down at the same time as the MUPI, I do not put much stock in that.

* (1340)

As far as the timing of the ruling in general, as the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) said, when could the Speaker have brought down that ruling that it would not have been perceived as inflammatory? At the beginning of the session? In the first days of the session, then the official opposition would have been saying they are sabotaging the session by once more heightening the tension. What would I have done as Speaker? Would I have waited to near the end of the session when maybe relations seem to be better in the Chamber, there was an air of co-operation in the Chambers to bring it forward, or would I have taken the middle ground and tried for the middle of the session? I do not know, but I do not think there was any timing that would have been perfect for bringing down these rulings or the Speaker could have retired without ever bringing down a ruling, I guess. That was possible.

Now the other part is, once again, we have a motion of censure to the Speaker. You know, sometimes I have coached young children. I mean, you coach young children and they complain about the referee, what do I tell them? Never mind, go and play the game. Well, we have had how many motions of censure with the Speaker already, which is sort of a referee in this Chamber, and we have already heard complaints from the official opposition about the Speaker. We have had votes on it numerous times, and I am saying to the official opposition: Get over it. Play the game. Get on with the business of this Chamber.

If the actual purpose was try to get an elected Speaker, I know the member for Thompson knows how to get things accomplished, and he knows very well that every time this issue is brought forward, it is less likely we will have an elected Speaker. He knows that. He knows that, so why is he bringing it forward? To accomplish that purpose, to get an elected Speaker, or to make political points? What is his real purpose in bringing this forward? To get media attention in the waning days of this session, or does he really want—because I believe there is will on all sides of the House to get an elected Speaker, but every time this issue is brought forward, it sets it back to the opportunity that

we will actually see one. So I will not be supporting the member's motion. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ashton: I just want to say that, first of all, I had no idea that the ruling was coming in yesterday. I do not think it would take too much to figure out that I do not exactly get much in the way of communication from the Speaker of this House. I think after seven months, seven months after the point of order was raised, I think that speaks for itself. Seven months, November 21, 1996, the point of order was raised. The ruling came in yesterday.

I also want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are two dimensions to this. The elected Speaker, I believe, is something—it is not a question of “if” anymore. It is a question of “when.” I would just remind members who want the elected Speaker, do not blame the opposition that has brought forward a bill in this Legislature this session and the last session calling for an elected Speaker. Point the finger at the person who sits in the front row and seems to want, as Premier also, to be Speaker of this Chamber on a regular basis.

Members of this House and members of the public know there is only one person stopping us from having this matter, bringing confidence back to this House from being dealt with by electing a Speaker, and that is the Premier of this province. He has said publicly that he believes that that is the domain of the government, the Premier to be able to appoint someone. What I do not think he has recognized is that this is the 1990s, the House of Commons has an elected Speaker, the majority of Canadian provinces do, the House of Commons in Britain has an elected Speaker. I think it is not too much to ask this Premier to come into the 1990s and go along with the growing trend in Canadian and other jurisdictions of democratizing them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this issue is about more than that. It is not just about having a referee. This is like going to a court and having a judge that listens to only one side of the evidence. I have heard this from lawyers who have used this analogy. That is what happened November 27 and 28; we were not even recognized to speak in this House with the Speaker. That is why we then moved a motion of nonconfidence.

* (1345)

I think if you look at this session, we moved the motion of nonconfidence at the beginning of the session. We were willing to give this House an opportunity to function, to give even the Speaker a chance. But what happened yesterday? I found it absolutely incredible. The Speaker basically said that it was unparliamentary for me to have said that this government was lining the pockets of Bay Street and its political friends.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the evidence is clear. They were paid. The brokers were paid. They were beaten down, according to the Financial Post, to a \$300,000 fee to decide whether they were going to sell off MTS. We knew the result of that.

Why did I use those comments? The brokers made \$35 million even before the shares went on the open market. Cost of marketing, \$5 million to \$10 million. Profits on the stock flips, we anticipate around the range of \$5.7 million. The stockbrokers made between \$45 million to \$50 million within the first few days of the sale of MTS. Now let us not forget that I said this in November. We said this in this House. We said the only people who would benefit from the sale of MTS would be the brokers. I could continue to look at some of the other profits that were made probably in excess of \$100 million because of the action of this government.

I did not choose when the Speaker brought down this ruling, but you know one of the toughest decisions I have had to make as a member of this House was whether to withdraw those comments yesterday, and that was not an easy decision for me to do. I must say there were some who advised me not to do it, but I withdrew it out of respect for—and I say this to the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski)—the office of the Speaker. The reason I moved this matter of privilege afterwards is because, first of all, that decision should not be allowed to stay as a precedent in this House, and, second of all, while I may respect the Speaker's Chair, I do not have any confidence left in the current occupant of the Speaker's office in this Chamber. That is the way you deal with things in Parliament.

There are some ironies of this, because what we were fighting for last year was democracy. We were fighting

not for part-time democracy, the kind that the Premier—and I am not allowed to say he is not a dictator, and I will not get into that either, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I cannot believe I actually even said that in the first place. But, you know, we are not a province where you can suspend democracy for two critical days to allow you to ram through one of the biggest decisions in Manitoba history because you did not have the courage to go to the people of Manitoba in an election, and you did not have the support to sell off our phone company. We do not allow that kind of part-time democracy.

You know, I thought it was kind of ironic that we were dealing with this matter, and this is not by my choosing, by the Speaker's choosing, the timing of bringing in the decision yesterday. I note that. This is within a matter of our finding out within days that we were right and the fact that what has happened is, while the stockbrokers and others may have benefited in this province, many Manitobans are going to see \$3 and \$4 and \$5 and \$6 and \$7 a month increases in their phone bills. We are going to see Manitobans lose their phones while stockbrokers go out and buy new Jaguars and new Porsches, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is a shame, that is a crying shame.

* (1350)

I say that this issue is about the fundamental role that we have in this Legislature, which is to speak out on behalf of the people of Manitoba. I say to the Premier, again, because I regret, and I say to the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), I would not want to see matters of privilege brought in, particularly on the Speaker of this House, in the way that we have done it. I would much rather have a Speaker that we can have confidence in in this House.

I have been in this Chamber now since 1981, and I have seen many Speakers. I know that people who have been in the Speaker's Chair know it is a difficult Chair, but I have never seen a Speaker who has so willingly turned a blind eye to members of the opposition to the point that we saw for two days, the critical point last session on MTS. We saw her refuse to even recognize members of the opposition. That has never happened, and I do not believe outside of the pipeline debate in 1956, which I referenced yesterday,

there is very little precedent for this in Canadian history. We are taking unprecedented steps; what happened in this House surrounding the sale of MTS was unprecedented, but it was not our choosing yesterday, it certainly was not my choice to be told that I had to withdraw comments. They are absolutely accurate, that people in this province and on Bay Street had their pockets lined because of the sale of MTS. That is a fact, it is a fact, and I will never, ever withdraw the fact that that is exactly what happened.

I want to conclude by suggesting to members opposite—there is going to be a vote on this in a matter of moments. Well, we do operate by our rules and procedures in this House on most occasions. Of course, we have learned from the government that it seems to be at the—[interjection] Well, the Premier says, only when we have to rely on you. I say to this Premier, and I have to say this, because we are only 23 members in this House. We may speak for many Manitobans in our constituencies, certainly many of the key issues of the day. I think we are increasingly speaking for a majority of Manitobans, and I know they did not like that on MTS, they do not like it on a whole series of issues, but you know, this is a democratic province. And I say to the Premier, who has sat in this Chamber since 1979, he should know better. He should know better. And I say to the Premier, stop playing your petty, personal politics. Recognize that the Speaker of this House does not have the confidence of all members of this House. You do not have to do anything else, I believe, than accept that and move towards an elected Speaker. Come into the 1990s, show some fairness, I say to the Premier and to the government. You know, we will lose this vote if you put the Whip on. I say, think about it. There are better ways of proceeding in this House, and the way to start is by getting a Chair in that has confidence.

By the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to comment on the record, so members of the government know, that this is not NDP versus Conservative, that I have seen you function in this Chair as our Deputy Speaker, and we have full confidence in you as Deputy Speaker of this House. I appeal to the Premier and I appeal to the Speaker personally. Please return to your chair. Sit as the member for Seine River. No one will hold anything against you if you continue in your role as a member of this Legislature. The fact that you do not

have confidence as Speaker does not prevent you from sitting in this House and functioning like any other member of the Legislature.

All we are asking for, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that our rights, as a minority in this House, be recognized and that we have full-time democracy, not part-time democracy.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, too, would like to add some words with respect to this particular debate as the member and Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) did yesterday, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) did again yesterday. I think that it is important to repeat and get to the essence of exactly what it is that has actually happened. I like to believe, as all of us, no doubt, recognize the importance of a matter of privilege.

The first citation I would go to is Citation 27 when it states: "A question of privilege ought rarely to come up in Parliament. It should be dealt with by a motion giving the House power to impose a reparation or apply a remedy. A genuine question of privilege is a most serious matter and should be taken seriously by the House."

* (1355)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can give you a hundred percent assurances that in fact I plan to abide by that particular clause, because I recognize the importance of a matter of privilege.

The first thing I would like to do is talk about another citation within Beauchesne's, and that is Citation 33: The most fundamental privilege of the House as a whole is to establish rules of procedure for itself and then to enforce them. A few rules are laid down in the Constitution Act, but the vast majority are resolutions of a House which may be added to, amended or repealed at the direction of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a book. It is our own local rule book, and what I would suggest is that we all refer to page 28, Clause 40.(1) in which it states: No member shall speak disrespectfully of the reigning monarch or any other member of the Royal Family, or

the Governor General, or of the Lieutenant Governor or a person administering the government of Manitoba, or use—and I emphasize this—or use offensive words against the House, or against any member thereof.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I explained yesterday, every Question Period, virtually without exception, almost in 40, 50 percent of the debates that occur inside this Chamber, I would argue that there are breaches of the rules. The Speaker's job and the Deputy Speaker's job is to, when a breach of the rules has occurred and someone brings it to the attention of the Speaker, there is an onus of responsibility for that Speaker to take some sort of action.

The day in question, the government House leader, Mr. Ernst, the member for Charleswood, stood up on a point of order and said, in fact, there was a breach of our rules, that something was said that was unparliamentary. Again, I would go to Beauchesne's, and what does Beauchesne say? There is a little bit of a conflicting on the two lists. You have the parliamentary words, and you have the words that are unparliamentary, and you will have some words that are on both lists. One would ask, why is that? The simple reason is you have to take into consideration the context of the way in which it is said. I would suggest to you, again, you look at Beauchesne's Rule 491 in which it states: "The Speaker has consistently ruled that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken. No language is, by virtue of any list, acceptable or unacceptable. A word which is parliamentary in one context may cause disorder in another context, and therefore be unparliamentary."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was here like everyone else when this whole ordeal occurred; and when that whole ordeal occurred, we saw people walking across the floor, making all sorts of gestures, we had individuals yelling and virtually jumping out of their seats. It was not a proud day to be an MLA and talk about decorum inside this Chamber. The issue, I agree wholeheartedly, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) spoke with passion, and I personally agree with the issue in itself that he speaks of.

But what we are talking about are the rules of this Chamber and how we are going to ensure that those

rules are in fact adhered to. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you take a look at the context in which it was put, that setting, and the fact that someone in the House stood up on a point of order to bring the attention and request a retraction, the Speaker did what in all likelihood I would have done had I been the Speaker and would have taken it as notice, or possibly if you wanted to, you could have taken some action right then and there, no doubt about that. Then someone might have argued that she was being unfair, favouring the government at the time, because it was a motion that did not reflect positively on the New Democrats, but it was taken as notice. That is something that is in fact acceptable. I stood up and I gave advice back then. You have to take a number of things into consideration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that the words that were used in that context were in fact unparliamentary. I do not want to take the government's side. Earlier yesterday in Question Period, there was another point of order in which they were challenging the Speaker. The Speaker was wrong, and we voted against the Speaker. As I have indicated many times before, I have a lot of problems with the Speaker, and I will continue to fight to try to get better representation from within this Chamber so that the Liberal Party is able to convey our thoughts and our beliefs when virtually one out of every four Manitobans voted for our party. That debate will continue.

* (1400)

The reason for this particular matter of privilege is because there was discontent, or they were not satisfied with the ruling of the Speaker. To that degree, I would say that the Speaker did make an accurate ruling. There are other issues that came out of it outside of the wording or exactly what it is that the minister or the Speaker were being accused of. The other issue was the one of timeliness. Why did it take so long for the Speaker to make this ruling? Well, it is interesting—and again yesterday I did make reference to it, so my apologies for those who might think this is somewhat repetitive. On Monday, June 23, the Speaker made two rulings. I quote directly from the Speaker from Monday. It states: "On October 29, 1996, during Question Period, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the opposition House leader." That is October 29. That was the first one on that day.

The next one: "I took under advisement during Question Period on November 7." Again it is a date that occurs; it is the second one; it is after October 29. From what I understand and I had it confirmed from the member, I think it was from the Interlake and so forth, that this one was November 21. So the chronological sequence of matters being taken under advisement seem to be somewhat in order here. Now, I have a problem with the Speaker taking so long in reporting back on privileges, and as I reflected yesterday, I can recall when the former Minister of Finance walked out of a committee room. I do not think the Speaker ever made any sort of a report back on that particular incident. I do not believe there was ever a ruling that came back. I could be corrected on that because that happened a number of years ago.

But what would have been of some benefit when you moved the matter of privilege, there should have been some sort of a backdrop in terms of how long on average does it take for a Speaker. Is in fact this the first time? You should know that before you move a motion of censure. One would expect that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I am not quite buying into that.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party put an excellent point in his comments yesterday and reinforced it again today. That was the coincidence of the Speaker bringing forward the matters that were taken under advisement on this same day in which the New Democratic Party was going to bring forward a MUPI. There is some merit to that, and the only thing that I could come up with in terms of responding to that—because I plan on supporting the Speaker; I am not going to be voting for this particular motion—the only thing that I look at is that the mover of the motion, the member for Thompson, yesterday spoke well in excess of an hour on this matter of privilege. Ninety-five percent of the discussion was on the debate of MTS, of which I agree with the points that the member for Thompson was talking about with respect to MTS, but I cannot recall the member for Thompson bringing up the coincidence of the matter of urgent public importance and the motion.

It is something which, again, now who do I believe—the official opposition or the Speaker? Well, as a member of the opposition, I want to make sure that I am doing what I believe and my colleagues believe is

the proper thing to do on this issue, and having said that, I would suggest to you that the moment the current Speaker was appointed Speaker of this House the New Democrats never supported her. [interjection]

I would argue that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they believed—and you have to be careful when you say that is not true because we could probably pull articles where people were saying, well, the former Speaker should have been reappointed, and so forth. So we have to be very, very careful. We seconded the motion and so forth, but I do not want to be manipulated in the sense of wanting to be brought into a picture to try to dump on a Speaker. Last fall, there were a number of things that occurred in this Chamber which I am not proud of as an MLA, to a certain degree participated in it, and the Speaker did make a very significant event in the donning of a helmet that people refer to. It was supposed to be a symbol of the war of words that was going on or taking place at that point in time. I think that it captured—[interjection]

Technically, we were not sitting, but anyway there were some things in which I believe the Speaker made very bad judgments on and I opposed right out, and I think it would be scary if in fact it was left as precedent setting. But the ruling that was made by the Speaker yesterday was, in fact, an appropriate ruling. It was in accordance with the rules. There should be no doubt in the minds of any member of this Chamber, any member of the media or the public. It was a proper ruling. Our rules, and even the rules in which we go by that were set—this little blue book states that in fact the Speaker was correct. This particular rule book was passed and adopted by different political parties. The New Democratic Party supported this rule book; the Conservative Party supports it. There are a few amendments I would personally like to see in this book, like more recognition for us poor Liberals; but, having said that, that one quotation that I cited that all of us are honourable, well, that is a part of the rules. The lining of the pockets and all the other naughty things that we said about the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and most of the time we get away with it where no one raises it on a point of order—all those naughty things I have full intentions on using them in the next provincial election if at all possible, if I can legitimize it. If it is an accurate statement, outside of this Chamber, I have full intentions of using it. I applaud the member for

Thompson when he uses it outside the Chamber, but always remember when we are inside the Chamber that there are some rules. Those rules do have to be followed.

We do not want to marginalize the importance of a matter of privilege. I have stood on matters of privilege. Many might question to what degree they were actually matters of privilege also in the past, and I might be open to some criticism on that, but I do believe that my intent has been one of trying to bring justice to the situation.

This particular matter of privilege, Mr. Deputy Speaker, cannot be justified, given the explanations that have been put on the record from the New Democratic side. With those few words, I am quite prepared to vote.

Mr. Filmon: I will attempt to be brief and make just a few comments with respect to the issue we are facing. The first thing I want to say that I appreciate very much the contributions of the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I appreciate their attempt to look from a perspective of balance at this. In fact, I say that the member for The Maples has continued to enhance his standing in this House as a member who is known for his sense of fair play, for his balanced approach to issues and, I think, his unquestioned integrity in looking at these issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are talking about here, I believe, is an attempt to misuse or abuse the rules of this House in an effort to debate and continue to whip to death, so to speak, the issues that were decided upon last fall, but in doing so there is a consistent pattern, and plenty of evidence to support that consistent pattern, of members opposite to vent their anger, frustration and dislike on certain members in the House. That includes the Speaker; that includes members on this side of the House who survive personal attacks day after day after day, as has been pointed out, I think, very accurately by the member for Inkster.

* (1410)

I think what is most unusual about this is that the primary perpetrator of this kind of activity is the very

person who has put forth this motion, and what is unusual about it is that this individual, the member for Thompson, is also the opposition House leader. Many of us were at the funeral just a couple of weeks ago of Stanley Knowles, and during that discussion it was said that Mr. Knowles, the long-time House leader of the New Democrats in Parliament, was considered to be probably the foremost authority in Parliament on the rules of the House, and one of the things that he prided himself on was that he did not misuse or abuse the rules. When he got up on a point of order, he was listened to because it was indeed usually a legitimate point of order. In fact, Bill Blaikie told the story of the one time that he could recall, the one time in close to 20 years that he could recall, that Mr. Knowles did not probably have a legitimate point of order but used the opportunity to forestall some proceedings in the House; but, other than that, he was listened to and he was respected because when he got up he did not use a point of order, a phoney point of order, to try and, in some way, obstruct the rules or abuse the rules of the House.

Unfortunately, and we can see day after day after day, time after time in this House, the member for Thompson on phoney, fallacious points of order to try and just use it as an opportunity to vent a tirade on a particular issue or on particular individuals in this House, which is, I think, an unfortunate circumstance because it does not contribute to anybody's confidence that this House is willing to accept the rules that collectively we have established or the traditions, when the individual who, presumably, is there to see that the rules of the House are kept, gets up every day and abuses those rules himself, and becomes the leader in this endeavour.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are dealing with a matter of privilege. If you look at the comments of the Premier, I find it interesting he talks about personal attacks because most of the last ten minutes have been an attack on myself. I just want to say that I accept that coming from the source it does, but I take particular offence at the Premier using the name of Stanley Knowles in that context, because Stanley Knowles spent his entire career, and particularly during the 1956 pipeline debate, fighting

for democracy, fighting against tyranny in the same way that I, on behalf of all 23 members of our caucus, do on a regular basis. He can say what he likes about me, but he should not bring in Stanley Knowles, who I believe if he were still alive today, and in fact if you would care to talk to him about what happened in this Legislature last December, would have said to the Premier that he was just as wrong as the government was in the 1950s. You want to attack me, you can do it, but do not use Stanley Knowles's name, because we are fighting for the legacy of Stanley Knowles in the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts. But may I ask, as I did yesterday, that we be relevant to the matter that is before the House. I have cautioned members on both sides of the House.

The honourable First Minister, to continue.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank the member for Thompson for making my point. I was being complimentary to Stanley Knowles and in fact making the contrast between his behaviour as a House leader and the behaviour of the member for Thompson. As people are wont to say, I knew Stanley Knowles, and the member for Thompson is no Stanley Knowles.

The point that we have to consider here is that this point of privilege is not a point of privilege and as was I think adequately put forward by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), as Beauchesne says, a matter of privilege is something that ought rarely to be used. We have seen how often these phoney points of privilege have been used by the members opposite as a means to allow them to abuse individuals and abuse their rights here in this House. That is the kind of thing that this House could do well without in future.

We talk about the role of the Speaker and her opportunities and ability to try and maintain order in this House. I have to agree wholeheartedly with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that from the day that she took the Chair in this House, she was subject to constant provocation by members opposite as they

came into this House and daily in Question Period abused the rules of Question Period with postambles and preambles and argumentative and repetitive questions.

When she attempted to maintain order, then the members opposite would taunt and abuse and challenge her at every opportunity. We had more times of her being challenged than any previous Speaker. We had more times in which the members opposite would use and abuse the rules of the House in Question Period in an effort to try and get her to make rulings that they could then challenge. That is the kind of abuse that has led to the circumstances that we find ourselves in in this House. The lack of decorum, the lack of respect, the lack of trust all flow from that attitude, which had its origins from the day that the Speaker took her place in that Chair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say, given that attitude and given the attitude that was reconfirmed in his very words just moments ago by the member for Thompson, that he had to think seriously whether or not he was going to obey the ruling and retract his words.

Members opposite love, with great justification, to needle me and to make jokes and laugh about the times that I have withdrawn my comments in this House because the words were unparliamentary. No matter who is in that Chair, it has been my absolute commitment that I will get up and obey the words of the Speaker, the rulings of the Speaker, withdraw the words time and again, which is why they have so much material to go on, but that member for Thompson, the opposition House leader says, he had to decide whether or not he was going to accept the rules of the House or the ruling of the Chair.

That is the level of commitment that he has to the rules of this House that have been jointly agreed upon to the traditions of this House which have decades of history behind them, but he has to decide. He says against the best advice of most of his colleagues, he withdrew his words. Talk about a hangdog approach to whether or not you want to agree with the rules of this House. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is shameful. It is shameful, but it is exemplary of why we have the circumstances we have in this House, the lack of decorum, the lack of understanding or support of the

rules, the lack of trust and respect that occurs in this House.

* (1420)

So, I say, it would not matter whether the Speaker was appointed, was elected or was anointed, as long as the members opposite have so little respect for the rules and proceedings of this House that they are willingly going to abuse those rules and those procedures with phony points of order, phony matters of privilege and the constant abuse of the rules in Question Period. It would not matter how the Speaker got into that Chair. This House would not operate as it should because of their attitude.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton)

That the ruling of June 24, that the words "he was not happy enough lining the pockets of the Bay Street brokers and his political friends" in reference to the Premier were in contravention to Beausnesne "not be a precedent of this House and that this House has no confidence in the Speaker of the House."

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay?

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The motion has been defeated.

Formal Vote

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

The question before the House is the motion moved by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that the ruling of June 24 that the words "he was not happy enough lining the pockets of the Bay Street brokers and his political friends" in reference to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) were in contravention to Beausnesne not be a precedent of this House and that this House has no confidence in the Speaker of the House.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Hickes, Jennissen, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Reid, Sale, Santos, Struthers, Wowchuk.

Nays

Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gaudry, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Kowalski, Lamoureux, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Newman, Penner, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Stefanson, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 20, Nays 30.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

CRTC Presentations

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Peter Kokolski, Mary Kokolski, Jim Nakonechny and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the

Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the minister of telecommunications make presentations before the CRTC opposing such hikes in local rates.

* (1430)

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and

WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and

WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and

WHEREAS Manitoba currently has only three centres where mammograms can be performed, those being Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson; and

WHEREAS a trip to and from these centres for a mammogram can cost a woman upwards of \$500 which is a prohibitive cost for some women; and

WHEREAS a number of other provinces have dealt with this problem by establishing mobile screening units; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has promised to take action on this serious issue.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLYPRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be

pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

CRTC Presentations

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System as a public asset served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America, thousands of jobs and keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT contrary to promises made in 1996 by the provincial government, the majority of shares of the privatized MTS are controlled outside the province of Manitoba; and

THAT on June 16, 1997, MTS requested from the CRTC a \$5 increase per month for 1998, one of the highest increases in the country; and

THAT this follows previous increases ordered by the provincial government in 1995, 1996 and 1997; and

THAT these increases mean that for some communities in the Parklands will have almost doubled since 1995, with Dauphin alone having an increase of 87 percent when the rate for Yorkton, Saskatchewan, under the publicly owned Saskatchewan Telephone System is \$5 per month less; and

THAT MTS is requesting a rate of return of 13 percent per year from CRTC and to do this wants to raise local rates further above the rate cap in the 1998 going-in rates; and

THAT, contrary to promises made by the provincial government, MTS under private ownership is moving

rapidly to raise local rates in rural and northern Manitoba.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the minister of telecommunications make presentations before the CRTC opposing such hikes in local rates.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Economic Development Fourth Report

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to present the Fourth Report of the Committee on Economic Development.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, June 24, 1997, at 10 a.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Assembly to consider bills referred.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 12—The Manitoba Water Services Board Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission des services d'approvisionnement en eau du Manitoba

Valinda Morris - Provincial Counsel of Women of Manitoba

Bill 59—The Conservation Agreements Act; Loi sur les accords de conservation

Stuart Briese - Union of Manitoba Municipalities

Bill 61—The Sustainable Development and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur le développement durable et modifications corrélatives

*Harry Mesman - Manitoba Federation of Labour
Stuart Briese - Union of Manitoba Municipalities
Cec Muldrews - United Nations
Anne Lindsey - Private Citizen*

Your committee has considered:

Bill 12—The Manitoba Water Services Board Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission des services d'approvisionnement en eau du Manitoba

Bill 36—The Wildfires and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les incendies échappés et modifications corrélatives

Bill 44—The Municipal Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités

Bill 53—The Local Authorities Election Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'élection des autorités locales et modifications corrélatives

Bill 59—The Conservation Agreements Act; Loi sur les accords de conservation

Bill 300—The TD Trust Company and Central Guaranty Trust Company Act; Loi concernant la Société de fiducie TD et la Compagnie Trust Central Guaranty

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee also considered:

Bill 301—The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company, Montreal Trust Company of Canada and Montreal Trust Company Act; Loi concernant la Société de fiducie Banque de Nouvelle-Écosse, la Compagnie Montréal Trust du Canada et la Compagnie Montréal Trust

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT subsection 1(2) be amended by adding “, and shall file a copy of that notice with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly” after “that date”.

Mr. Tweed: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Law Amendments Fifth Report

Mr. Jack Penner (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): I beg to present the Fifth Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Your committee met on Monday, June 23, 1997, at 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

At that meeting, your committee elected Mr. Dyck as its Vice-Chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 47—The Adoption and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'adoption et modifications corrélatives.

*Joan E. Vanstone - Parent Finders of Canada
Darcy Lyons - Private Citizen
Roydon Kading - LINKS, Post-Legal Adoption Support Group Inc.
Wayne Helgason - Social Planning Council
Luis Coelho - CUPE
Tamsin Collings - Private Citizen
Karen Linde - Private Citizen
Ellen Peel - Winnipeg Child and Family Services
Joan Wolf - Private Citizen
Linda Shapiro - Private Citizen
John Poyser - Private Citizen*

Your committee has considered:

Bill 47—The Adoption and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'adoption et modifications corrélatives.

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Upon completion of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 47, your committee passed the following motion at its Monday, June 23, 1997, meeting.

THAT the Standing Committee on Law Amendments do now adjourn and recommend that this committee reconvene to consider clause by clause of Bill 48 at a time to be announced by the government House leader.

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

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Law Amendments Sixth Report

Mr. Jack Penner (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): I would like to present the Sixth Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, June 24, 1997, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

Your committee has considered:

Bill 21—The Jury Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jurés

Bill 33—The Executions Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'exécution des jugements et modifications corrélatives

and has agreed, on counted votes of 6 Ayes, 4 Nays, to report the same without amendment.

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

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Telecom Services Rate Increase

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the First Minister. Yesterday the Premier took a number of questions as notice dealing with the massive rate shock and increase that is being proposed by the Manitoba Telecom system and its submission to the CRTC.

A number of times we asked the Premier whether in fact the government representatives on the board of directors—did they support this massive rate increase or not. I would like to ask the Premier today: Can he advise the House whether the government has supported the \$3-per-month proposed increase that will affect all Manitoba consumers in a very, very negative way?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not in a position to give that information to the member opposite. The board meetings of the corporation are not public. We have not taken a position that we should brief the members opposite nor talk to them—at least, brief the members of the board or talk to them about issues that have to do with the running of the corporation.

We have said in the past that we want to ensure that we provide the best possible service to the people of Manitoba at the lowest possible cost. As I have said in the past, the processes that are in place go back several years when the CRTC instituted a program of rate rebalancing to ensure that rates that were charged reflected as closely as possible the costs of service so that, where the company was in competition, as it is for long distance, which has substantially lowered all of its long-distance costs for its ratepayers, they would also recognize that when the local competition arrived—and it will arrive before long for Manitoba Telecom

Services—that they should not lose large chunks of their local business as a result of not having rates accurately reflect the costs.

Mr. Doer: The secrecy agenda of this Tory government just keeps going on and on. We have Bill 50. We have all kinds of secrets this government is keeping away from the people of Manitoba, and they cannot even tell us and make public what their own board of directors and representatives are doing on the biggest rate increase in the history of the Manitoba telephone system. I think shame on this government and shame on this Premier for his secret regime that he is administering here in the province of Manitoba.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of the fact that he will not take a stand on his own board representatives on the Manitoba Telecom Services board of directors, will this government now rise up with consumers across Manitoba and oppose this massive \$3-per-month rate increase and join with seniors and other consumers to go to the CRTC and oppose the massive increase that will have to be required as a result of the privatization and the broken promise of this Premier?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make the point that the member opposite talks about a rate increase. A proposal has been put forth to the CRTC. They are an objective third-party review that will evaluate whether or not the proposal is reasonable and will make judgment on that in accordance with principles that are applicable right across Canada. They will not deal with it politically, as members opposite want to do and did do while they were in government.

I make the point that, for instance, in Manitoba Telephone System rates, there was only one increase during the period of 1977 to 1981, when the Lyon government was in office, and no sooner did the New Democrats come into office, but they started to increase year after year after year the rates of the Manitoba Telephone System. In 1982 they increased the rates; 1983 they increased the rates; 1984 they increased the rates; 1986 they increased the rates; 1987 they increased the rates. Some of these were double-digit rate increases. That is the way they operated from their cabinet room when they had an opportunity to control

the rates of the Manitoba Telephone System. They did not control them. In fact, they used them as an opportunity to continue to go up and up and up and up, and that is what they did when they had the political choices.

* (1440)

Mr. Doer: The Premier did not answer the question. I asked whether the government would appear before the CRTC on behalf of consumers. Now that he has moved and broken his promise and moved us into a private, profit company, other provinces that are dealing with private, profit companies, like Ontario, like Quebec, appear on behalf of the consumers. You can appear on behalf of the consumers. I know this Premier has abandoned the consumers with the sale of Manitoba Telephone System.

I would like to ask the Premier: Will he join the consumers, the seniors, and others in this province that are opposed to this massive increase based on the private, profit shareholder return, and will he oppose the rate changes and the band changes that are going to result in massive increases beyond the \$3 for rural and northern communities? Will he oppose those at the CRTC and get off the sidelines, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have continued to support the ratepayers and the customers of Manitoba Telecom Services as long as we have been in government. That is why there has been such a massive reduction in the long-distance rates since we have been in office, so that the bills of the people in Manitoba have continued to be controlled so they did not have to pay more than they were in many other jurisdictions. That is why we believe that we are doing what is right for the consumers of Manitoba, which is to keep their costs, their total costs as low as they possibly can be.

PC Manitoba Fund Banquet Corporate Sponsors

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Earlier today we had discussion about some of the main beneficiaries in the privatization of MTS, the brokers on Bay Street, the political friends of this government. I would like to ask the Premier if he can confirm that a fundraising dinner

held for the PC Manitoba Fund—and indeed, members opposite say it was a great event—that RBC Dominion Securities and particularly Bieber Securities and Wellington West Capital Inc., gave major contributions to the Conservative Party, in this case, months after they benefited from \$35 million in commissions at the expense of the people of Manitoba. Will he confirm that?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the member opposite is speaking about a dinner held last evening—is he?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Filmon: Yes. Well, I would say that there were a whole lot of Manitobans who were there who have contributed not only to some scholarships in the name of former Premier Duff Roblin but also to the PC Party of Manitoba. That included a wide range of people who did indeed buy tickets and tables. In fact, there were people I know who are not necessarily political supporters of this party, of this government. There were people there who I know were members of the Liberal Party and supporters of the Liberal Party, but they wanted to honour a great Canadian, former Premier Duff Roblin.

There were representatives of the media there, and they paid for their tickets. They did so because they wanted to honour a great Manitoban. We think that is appropriate. People make those choices. All the people who were there were more than 2,000 people, an outstanding success. Those were things that I believe were done in the recognition that former Premier Duff Roblin served this province and this country with great dignity and with tremendous strength and force. We were happy to see that recognition, and we were happy to have over 2,000 of them there.

Mr. Ashton: I would like to table a list, by the way, which indicates these were not tickets. Wellington West sponsored the dinner. Major corporate sponsors were the brokers that benefited from the sale. By the way, this is not being donated to flood relief. Perhaps if they were to donate the money to flood relief in the name of Duff Roblin, that would be appropriate but not to use this as a fundraiser for the PC Party.

I want to ask a question to this Premier: Can he also confirm that one of the major corporate sponsors is Manitoba Telecom Services Inc.? They are raising the rates on the seniors of this province and putting the money into the PC Party, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would just like to remind the honourable member that his question is out of order. According to Beauchesne 410: "The subject matter of questions must be within the collective responsibility of the Government or the individual responsibilities of Ministers."

The PC Party does not fall under the collective power of the government.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will do a further question, which will be in order. Since the government has four representatives on the board of MTS which were appointed supposedly to protect the interests of Manitobans, can he indicate whether they approved using money from MTS to finance the Conservative Party, something that would be considered kickbacks in many areas of the province?

Mr. Filmon: I can say that the dinner was in every way a huge success, that it was attended by well over 2,000 people, that it did have representation there from various corporate entities and sectors of society. In fact, I believe one of the tables was bought by the Winnipeg Free Press. These are not people who are there as political supporters of this government. These are people who are there to recognize the significant contribution of former Premier Duff Roblin, and that is the way in which people looked at it. I am very glad that the member opposite is showing off the program. I think it is something that should be recognized—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Might I remind honourable members, under Beauchesne 417, "answers to questions should be as brief as possible and deal with the matter raised." I had ruled the honourable member for Thompson's question out of order, and I do believe that was the one the Premier ended up answering.

The honourable member for Thompson, with a question.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I realize and I will ask this in way of a supplementary: Does the Premier not recognize—and I will table this document from the Financial Post which outlines the fact that two of the major corporate sponsors at this dinner, and I quote, were included for political optics at the insistence of Manitoba. That is Bieber Securities and Wellington West Capital.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it not clear to the Premier that this appears to everyone who can see it from an objective perspective that when you have people who have benefited so majorly from this, the—is an example of political kickbacks and we should not have those brokers or indeed MTS using the people's money of this province to finance the Conservative Party?

Mr. Filmon: If you accept that illogical point of view, you would have to accept that all of the unions that contribute to the New Democratic Party of Manitoba did so because of the labour law changes that they brought in when they were in office, and the checkoff that they created for those people that lined the pockets of the union bosses of this province were the reason why they got the union votes. Those are the kinds of analogies that the member opposite wants to make. If that is the way he looks upon it, then he has to accept the fact that New Democrats are bought and paid for by the union bosses of this province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I do believe there are some members who would like to ask some questions this afternoon.

* (1450)

Child and Family Services Agencies Government Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been asking a number of questions over the last number of years about the funding cutbacks on children and families and the most vulnerable in our society. Regrettably, this February the United Way of Winnipeg, in an unprecedented move, talked about the four- and five-year-olds that are now at risk. They talked about the fact that there are

more and more funding cutbacks from funders like this provincial government, and unfortunately, governments are taking—this government is taking a short-term view and not funding prevention for people. Today the front-line workers, working again in many Child and Family Services agencies dealing with children at risk and families at risk, have come to the same conclusion, that funding cutbacks from this Premier over a number of ministers of Family Services are resulting in a short-term problem, in a long-term problem for all our communities. Families are having greater and greater difficulty with cuts and preventative programs and this is spiralling into massive increases in their caseloads.

Will the Premier reverse the cuts to preventative programs and start investing in hope and opportunity for our kids and families?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for that question because it does allow me to clarify the record and indicate that support to Winnipeg Child and Family Services has increased by \$17 million since 1991-92, and I do not consider that a cutback, contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition has indicated. I guess the big concern for me and for our government is the issue around families not being any healthier or any more functional as a result of those massive increases to our Child and Family Services agencies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have genuine concern about the system that is out there today and whether in fact more money in the system will mean better services for families and children, or do we need to direct the dollars into different areas to ensure that we try new and innovative ways of providing service to children and families in need.

Independent Report—Findings

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): We will listen to the words of the front-line workers and the words of the United Way agencies that have totally denied the kind of analysis we receive from this government.

I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): Management and staff, under a Prairie Research Associates study

dealing with Child and Family Services, in a confidential report August 28, have stated that reduced services in schools, recreational facilities and cutbacks in health care were often cited as one of the key reasons to massive increases in caseloads for front-line workers. In other words, a management study is again confirming what the front-line workers were saying today. When is this Premier going to stop cutting preventative programs in schools, in recreational programs, in health care and start investing in our families and our children so they will have hope and opportunity in our future?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I say there is more money not less going into children and families in the province of Manitoba than there ever was under the former administration.

I just had the opportunity over the lunch hour to make an announcement at Rossbrook House, where we provided \$300,000 through the infrastructure program for expansion of that facility. Along with the bricks and mortar that come with the infrastructure program is the additional \$75,000 that we put into Rossbrook House through the Department of Family Services to stabilize their funding last year. Along with that goes money from the Winnipeg Development Agreement for the Urban Safety program. Those are the kinds of organizations and facilities that are right in the neighbourhood, that understand the needs of that neighbourhood, that are going to make a difference for the families and children, not unlike Andrews Street Family Centre that is receiving money, not unlike the Aboriginal Head Start programs that have been put in place under the Liberal federal government.

All of those initiatives are starting up and starting to have an impact on healthier families and healthier communities. I think that is where the focus of our energy and our effort and our funding has to go to try to ensure stronger, healthy families and communities.

Mr. Doer: We have the report from the front-line workers today; we have the report from the United Way a couple of months ago; we have a report from a group studying management in Child and Family Services all talking about the massive increases in caseloads based

on funding cutbacks from this Premier and this government to health, education and recreation.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of the 62 percent increase in caseloads, how high do the caseloads have to be, in terms of children in care, before this Premier starts reversing his heartless cutbacks to the programs that are vital for family and children of this province?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess I agree that there are issues—I agree with the front-line workers, with the Leader of the Opposition, with, I am sure, all members of this Legislature when people indicate that there is a need to ensure that the programs and the services are there and available for children. That is exactly what we are trying to address.

Now the union in Child and Family Services may believe that our mandated agencies are the area that we should be putting even more money into. We have increased the funding by \$17 million over the last five years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we believe as a government that we need to be working with the community organizations and agencies, agencies like Rossbrook House, agencies like Andrews Street Family Centre, agencies like Ma Mawi, which I have had several meetings with.

The issue seems to be that 70 percent of the caseloads in the city of Winnipeg are aboriginal. I asked at committee the other night, how many aboriginal workers are working in the Winnipeg agency to try to resolve the problems. We need to be working with the aboriginal community in the city of Winnipeg to aggressively address the issues.

* (1500)

Foster Care Funding

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Estimates in 1995 the Minister of Family Services said that she had concerns about children in hotels, and she was going to do something about it in

the near future. This year in Estimates, two years later, she said there are up to 80 children a night in hotels.

Foster parents are saying that they do not want to take children because of the cutbacks, because it is getting increasingly difficult to maintain these children in their homes because of the policies of this government. What is the Minister of Family Services going to do to reverse the cuts that she has made to foster parent rates, to the supports for foster families so that parents will be willing to take foster children so they will not be warehousing children in hotels anymore? What is this minister going to do?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I thank my honourable friend for that question, and I think it is the same question that was asked yesterday.

I will indicate that I am very concerned about the children that are in hotels and are not being served in a normal home situation or circumstance, but those are not the children that enter foster homes at the basic rate. Those are children that enter foster homes that have high needs, have special needs, and the agency provides in some instances up to \$80 per day for children in foster placement if they have high needs, anywhere between the basic rate and \$80 per day.

So the money is there. We have increased year after year the support to the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency. I have indicated \$17 million over the last five years to try to deal with those issues.

I am disturbed that there are as many children in hotels as there are. We have asked the agency to try to deal with that issue, and they have committed to trying to find the appropriate foster placements.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if she will listen to the foster parents who are saying that they have inadequate supports—in the report that was released today—no visits from Child and Family Services workers for many, many months. Will she listen to these foster parents and reverse the cuts that were made by her government so that parents are willing to take foster children on behalf of our society so that these children and their needs are taken care of? When is she going to reverse the cuts? When

is she going to provide more adequate support to foster parents?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Again, I say to my honourable friend that there is more money. There is \$17 million more in the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency than there was six years ago. That is not a cut, that is an increase.

When the issue of a shortage of foster homes was identified some time back, and we were made aware of the increasing numbers of children that were being housed in hotels rather than in homes, I approached the agency and they did some recruitment. They did find some new foster homes, but the people that really need to be involved are the places like Ma Mawi, who I have spoken to and just met with last week, I believe. They went out and recruited 40 foster homes, and they are prepared to look at culturally appropriate foster homes, recruitment and training of those foster parents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are the people that we have to work with. We have to trust that they can recruit and develop and ensure that culturally appropriate placement is available, and they are as concerned and they are prepared to work with us to try to accomplish that end.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services to read the environmental scan, to talk to the executive directors of the United Way agencies and listen to what they are saying, which basically is that the reason for the cost of children and maintenance going up is because of the cuts by this government in social assistance, in health, in education and recreation, which are causing children to come into care at higher costs, instead of spending money up front in prevention to keep children in their own homes.

Will the minister meet with these groups, read the reports and follow up on their very good recommendations?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Again, I will repeat for my honourable friend, because we honestly believe that agencies like Rossbrook House, like Andrews Street Family Centre are the agencies that are out there aggressively doing the early intervention, the early up-

front support to try to keep children out of our child welfare system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have made a commitment. We have made a commitment as a government, as all governments across the country have, to early intervention and trying to ensure that we do not need the resources and the foster homes in our child welfare system but that we can prevent that from happening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to indicate to my honourable friend that there are changes that need to be made in the system. I think sometimes we have asked our child welfare agencies, our mandated agencies to be all things to all children and families, and maybe the more appropriate prevention support needs to happen at the community level.

LAMC Meeting Schedule

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Premier. We have a much increased workload at the provincial Ombudsman's office, especially with the passage of the privacy legislation. We have the Provincial Auditor's office which is having to delay new initiatives. We have Elections Manitoba which has boundary redistribution to be addressing. These are all independent offices.

My question to the Premier is: Because of the debates between the New Democrats and the Conservatives of this Chamber, we have not been able to meet and have these valid questions being answered and these independent offices being properly served. My question specific to the minister is: When are we going to deal with these three independent offices?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I thank my honourable friend for that question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I believe that each of the independent offices that he refers to all report to LAMC and have their budgets approved by the Legislative Assembly Management Commission. We obviously have had difficulty because of the fact that the New Democratic members of that commission have refused to participate in its deliberations and discussions, thus denying us the

opportunity to be able to review and approve many of the initiatives.

As I said yesterday in response to a similar question in this House, we are quite prepared to acknowledge the need for resources in some of these independent areas. We recognize that there is work to be done that should be started later this fall, for instance in the boundaries review that takes place as a result of new census data and all of those things particularly that come under the Ombudsman and his need for resources. Yet, if the members of the New Democratic Party do not attend the meetings of LAMC, we cannot have a quorum and we cannot deal with those issues. We on this side are more than willing to be able to see that committee meet and to be able to see it deal with those very real issues that he brings forward.

Independent Offices—Operation Premier's Involvement

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the politics to the side for now. The question is: What is the Premier himself doing to ensure that these three independent offices of this Legislature are in fact being properly resourced? What is he doing to ensure that, because what happens—LAMC might not meet for another year. What is he doing to ensure that these offices are going to be properly served?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I would caution what I believe is the proposal that is being imputed by the member for Inkster, and that is that I should somehow interact directly with these independent authorities who are the servants of this Legislature and not of the government. That is why they report to LAMC, which is an all-party committee. It is a committee of this Legislature as opposed to a government entity, and it is to maintain that sense of independence of those offices. So, if he is now suggesting that I ought to insert myself in my role as Premier directly with these independent authorities, I think he is wrong. I would certainly decline to do that in favour of the members in this House attempting to find some manner in which they can come to grips with their responsibilities and address the needs of those independent offices.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me be more specific with the Premier and ask the Premier: Will he

agree, for the need to have these issues dealt with, to allow for a committee then of representatives from all of this Chamber because LAMC apparently is not working, so that a committee in which we can have representatives from the New Democrats, Conservatives and from the Independents, that we can go and find out exactly what these resources are so that we can in fact—because we cannot trust the New Democrats and the Tories in getting this issue dealt with, and this is in fact an independent group of offices that do have resources, that do require, I should say, resources, and there is a responsibility of all of us in this Chamber to ensure that they are being given those adequate resources?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Question.

* (1510)

Mr. Lamoureux: Will the Premier in fact take some sort of action?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question has been put.

Mr. Filmon: I am not sure whether the member for Inkster is wanting me to ride roughshod over all of the procedures and mechanisms that are set up in this House to deal with these independent authorities. I say to him that that is the wrong advice to be giving, in my judgment, respectfully.

I am informed by our government House leader that he believes that progress is being made towards some opportunity to get LAMC reconstituted and to meet and deal with this. Now I have been wrong before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I know that the government House leader is rarely wrong, so I am accepting his advice.

Rural and Northern Doctors Negotiations

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been in this Chamber through the course of two emergency doctors strikes. There are presently negotiations going on with approximately 270 rural doctors, self-imposed negotiations by the Minister of Health, who has indicated that there will be a 90-day deadline, indicated there will be a solution and the deadline given is often June 30 or July 1. We are

facing a very serious situation, have for some time in rural and northern Manitoba in respect to doctors. I want the Minister of Health to update this House specifically as to what is happening with respect to that agreement and whether or not there will be some resolution to that matter.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): I very much appreciate the timely question from the member for Kildonan on this particular matter. As he knows, we struck out some months ago on a 90-day process involving the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Manitoba Medical Association, I believe the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, the College of Family Practitioners and of course ourselves as a province with the regional health authorities. That committee has worked to really go over and hopefully give some advice on a new model of delivering emergency services throughout the province. I am pleased to indicate today that I think we have the makings of that new model, and as we speak, there are still some discussions going on with some of the organizations. I ultimately would like to have their support for that model as we go forward, but we have fleshed out, I believe, the makings of a new model that is worthy of a try.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Deputy Speaker, can the Minister of Health indicate to this House and the people of Manitoba whether the making of this new agreement will be within or outside of the auspices of the five-year MMA agreement that was negotiated by his predecessor, whether or not this will be a side agreement or whether it will require ratification by the MMA and their members?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, again I appreciate that question from the member. The short answer is neither, actually. We are not looking, at this time, to come up with an agreement with the Manitoba Medical Association. What, in fact, we are trying to do is involve them in a process to develop a model that we can provide to the regional health authorities as another tool to provide emergency services. I would hope that model would have the support or endorsement of the Manitoba Medical Association, but when we set out on this process, it was not specifically to arrive at an agreement or a side agreement or an amendment to the documents that he has referenced.

Service Delivery

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, can the minister therefore give assurances to this House and to the people of rural and northern Manitoba that, with respect to the approximately 270 physicians that we are dealing with in health centres, we can be assured that services will be provided on a regular 24-hour basis, as per the norm in these regions, within what period of time, and what is the deadline that we are dealing with?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Again, another highly relevant question to the events of this week that are going on at the current time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, currently in many of our rural facilities—just to put it in context—24-hour emergency services are not offered today, some because physicians have withdrawn those services, others simply that there is not sufficient need or sufficient physicians available to provide that. So currently there is a mix of services around the province.

We are confident that this particular model, as a tool, will satisfy many of the needs that physicians and communities have put forward. I am not so bold as to say that it will satisfy all needs or all physicians in the province, but I suspect that it is a kind of tool that will allow regional health authorities to deliver a high-quality product on a regular basis throughout the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for Oral Question Period has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the following committee changes were moved yesterday afternoon by leave in the Standing Committee on Economic Development, and I am now moving the same change in the House so that the official record will be corrected: that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development for Tuesday, June 24, 1997, for 3 p.m. be amended as follows: Osborne (Ms. McGifford) for Thompson (Mr. Ashton); Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk); Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk); Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), for Wednesday, June 25, 1997, effective 3 p.m.

Motions agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Gimli, with committee changes.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the following committee change was moved yesterday afternoon by leave in the Standing Committee on Economic Development, and I am now going to move the same changes in the House so that the official records can be corrected.

I move, seconded by the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development for Tuesday, June 24, at 3 p.m., be amended as follows: the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render); the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura).

I move, seconded by the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Wednesday, June 25 be amended as follows: the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer); the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Motions agreed to.

MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Rate Application Before CRTC

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that under Rule 27.(1) the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance namely the recently released rate application before the CRTC for a series of major

increases in base rates which will result in rate shock for residential phone service in Manitoba and is contrary to what was promised by the provincial government last year when MTS was sold.

Motion presented.

* (1520)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable member for Thompson, I believe I should remind all honourable members that under Rule 27.(2) the movers of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and—one moment.

Order, please. I have got to inform the honourable member that the motion that he just moved before the House is not the same as the motion that was tabled with the Clerk. I would have to ask leave for the honourable member's motion that was tabled, the original one, to be moved in the House. Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and—

Some Honourable Members: No leave.

Mr. Ashton: Leave was given. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) maybe was not paying attention at the time.

An Honourable Member: No, I said, no leave.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I had requested whether there was leave or not. Okay. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent public importance.

I move that under Rule Number 27(1) the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the recently released rate request of MTS Netcom to the CRTC for a series of major increases in base rates which will create rate shock for residential phone services in Manitoba and is

contrary to what was promised by the provincial government last year when MTS was sold.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), seconded by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that under Rule Number 27(1) the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the recently released rate request of MTS Netcom to the CRTC for a series of major increases in the base rates which will create rate shock for residential phone services in Manitoba and is contrary to what was promised by the provincial government last year when MTS was sold.

Before recognizing the honourable member for Thompson, I believe I should remind all honourable members that, under Rule 27.(2), the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and one member from the other party in the House is allowed not more than five minutes to explain the urgency of debating the matter immediately.

As stated in Beauchesne, Citation 390, urgency in this context means the urgency of immediate debate, not the subject matter of the motion in their remarks. Members should focus exclusively on whether or not there is an urgency of debate and whether or not the ordinary opportunities for debate will enable the House to consider the matter early enough to ensure the public interest will not suffer.

Mr. Ashton: I realize that the Premier may be somewhat disappointed that I am entitled and indeed have followed the rules in putting this matter of urgent public importance before this House, but I say to this Premier, he will never silence us in the opposition when it comes to speaking on behalf of the people of Manitoba. Why, indeed, did we move this matter? I want to note, by the way, that I realize that this exactly has not got much of a surprise factor. We intended to move this matter of urgent public importance yesterday. I want to note that, because a similar resolution was filed yesterday. The reason we filed it was because this was the first opportunity after we had the opportunity to look at the CRTC application filed by MTS NetCom, which shows clearly that Manitobans could be faced with not only a \$3 increase if the application is

approved, but they need to find another \$20 million that could result in another \$4 a month on average, in fact, even more in many rural areas.

We are saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, rate shock is a reality with MTS in private hands. We were right. Ross Nugent was right. The people of Manitoba were right. We are going to see dramatically increased phone rates, and it is time for this Legislature and this government to take a position on that critical issue.

I find it appropriate that we have the chance to deal with the urgency of this today, because we have just learned today just how unable this government is to provide information and participation on this issue. Is there any surprise that the Premier does not want to intervene at MTS NetCom? I wonder what one of the major corporate sponsors of their fundraising dinner yesterday, MTS, would say about the Premier going to the CRTC and suggesting they get a slightly lower rate of return, maybe not those huge rate increases. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have never seen such clear evidence of kickbacks, political kickbacks, than I have seen with this government, which raises funds from MTS when it is supposed to be defending Manitobans and defending them by saying no to those major rate increases.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I say to members opposite, the Premier had the nerve to stand up and say, well, people bought tables and tickets. You know, we have to deal with this matter urgently, because one of the major sponsors is Wellington West. I want the members opposite to have the opportunity to debate how Wellington West Capital, one of the three major sponsors, lobbied to join the syndicate selling off MTS, and according to the Financial Post, at Manitoba's insistence, two Winnipeg-based boutiques were included for political optics: Wellington West Capital, which was one of the major dinner sponsors—and, guess which the other one was, Mr. Acting Speaker?—Bieber Securities. I have here this sponsor—I say, by the way, I find it shameful that they would use the name and use the reputation of one of the most respected politicians in Manitoba history to bag money from the people who benefited from the sale of MTS, because Bieber is on here as well. I say to

them if they want to have a dinner in honour of Duff Roblin, raise money for flood relief. Do not raise it for the PC bagmen.

You know, I do not know what is more offensive. Getting kickbacks by taking money from brokers that just benefit at our expense by a policy that was made by a government that had no support from the people of Manitoba, none; 78 percent of rural Manitobans said no. Two-thirds of Manitobans said no to the sale of MTS. What is more offensive, is it that, or the fact that six months after MTS was sold off, we have MTS seeking a huge increase in rates and now donating money as a major corporate sponsor to the PCs?

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

I want to go further and suggest one of the reasons we have to deal with this urgently is I want to find out what the role was of the board appointees from the government, many of whom are major contributors themselves to the Conservative Party. I wonder if they had a chance to vote on this, because I believe then you have a direct tie-in between the government of the day and financing of a political party in a way that is one of the most odious forms of fundraising I have ever seen in this province, to go and benefit the brokers in November, to add them through political interference and then collect money from them six months later and to sell off our phone company and then have the ethical and moral judgment, to my mind, of even the people at MTS now, this private company.

Do they not understand what it is going to say to the seniors and others who may lose their phones? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have never seen a government sunk so low in terms of morality and ethics. That is why we need an urgent opportunity to debate. While on the one hand they are dramatically increasing rates over at MTS and why this government will not say anything that will go against the interests of their corporate friends, they want to line their corporate friends' pocket. We all know that. That is why we need to debate it now.

* (1530)

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):
Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, the official opposition

brings forward a motion for debate on what they call an urgent and pressing matter, warranting the setting aside of the business of the House, when in his opening remarks, perhaps even in the motion itself, the honourable member refers to a CRTC application respecting rates for the Manitoba Telecom system. It was not urgent when honourable members, some of whom sit on the benches opposite, sat around in the backrooms and decided what phone bills, how they should be increased. It was not a matter of a requirement for any debate in the House at that time. It was not a matter of any requirement that they wanted, that they recognized for a debate in this House when it came to unconscionable increases to our Manitoba public auto insurance rates.

So somehow there is a sense here that there is a rule for members of the New Democratic Party and a different rule for other governments and other people in Manitoba. It smacks just of a little bit of hypocrisy here today that this application for a motion of urgent and pressing importance should come in front of us today. Now, I am sure the honourable member has met the appropriate requirements for filing notice with the Speaker's office, and I have no evidence to suggest that has not been done. But this is about whether there ought to be a debate. This little five-minute time we have now is to discuss whether there ought to be a debate about this, not the time for the debate itself but whether this is an urgent enough matter that there be a debate.

It strikes me as somewhat strange coming from honourable members in the New Democratic Party that a proposed increase in rates would be a matter urgent enough to require a debate in this House, when they themselves sat in the backrooms and made decisions about the prices that Manitobans should have to pay for their phone bills or for their Autopac rates. So here, again, I think what we have is an application on the part of the honourable member for an opportunity to make their points again and again and again. Whether they have this opportunity this afternoon or not, which I suggest they will not, because they simply do not meet the requirements for the debate, they will have ample opportunities to bring to the public's attention the things that bother them about the Manitoba Telecom system and whatever it is that bothers them about the government which they oppose in this place.

So, with due respect to the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who, no one would question his passion for these issues, and I certainly do not, and his eloquence in bringing forward these matters is not something that I question either, but the appropriateness of setting aside the business of this place on this particular matter at this particular time, simply the case for that has not been made.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, could I request leave to speak to this?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable member for Inkster have leave to put his remarks on the record? [agreed]

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Speaker, very briefly I listened closely to what the member for Thompson was saying. I would buy into the argument that the member for Thompson has put forward in terms of the need to have some sort of debate on this particular issue.

There was a cautionary note that came to mind in terms of any potential vote on this. The member for Thompson made reference to board members being MLAs, if in fact they would, not government-appointed MLAs if you like, or individuals appointed by the government in terms of conflicts of interest, if in fact it comes down to a vote, but in principle I do not have any problems supporting the motion that is brought forward with respect to the member for Thompson.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Deputy Speaker, a matter of clarification just on the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Crescentwood, on a point of order?

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to clarify that the government appointed all of the members of Manitoba Telecom under the Manitoba Telecom act. The board of directors was entirely appointed by the government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order.

I wish to inform the House that the notice requirement for this matter was met. According to Manitoba practice and Beauchesne, a Speaker's role, when a matter of urgent public importance is put forward, is to determine whether the matter is so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention and to judge whether the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and the public interest demands that discussions take place immediately.

While the honourable member for Thompson brings forward an important matter, it is my judgment that the public interest will not be harmed if the debate of this matter does not take place today.

Mr. Ashton: It is with regret I challenge the ruling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Ashton: On division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On division.

Funding for the Office of the Ombudsman

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, too, would move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), that under Rule 27.(1) the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Legislative Assembly Management Committee to meet and provide extra funding for the

Ombudsman's office so that they can adequately carry out the duties assigned to them by this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before I recognize the honourable member for Inkster, I believe I should remind all members that, under Rule 27.(2), the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and one member from the other party in the House is allowed not more than five minutes to explain the urgency of debating the matter immediately.

As stated in Beauchesne Citation 390, urgency in this context means the urgency of immediate debate, not the subject matter of the motion. In their remarks, members should focus exclusively on whether or not there is an urgency of debate and whether or not the ordinary opportunities for debate will enable the House to consider the matter early enough to ensure that the public interest will not suffer.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would argue that the public interest would be best served by debating this particular issue today. Earlier in Question Period, once again, I have asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province to indicate what is happening with these three independent offices. I have had opportunity to have some discussions through the Ombudsman's office and one of the other offices where there was a concern expressed in terms of the lack of any sort of direction coming from within the government.

I look at the provincial Ombudsman's office, and within that office we see more responsibilities that are being delegated, therefore they do need additional resources. Even the Premier in Question Period yesterday acknowledged that he would like to be able to give them more resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have the Provincial Auditor's office, whether it is staffing complements or what they are going to be doing with staffing years to the delaying of new initiatives, again because of our collective inability to address the issue. We have Elections Manitoba which has a responsibility of looking into boundary distribution amongst other

things, and all three of these offices are, in fact, independent.

* (1540)

There are no other times or opportunities for us to be able to debate this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the sense that budget concurrence, the Estimates, is over. There is no relative bill before the House in which we could allow for a debate to occur. I myself, as other members, have used our grievance. I would suggest to you that the public's interest would be best served because these are, for all intents and purposes, independent offices of this Chamber, and it is the responsibility of this Chamber to ensure that those offices, indeed, have the resources that are necessary that would allow them to function in a proper fashion.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) in his answers to questions has acknowledged the Ombudsman's office, in particular, does not have the resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, that in itself raises the concern in terms of, well, what resources is the government prepared to give? If, in fact, the government was saying, well, look, until LAMC meets, we are prepared to allow for this type of an increase to take this into account, and as long as you are not decreasing the lines it can be reviewed whenever LAMC does meet, because we have not had any indication in terms of when it is going to be meeting, and that causes a great deal of concern for the collective good of the independent offices and the collective good of this Chamber.

We rely heavily on the resources from all three of those offices, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we recognize their importance and the contribution that they make in their independent way. We are not saying that the Premier should ride roughshod over these offices. What we are saying is that the Premier at the very least needs to try to resolve this issue. He himself needs to get involved with the representatives from this Chamber, and failing that, at least allow for additional resources to go direct to these three independent offices and let LAMC, whenever it does meet, resolve it.

It is indeed in the best interests of the public that these three independent offices and their need for additional resources get addressed, and they should be addressed today because we do not know if in fact we

could be out of here—the session could be concluded today; it could be concluded as early as tomorrow. We cannot leave these three independent offices hanging when in fact there is a good chance, I would say a better than 60 percent, 70 percent chance, that it will not be resolved before we rise or before we go into the summer. That is the reason why I believe that it is important that we have that debate today in order that all parties can get on the record in supporting the additional resources to these three independent offices that are in fact warranted.

With those few words, I trust that we will be able to have an emergency debate today to resolve it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do believe that it will take the will of the House and leave because our Rule 27.(5)(a) indicates that not more than one such motion, a matter of urgent public importance, may be made at the same sitting. We just dealt with a matter of urgent public importance before, and I know it is longstanding practice in this House in terms of that particular rule. But we are open in terms of that, in terms of the will of the House.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: On a point of order, and I can appreciate the sensitivity from the member for Thompson. I know during the minority days it was only accepted that there would be one emergency debate during the day. At least that is an indication I was given. After, I can say from experience that it was allowed, and I did ask both the former Speaker and Clerk's staff with respect to the ability to have a second MUPI, and the response I was given back then was yes. In fact, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look, you will find at least on one occasion, I believe, where we did have two MUPIs, just to clarify that particular rule.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, on the same point of order.

Mr. Ashton: The same point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The rules are clear. We cannot follow the rules by leave. I was just going to deal with that in my comments, and I am wondering if you wanted to

perhaps reserve a ruling on this until after the comments are made, or if you wish to make a ruling at this point in time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will rule on the point of order after the comments have been made. The honourable member for Thompson, to conclude his remarks.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: I want to indicate that we believe it is technically not in order, but we are willing to be accommodating. There are some important issues that need to be debated. I am not sure this is the forum to debate LAMC issues. In fact, I would suggest it is not the best forum whatsoever in this House. I believe there are other ways of dealing with issues before LAMC in terms of its role as a committee. Our position, in terms of the nonpolitical offices, is clear, and I am hoping at some point in time, if we all appear to have some agreement on providing additional resources that the independent offices need, and I point in particular to the privacy issue requiring an additional role for the Ombudsman, longstanding requests from the Auditor's office, and in fact that we have written to the government House leader (Mr. McCrae) indicating our own support for the proposals put forward prior to Christmas as part of the budget process.

We are prepared to allow leave on this. Of course, it is subject then to the government as well on the clear understanding that technically it is not in order. But I would also add a caution that I do believe that some of these issues would be better dealt in the ordinary course of events through discussions between the various parties and without going any further than saying there have been some discussions. I even note that I think that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) commented on that today in comparison to yesterday where, perhaps, he may not have been aware of that fact, but indeed an LAMC meeting was cancelled by mutual agreement while discussions continue, and I want that put on the record. That was by mutual agreement, and our intent is to continue those discussions.

So I am not sure if there is really much we can add right now that would be useful in a public forum, but I was certainly prepared to deal with that. If there is a will of the House, we are prepared to discuss those applications by leave.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has brought this matter forward today, because it is indeed an important matter. Again, whatever technical problems there might be, I was engaged in something else a moment ago when that came up, so I am not sure where we stand on the legality or the technical appropriateness of the motion being in front of us, nor indeed do I know if the honourable member provided the appropriate notice. It may be that Your Honour set that out and let us know about that. I am assuming that happened.

But the point is some of the things that have been said here by the opposition House leader are indeed true. We have had a little difficulty over the last few months getting the Legislative Assembly Management Commission to function in its normal way, but I do not think we can agree that the ordinary business of the people of Manitoba needs to be set aside today for the purpose of a debate about the LAMC. I do believe that if there are some good intentions and some good will, which I believe there to be, we will indeed, through some mechanism yet to be determined, be able to achieve the ends that we need to, to ensure that the Ombudsman's office, the Office of the Provincial Auditor, indeed the office of the Clerk of the Legislature and the office of Elections Manitoba and all the other matters that need to be dealt with through the LAMC, it is true, will indeed in due course be dealt with in such a way that the people of Manitoba will not be inconvenienced or in any way harmed because of any delay in LAMC meetings.

* (1550)

Remember we are relatively early in the fiscal year still and we are aware of the requirements of these various agencies. We are aware of requirements of the various caucuses in this House. We are not unmindful at all of those matters, and it is with that in my mind that as government House leader I am trying to bring about amicable solutions to some of these problems that do from time to time surface in a Legislative Assembly. So, while I respectfully agree that the matter raised by the honourable member for Inkster is indeed one of considerable importance, I think that there are options available to us to resolve the difficulties enunciated in his comments this afternoon. So, on that basis, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, I am not able to support setting aside the ordinary business.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Yes, I just want to add a very short comment. I have been informed by more senior members here that, indeed, during the times of the minority government, more than one MUPI was not allowed, but in fact precedent has been set in that more than one MUPI has been brought forward. So I just wanted to advise--

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have already taken that matter under advisement, and I will be dealing with it right now.

First, I will advise the House that our Rule 27.(5)(a) allows that when two MUPIs are filed, if the first one is not debated, then the Speaker can take into consideration the second one filed. Because the motion of the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was ruled out of order, we can proceed to consider the motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

The required notice for this motion was provided. As has been noted previously in the ruling, the role of the Speaker when a matter of urgent public importance is raised is for the Speaker to judge whether the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and to rule on whether the public interest demands that discussion take place immediately.

The member does have another opportunity to raise this matter. The debate on the concurrence motion in Committee of Supply will soon commence, at which time the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), as well as any other member wishing to do so, can so pose questions and debate the matter. I have not been convinced that the public interest will suffer if the member for Inkster's motion is not debated today. Therefore, I rule that the motion is out of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: With respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would have to challenge your ruling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Kowalski: Yes, I believe that if you canvass the Chamber you will find, as an independent member, I believe that there are other members who believe the needs of the Ombudsman's office is needed and would support a recorded vote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable member have support for a recorded vote?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

An Honourable Member: Are four members on their feet? That is what you have to have, four members standing to their feet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for The Maples does not have support for the recorded vote.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Just on a point of order for clarification for a process in the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that when someone does stand and request a recorded vote, the question then should be put: Does he have the support? I personally support the member for The Maples. I am sure that there might be other members. Maybe what a more appropriate

thing would be to ask for those who might support the member so that we know if in fact he does have that support, should maybe rise in their place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member did not have a point of order. I have clearly ruled that the honourable member did not have support. I have asked the question, and if the honourable member wants to challenge—

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: On a point of order, I would ask the Deputy Speaker: How would he know that the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) does not have the support of the four people?

An Honourable Member: There were not four members standing on their feet. That is why.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, there was no requirement. The government House leader said that there was not four members standing on their feet. Is that what is supposed to happen? I am just looking for guidance on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I am sure it will happen in the future. If a recorded vote is requested by any member—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member that I have ruled on this matter, that the honourable member did not have support. I have done it in the past where the member has asked me for the support, and I have recognized it when someone has said yes for the member. So there is a way to do it.

Mr. McCrae: On a point of order, if we review Rule 10.(8), it says: "Upon a division, the 'Yeas' and 'Nays' shall not be entered in the Votes and Proceedings unless demanded by not less than four members." I have only heard the demand made by one or two members, and that is not four.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, how do you know?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the honourable government House leader for that, but I have already made my ruling. I have decided—[interjection] Order, please. I have made a ruling. If the honourable member wants to challenge my ruling, that is up to him, but I have made my ruling. We are just going on and on in debating with the Chair at this time. I thank the honourable member.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, would you be so kind as to call the Report Stage for the bills listed on page 3 of the Order Paper beginning, I think, with No. 34 and going in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

REPORT STAGE

Bill 34—The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Municipal Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Highway and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), that Bill 34, The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Municipal Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et la Loi sur les municipalités), reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 35—The Condominium Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On behalf of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Radcliffe), and seconded by the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman), I move that Bill 35, The Condominium Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les condominiums et modifications corrélatives), reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 37—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On behalf of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), and seconded by the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), I move that Bill 37, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Agriculture, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* (1600)

Bill 40—The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), and seconded by the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), I move that Bill 40, The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Fonds de participation des travailleurs du Manitoba), reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 54—The Animal Husbandry Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), and seconded by the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), I move that Bill 54, The Animal Husbandry Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'élevage et modifications corrélatives), reported from the Standing Committee on Agriculture, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 55—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton),

THAT Bill 55 be amended by renumbering the proposed Section 15.1, as set out in subsection 6(6) of the Bill, as subsection 15.1(1) and by adding the following:

No sale without vote

15.1(2) The government shall not present to the Legislative Assembly a bill to authorize or enable the sale, lease or other disposition of major generation, a subsidiary in Manitoba or any shares of a subsidiary which owns major generation, transmission or distribution facilities in Manitoba, to any person other than a subsidiary, unless the government first provides the voters of Manitoba with an opportunity to vote on the matter, and a majority of persons who vote authorize the government to proceed with the changes.

Procedures for vote

15.1(3) A vote for the purposes of subsection (2) shall be conducted to the extent possible in accordance with The Elections Act and the provisions of The Elections Act apply with necessary modifications to a vote under subsection (2).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are presenting the amendment.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment to Bill 55, moved by the honourable member for St. James, contravenes our rules and practices because it calls for an expenditure of public funds. I must therefore rule the honourable member's amendment out of order. I understand that an identical amendment was ruled out of order in committee for the same reason.

Point of Order

Ms. Mihychuk: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask you to consider the amendment in order with any expenditure being incurred by Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the honourable member, but she did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Just by way of clarification, are you ruling the amendment is not—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Out of order, yes.

Mr. Ashton: I would challenge the ruling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson has challenged the ruling of the Chair.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Ashton: On division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On division.

* * *

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay), that Bill 55, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba), reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 57—The Highway Traffic Amendment,
Summary Convictions Amendment and
Consequential Amendments Act**

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), and seconded by the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman), I move that Bill 57, The

Highway Traffic Amendment, Summary Convictions Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires et modifications corrélatives), reported from the Standing Committee on Agriculture, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Deputy Speaker, would you be so kind as to call third reading debate on the bills as listed beginning at page 3, Bill 2.

THIRD READINGS

Bill 2—The Arbitration and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), that Bill 2, The Arbitration and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur l'arbitrage et modifications corrélatives), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has been debate on this particular bill which has been through a committee. I want to indicate that we have no difficulty with this particular bill passing and are prepared to say go to a vote on third reading.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 3—The North American Environmental and Labour Cooperation Agreements Implementation Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I move, seconded by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), that Bill 3, The North American Environmental and Labour Cooperation Agreements Implementation Act (Loi sur la mise en oeuvre des accords nord-américains de coopération dans les domaines de l'environnement et du travail), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (1610)

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we oppose this bill for a number of reasons which I have set forth in both second reading and in committee.

Basically the bill accomplishes nothing that is not already made possible under the North American Free Trade Agreement. There are no particular gains for the province, and indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by becoming a cosignatory to this and ratifying the bill, Manitoba opens itself to actions taken by third parties against Manitoba, opens us to challenges should we wish to improve our standards of environmental or labour practices, because third parties under this agreement have the right to sue. Particularly, foreign-denominated corporations have the right to sue if they feel aggrieved under this. Manitobans, on the other hand, through their government, do not have a reciprocal right.

Also, I noted in debate, and the minister undertook to raise the issue, that under the labour agreement, third parties such as labour unions do not enjoy the privileges that third parties under the environment agreement enjoy, which is the right to bring some form of action should they feel that laws are not being appropriately interpreted in any of the participating countries and jurisdictions.

I think also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has to be said that for this government to pretend that it is in support of fair labour practices or in support of ILO conventions on the rights of labour and to have the shockingly bad record that it has in regard to labour is simply hypocrisy. When Canada is not prepared as a country to ratify the ILO conventions on child labour, when this province is prepared to bring forward such legislation as it brought forward in the last sitting of this House and then to say that they are in favour of high standards of rights of labour to organize and to pursue the legitimate rights of workers is simple hypocrisy.

With those words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our party intends to oppose this legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. All those in favour of the—oh, the honourable member for Inkster. I am sorry.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, just very briefly, the NAFTA trade agreement currently appears to be working for Manitoba. Free trade appears to be working, and the benefits for Manitobans are obvious, but with the success of NAFTA, Manitobans also face some serious problems, particularly in the area of labour and the environmental issues. This bill is not really needed to address these issues. As MLAs, we have the opportunity every day.

This bill is more an excuse to allow the minister to talk about how responsible and proactive he is on these issues. This bill is nothing more than a public relations exercise in some ways. This government neglects the labour and environmental issues. If they did, why would they introduce in the last session the most regressive, in many ways, labour legislation since the '40s? The record on the environmental issues is equally as cloudy. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading of Bill 3, The North American Environmental and Labour Cooperation Agreements Implementation Act (Loi sur la mise en oeuvre des accords nord-américains de coopération dans les domaines de l'environnement et du travail).

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, say nay.

An Honourable Member: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On division.

Bill 4—The Steam and Pressure Plants Amendment Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman), that Bill 4, The Steam and Pressure Plants Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les appareils sous pression et à vapeur), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Very briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the elimination of duplicating regulations is an important endeavour so long as safety is the first consideration. After listening to the minister's comments in second reading, we are convinced he has taken the issue of safety into consideration and believe that this bill is a necessary and prudent piece of legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 5—The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program Repeal Act

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill we are indeed in favour of and prepared to support—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. He has not moved it yet.

The honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, she was up before you were.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would hate to challenge that decision. I think we have to check those eyes and those glasses of yours.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman), that Bill

5, The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program Repeal Act (Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le programme d'encouragement à l'exploration minière), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Mihychuk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak in favour of this bill, saying once again it is high time that the government moved on a program that was poorly founded way back when it was created in '91-92. It was a failure all the way through over the next five or six years supported by the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) and trumpeted as one of their star programs. We are indeed in favour and supporting this bill. The timeliness is well past; however, there are serious flaws to this program. We raised in second reading and urge again that the department actually look at its programs in terms of proper assessment procedures. We are in fact in favour of passing this bill.

That concludes my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

**Bill 6—The Natural Gas Supply Repeal
and Public Utilities Board
Amendment Act**

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman), that Bill 6, The Natural Gas Supply Repeal and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act (Loi abrogeant la Loi sur l'approvisionnement en gaz naturel et modifiant la Loi sur la Régie des services publics), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of the comments that I could put on record on this particular bill I put on Bill 9, but suffice to say, I still would like to add just a few comments.

Unlike the Klein or the Harris governments, the Filmon style of privatization is a much slower process, but make no mistake about the outcome. It is still the same in many different ways. Instead of telling the voters the truth, many would argue, they move slowly in the backrooms to undermine a system of government that protects Manitobans because they believe in the right-wing Conservative ideology far more than they believe in the protecting of Manitobans. The thought of having Crown corporations that might try to protect consumers from the impact of high natural gas prices is frightening to this government, it appears. What they neglect to tell Manitobans is that while natural gas for homeowners increased by 8.8 percent, the same increase for commercial users was as low as 2.1 percent.

With those few words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will leave it at that.

* (1620)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member for Inkster, and I particularly appreciate the fact that he is clearly, I think, attempting to distance himself from some of the comments that have been made by the leader of the Liberal Party who has said that she is not really against privatization, just the way it is done. I mean, I found that amazing on MTS, and I am not saying it is a shock to the member for Inkster. I think he spoke clearly to the fact that there are probably many people who would support the Liberal Party that do not subscribe to that particular approach and our concern about the issue of privatization.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker—[interjection] Well, indeed, and it is interesting that it takes the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) to point out that Liberals in government have been privatizers. The federal government with CN, for example, much of our rail system is being privatized—just ask anybody in northern Manitoba, in rural Manitoba—some of the lines that are being dumped as part of the transportation act. So I think that the difficulty sometimes with the Liberals' approach is that they do want to be on both sides of the fence, and the problem when you try that is you get impaled firmly on the fence, and I would not recommend that to anyone. I would suggest to the

Liberals that they listen to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) who gave, I thought, some very good comments, because I think there are going to be clear choices ahead for Manitobans in the next few years.

One of those choices is on the key issue of whether there is a role for public ownership in this province. I believe the answer to that question is yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We argued that on the Manitoba Telephone System. We will be arguing that again continuously on Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, with many of the other things that we have within the public sector. Even more broadly, whether it be home care or health care or education, those issues are there. I think also what Manitobans are willing to do is to have mechanisms available for unforeseen circumstances that do involve public involvement in the economic sector, and I want to say that I find it disturbing that the government is not even looking at some of the other jurisdictions. We are starting to see even the Harris government in Ontario starting to slow down on the issue of privatizing Ontario Hydro. So even the Harris government, I think, is learning the lesson, and I hate to use them as an example for this government, God forbid, but they are learning the lesson that this government is only just beginning to learn.

There are some constant themes, and I think this is going to be one of the key choices ahead for Manitobans in the next provincial election: Do they believe in public involvement in the economy in co-operation with the private sector, or do they believe in this ideology, which is a dying ideology internationally, a dying ideology, a right-wing ideology, that only the private sector can do the job? I point to Europe where 13 out of 15 of the governments in the European community now have left-of-centre governments. That is two out of 15 that are right wing, two out of 15. Look at the British Conservative Party, I mean. Even in the United States with the Republican Party, look at what is happening to Newt Gingrich and his agenda. Look what happened in France to the right wing and that with the Socialist victory in France. Learn from what is happening. Do not please try to implement the dying ideology of right-wing ideologues that was in fashion in the 1980s.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I note today—you know, what amazes me, and I look at the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) because it is interesting the member opposite talks about 60 Reform members nationally—60 Reform and 20 Conservatives. Actually, some of those Conservatives are pretty left wing compared to—you know, a lot of those people in the Atlantic provinces know that. You know, it is interesting, we have seen the Premier (Mr. Filmon) the last few days get back to the 1970s. He talked about the 1970s earlier today, the 1980s. I think he is stuck in a time warp. I think at times the Premier does not understand that in 1997, if he is trying to blame the previous government, he is the previous government. He is the previous, previous government; he is the previous, previous, previous government. The Deputy Premier can applaud for himself if he thinks that they are going to be the next government.

I say to the Deputy Premier: Run on your record, on what you are doing to our public assets; run on what you said to the people of Manitoba in the election about MTS. I suggest you do one thing, I say this to the Deputy Premier, go to the people of Manitoba and say in the next election: From the people who brought you MTS, do you trust us on Hydro, on Manitoba Public Insurance, on our health care system and our education system? The answer very clearly, Mr. Acting Speaker, is no; the government has no credibility left in terms of public involvement in the economy. Manitobans believe in co-operation. They believe in the mixed approach. They believe there is a role for the public sector, and that is why even this legislation, which could provide that kind of mechanism if we run into difficulty in natural gas, even if the government has to repeal this from 10 years ago.

I say to the Deputy Premier, shame on this government. But that is fine if you want to get into a debate over public ownership and public involvement in the economy in this province, we are ready for it. Whenever you have the courage to call an election, that is going to be top on our agenda. I just say to the Deputy Premier, hang on to your hat because you are sure going to hear about this in the next election.

With those few words, I am prepared on our side to put this to a vote, and I want to indicate we oppose Bill 6.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading of Bill 6. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Acting Speaker, I am not sure the microphones, the earpieces were totally turned on there, but if you are saying that you did not hear the vote as being mostly negative, I would indicate that we would ask for it on division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): On division.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): First of all, I would like to rescind the committee change I made on Law Amendments earlier: St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk); Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), for Wednesday, June 25, for 3 p.m., to rescind that; and

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen); Burrows (Mr. Martindale) for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), for Wednesday, June 25, 1997.

Motion agreed to.

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

Bill 7—The Midwifery and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), that Bill 7, The Midwifery and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur les sages-femmes et modifications corrélatives), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to say a few words about this bill. I must say that it is a bill that people, in particular women, have lobbied for a very long time, and one that I am pleased that the government has listened to the people of Manitoba and brought forward.

An Honourable Member: We are delivering.

* (1630)

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister says he is delivering, but in fact this will give the opportunity for midwives to be properly compensated and to do legally what they have been doing for many, many years.

Midwifery is one of the oldest medical practices in existence and one that I would venture to say many people, and many members who are serving in this House, may have been delivered by midwives. I come from a large family, a family of eight, who lived in a rural area, and six of—

An Honourable Member: A large family of politicians.

Ms. Wowchuk: Sure. A large family of politicians, my colleague says, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, living in a rural area, of a family of nine, seven children were delivered by midwives. In fact, the two that were not were delivered in the hospital were delivered there only because of medical complications. So I am very pleased that this legislation is being brought forward, and women who are practising as midwives now will be

able to do the job legally and will be properly compensated for the work that they are doing.

I had the opportunity to listen to many of the presentations that were made, and women clearly indicated that they wanted the opportunity to have their children delivered at home with the assistance of a midwife, and those who had had their children delivered in that fashion found they were much more comfortable in their own environment and in many cases were able to have their babies delivered without any complication.

What we have to be sure of is that the proper education is available and that there is recognition of the traditional midwives who are in existence right now, people who have been working, and that there also is co-operation between the medical profession and the midwifery profession, because, of course, as these people who were making presentations indicated, many times their medical doctors are not in full support of midwives. That then leads to difficulties, but those women who could have their midwives with them in the hospital said that when they compared deliveries without midwives, they were much more comfortable with that procedure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think one of the areas on this legislation when this legislation is passed, we have to ensure that the midwifery services are available to all people and that there is room for people to get training, and that those opportunities are also available for women in rural Manitoba and in the North.

I think one of the big injustices that has been done to society is what we have done in the aboriginal community, and in most cases in the aboriginal communities in the Far North in Manitoba when a woman is going to have a child she is put on a plane and shipped off to, for example, Thompson or some other area, and she has to stay there until after the baby—or in many cases to Winnipeg. Ties are broken with the families, and in many cases, that particular woman may not speak the same language, she is very lonely for the rest of her family, and it is a very long stay and a difficult stay in the hospital, waiting for that delivery to be made. In many cases, then the woman goes back to the community without the supports that she needs, and all of the traditional midwives have lost

many of the skills that they had, because the profession is not recognized.

We have to ensure that when this legislation passes that we ensure that the opportunities are there for women from the Far North, and women from the aboriginal communities have the opportunity to take the training and are encouraged to move back to the traditional ways of delivering children. Not all births are high risk. When it is not a high-risk birth, there is no need to bring that woman into the city or into a large centre. In doing this, we will then be making a much more comfortable environment, building stronger bonds for families, but also saving a lot of money for government, because when you think about the cost of plane fares, of stays in hospital, and this government has been doing what they consider—they have been doing a good job of cutting hospital beds and services in rural Manitoba. We are seeing the impacts of that. I worry about these people who have to use these facilities.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few words, I want to say that I think that this is a good piece of legislation, but we have to be sure that, along with establishing training centres, there is flexibility, and that this government recognizes what past governments have done and what other governments have done to reduce services and take away traditional ways.

The medical profession plays a role in this, too, when people are sent out of their community, and that is a real problem. We have to look at building bonds and bringing back more traditional services to a very natural procedure, and that is birthing a child.

Again, we will be watching this legislation, and should there be a need to amend it after it has been in place, we see how it is working, we will be quite prepared to amend it. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to put a few words on the record on the bill that we will be supporting. However, I think this is the height of hypocrisy by this government. At the same time that they talk about more ability for women to access a variety of options for birthing, this is the very government that recently closed the Misericordia family unit, which allowed families to experience birth

in a newly renovated, modern facility, user friendly, updated and very much appreciated by the community, used by the inner-city residents, by many of my own constituents, all the way from the west end of the city, who really appreciated the Misericordia. This government in fact closed that ward.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the same time that the whole west end inner city is looking for so-called opportunities and flexibility, this is the same government which has, because of underfunding, threatened the viability of the obstetrics program at the Grace Hospital. So let them not be on the record suggesting that they are indeed progressive. Hardly. What is in reality, the record has shown that they have actually closed the door on opportunities for the women and families in St. James, Sturgeon Creek, Assiniboia, Charleswood, Tuxedo. The whole southwest portion of Winnipeg is being funneled into the Health Sciences Centre. I say shame on the government. They should be condemned for their actions, because indeed what they have done is limited opportunities, forcing families into facilities that are in desperate need of renovation, extremely overcrowded, as the former Minister of Health should know, and does not provide opportunities and flexibility.

There is no room in the Health Sciences Centre to allow a family to share the experience, as we know, is a positive thing for the birthing of children. So in fact this government, while they trumpet the midwifery—and we thank them, for this was a laboured process indeed to bring forward this bill. Women and families have been asking for this for many, many years, so they bring this, but the hypocrisy lies with the fact that they closed the Misericordia. They closed options for the inner city, for the west end, for St. James and Sturgeon Creek, Assiniboia and the whole St. James area by the possibility of closing the Grace maternity unit. I ask the government to make it clear, as soon as possible, to tell families, because planning is essential, that indeed the Grace Hospital will remain open, will remain there for the Grace babies to actually have their own babies. That is a commitment that this government made to that community when they built the hospital and when they built the Charleswood Bridge.

What has happened now, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The potential for the closure of the Grace Hospital maternity

ward—hundreds of people were out yesterday to send a message to this government. So I take this opportunity today to put on the record that this government has indeed a long way to go before it understands and appreciates the true concept of providing opportunities and flexibilities for family and women.

I would just like to close by saying that indeed we are supportive of midwifery. We look for that in the development of the future, but the present actions of the government must be and will be condemned by the people of Manitoba and this side of the House. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

* (1640)

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I believe there is agreement to waive private members' hour today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to waive private members' hour? [agreed]

Bill 8—The Real Property Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy First Minister (Mr. Downey), that Bill 8, The Real Property Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a real short note on this particular bill of great substance no doubt. It is not to belittle what actually the bill is doing.

I understand it is very administrative. It is concerned with creating in the politically correct world, replacing "he" with "he or she." With our huge research department, that is what they could in essence pull out of the bill, trusting that they have not missed anything. Being politically correct in this particular situation would, in fact, be appropriate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 9—The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy First Minister (Mr. Downey), that Bill 9, The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Régie des services publics), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that this bill remain standing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Wolseley, seconded by the honourable member for Swan River, that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 13—The Insurance Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy First Minister (Mr. Downey), that Bill 13, The Insurance Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 14—The Pension Benefits Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), that Bill 14, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 17—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Bill 17, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): It is, indeed, an honour to be able to speak on this bill on third reading. It allows us to speak about the way the government has handled The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Act here in this province dealing with retail outlets. I should say that this is an opportunity to speak about what happened last November dealing with The Retail Businesses Holiday Act and the kind of mistruths we found from the government in terms of how they were dealing with the act dealing with Remembrance Day.

As I recall correctly—and this, of course, affects retailers and I wanted to speak about this—the government wanted to change the way Remembrance Day was handled for retail outlets. We, of course, had passed the bill in this Chamber by the so-called November date, the so-called date which was, of course, dealing with bills that were properly before the Legislature at third reading for votes, as opposed to some bills that were still sitting in committee because the amendments were not in on time, like the telephone act, in particular. We had passed the bill at the Legislature well in advance of the—this Legislature had passed the bill. There was some dispute about the merit

of it, and we had passed it in the Legislature and it was therefore law or potentially law on November 8.

Now, the government was so disorganized that evening that they did not bring the Lieutenant Governor in to proclaim the bills that were passed in the Legislature. Then on November 9, they did not take any action, and then further on November 9, they went out and said there is confusion in the marketplace, in the retail sector, because the Legislature and the opposition had prevented the passage of this bill. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), the former Minister of Labour, went around and said he did not know what the position of the government is, and he could not tell them what to do on November 11 dealing with the retail act. [interjection] Oh, the devil made us do it. Oh, it is never our responsibility.

Of course, now the NDP, being the responsible members that we are, went back and did a little research. We found that, for example, the bill dealing with the pedophile registration on the Child Abuse Registry list, which was an omission from the government in earlier bills, one which we had moved in a private member's bill, that bill had been passed in the Legislature and it had been proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor in this Chamber, and other bills had been proclaimed. You know all that was required to do to proclaim the bill was to stop the proceedings in this Legislature for a few minutes, walk across the hallway, bring in the Lieutenant Governor and proclaim the bills in this Chamber.

* (1650)

Now, do you think the government could get their act together? I mean, I knew they could not get their act together to jam through the telephone bill in the right time, but you would think the government could get its act together to get this act proclaimed before November 11, so the businesses of this province would have some degree of certainty and the Conservatives would have some degree of certainty. No. So did the Tories accept responsibility themselves for this fiasco on the retail closing act and the confusion that was in the marketplace and in the consumers' minds on a very important date, that being November 11 pursuant to the retail closing act, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Act? No, they could not. They could not get

the LG in. Did they take responsibility for their ineptitude? Of course not, as the Deputy Premier said. They went through the usual mantra of excuses, blame the opposition.

I am surprised they did not blame Chretien. I am surprised they did not blame the federal government. I am surprised they did not blame the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I am surprised they did not blame—who else do they blame? Oh, union bosses who have participated in the co-operative approach on the retail closing act. They started to go through their usual list of victims and pick them up and blame them, and never did the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), the then Minister of Labour, accept responsibility for the fact that he was not awake enough at midnight—I guess he usually gets in his jammies by then—to say, oh, I need to proclaim an act. I have to bring the Lieutenant Governor in here because I have an act that is important for three days later on November 11.

Did they stand up and say that we need this act proclaimed? No. The Minister of Justice was propped up by little sticks because it was really late at night. It was between at least 10:30 and 11, and the next day he came out and, of course, blamed, in the newspaper and on radio, members of the opposition for his inadequate performance in his function as Minister of Labour.

Of course, after he had performed so poorly as the Minister of Labour with the highest number of days lost to strike and lockout, he got rewarded by being the Minister of Justice, and he has been fumbling those issues ever since he got appointed. I mean, this is his reward for fumbling The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Act. The reward for fumbling that act was to make him the Minister of Justice and watch him fumble the Johns' school act and The Highway Traffic Act, mumble his way through that bill.

You know, last Thursday the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) told us that his law would provide for the seizure of cars for Johns, and by Monday, as articulated by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the great Monty Python skit—this car is not seized; it is just in a state of suspended animation. It can't be seized; it can't be whatever. Of course, then he went on to chastise us

for not wanting to consult with social workers and all these other kinds of people for his inadequate performance on the Johns' school and the consequences therefore.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we now have to take a very fresh look at Bill 17 before us today because once bitten, twice shy. That is why I am making these comments about our previous dealings. Now, I hope the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer) is on the ball unlike the previous Minister of Labour and will be able to have the ability to proclaim an act when it is needed because certainty in the consumer and retail market for workers and customers and employers and owners is very important.

Now, I notice in this act that the government is going to delegate this authority from the government to the businesses, and it is actually quite interesting to note that this is probably the only thing in this whole session, the only matter before this whole legislative Chamber, where we are actually going to have some power to the people, whereas the other 60 bills deal with more power to the government. Of course, that carries on with the bills that we had in the last session of the Legislature where there was a concentration and a power grab by a group of people who are absolutely bent on power, secrecy and we would argue other words to describe their very characteristics, as opposed to providing for power to the people.

So we think it makes sense to allow the minister to allow businesses to close on various days pursuant to the holiday act for their own employees. We think that that makes good sense, and unlike the mishaps that we saw the last time we had the Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Act amendments before this Chamber, we certainly will provide the minister with that authority, as requested in this legislation, rather than Executive Council.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I recall it when the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) in his speech to this bill at second reading, we also asked the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer) to publish in the annual report the numbers of times where this practice is utilized by the minister, this fiat or permission is utilized by the minister, for purposes of this act, and I think that is a reasonable request.

It may go against the secrecy provisions of Bill 50 and the overall secret nature of this government to want to withhold that information from people, but I would think that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer) would commit on closing the debate on this bill that he will in fact publish the numbers of occasions under which this exemption under the retail act is exercised by the government. Before, we had that information by Order-in-Council by definition, because those documents must be published, although not all Orders-in-Council were released.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) is sitting there, and a lot of Orders-in-Council dealing with the infrastructure money for the Winnipeg Jets were withheld by this government through the January to April period in 1995, again, the secret nature of members opposite. I guess the member thinks he is still back at City Hall, you know, the former chair of the gang of 18, I think they called it, the gang of 18 or the gang of 19. Where did they used to meet? Down in the cellar of the Fort Garry hotel, those meetings where they used to make those secret deals. You know, they used to sit there like an Edward G. Robinson movie and cut the cake up and cigar smoke would come out and people would find what wards got what benefits, and the member, of course, was involved in that, and of course he has been continuing on in his secret ways since.

I would say, with those brief words, that we will support the passage of this bill at third reading, but we take the minister at his word that he will publish those businesses that exercise this provision as opposed to Orders-in-Council in his annual report, and we will be looking for that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, very briefly on this particular bill, I would echo many of the comments that the Leader of the New Democratic Party put on the record with respect to Remembrance Day and what the sequence of events—which I would concur with his interpretation of actually what occurred back then. But having said that, this particular bill we do not have any problem with in terms of seeing passed.

There always has been a great deal of concern with the whole issue of Sunday shopping, and one of the

things that I have always felt is that the government has really never worked with the different groups, whether it is the public or some of the interest groups that are out there to try to get a fairer sense in terms of what should be done with respect to Sunday shopping. I know that they have somewhat passed off that responsibility ultimately to a number of the municipalities, through a local municipality to ultimately determine, as opposed to trying to come up with some sort of a provincial policy. It is a hot issue, it is a hot issue, and I can recall at the time we had argued that the government was not prepared to deal with it, and if you are not prepared to deal with it, maybe the best thing to do is to hand it off. But it would be nice to see more consulting with the whole issue of Sunday shopping, because it will in all likelihood continue to be an issue over the years to come.

With respect to the issuing of permits, again, I do think that there is some benefit of having some sort of a listing or at the very least a number that indicates how many permits have been issued out through the minister's office as indicated by the Leader of the New Democratic Party. With those few words, we are prepared to see the bill go to committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Chairperson: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

* (1700)

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): The work, I am happy to report, is moving along in the committees that are meeting by leave at this time. However, I think that it would be wise for me to announce that, with the leave of this House, the Law Amendments committee would sit tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. to deal with Bill 48, to complete the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 48.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Law Amendments will sit tomorrow morning at 10 a.m., with leave. Is there leave? [agreed]

Bill 18—The Emergency 911 Public Safety Answering Point Act

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), that Bill 18, The Emergency 911 Public Safety Answering Point Act (Loi sur les centres téléphoniques de sécurité publique—service d'urgence 911), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a bill that enhances emergency 911 service. Any legislation that will ensure public safety and better safety for people in the province is something that we would support. This bill ensures that all public safety answering points which operate within the proper service guidelines regarding—and this deals with staffing and training and performance. It sets standards for emergency response position points.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there have been, at the present time, 911 services offered to people in the city of Winnipeg and the areas surrounding Brandon. Through this service, people in that area have the opportunity to access emergency services much more quickly by dialing three digits rather than having to dial the seven digits. Other parts of the province are not quite so fortunate.

In the rural communities—and many communities are now negotiating to have 911 services brought to municipalities, and those I believe will be accessed through the Brandon centre, but unfortunately many parts of the province will not have this service. Many communities in northern Manitoba will not have the opportunity to access 911 service and that is unfortunate.

Many of the communities in northern Manitoba, where there is scant population, people who live in remote areas often do face crises, whether it is fire or need for ambulance service or other emergency services, will not have that service available to them. Now I am not sure whether in time with technology that will be available, but I have to say that I am very concerned with what will happen with emergency

services with this government having privatized our telephone system. Is the service going to be available? Is any private company going to be interested in providing services into remote communities?

We have seen this in other areas. We have seen history of what happens in other states, in the United States, where telephone services have been privatized, and it becomes very expensive. You have to wonder whether there is an interest. So I am disappointed that the government has moved toward privatizing our telephone system. We have made that very clear. I am also very disappointed with what we have heard in the last couple of days with MTS applying for rate increases, because with the rate increases that are applied, many people will not be able to have phones.

If they have no phones, they cannot use 911 service. We have raised this issue and I have mentioned it to—one of the members across the way indicated that this new telephone system would reduce telephone rates because long distance rates were going down. What the members across the way have to recognize is that there are many people in this province who cannot afford a telephone. I represent many of those people.

In my constituency there are many people who do not have a telephone simply because they cannot afford it. Many of the people that I represent are on social assistance. Social assistance does not allow for the additional cost of the telephone. Do you think, with these additional costs, with increased rates, that they will be able to have a telephone? No, they will not be able to have a telephone. Whether 911 service is expanded into those areas, they will not be able to make use of that service, so I think it is absolutely disgraceful on the part of this province to say that they are improving services when they move to privatize the telephone system and, in reality, are denying many, many people the service.

So this is good legislation. There is an expansion of 911 service, and I look forward to the day when 911 services will be available to the communities that I represent. I hope that those negotiations go well, and I hope that the costs will be affordable, but with the increase in telephone costs that are being applied right now and the cost of 911 service, I do not know for sure

but I think that the 911 service was going to be an additional cost of a dollar a month—

An Honourable Member: 25 cents.

Ms. Wowchuk: In rural Manitoba as well? [interjection] The rate will be 25 cents a month, so if that is the rate for rural Manitobans, that is not an exorbitant cost. Hopefully, it can be delivered.

I would encourage the government to move farther and look at northern Manitoba, look at Thompson, look at all those remote communities that need the service as well. As I understand it, at the present time everything north of 53 is being excluded from the service. That is what I have been told. If it has not been excluded, then I would appreciate knowing that, but we do have to have it.

We have to have other services available for rural Manitobans that require a telephone, and one that I have lobbied this government very hard for is the rural stress line, and I am very disappointed that the government did not recognize that as an important service and refused to fund it. There were some very interesting statistics on rural stress line services in other provinces and the benefits of those services to the health and safety of communities as a preventative service. So, along with 911 service, there are other services that this government should recognize.

This government should recognize that there are other parts of the province that need the service and, in particular, in northern Manitoba where, as I say, the population is sparse but where it is also needed. People who live in northern Manitoba are no different than people who live in southern Manitoba. They suffer heart attacks. Their houses burn down. They have accidents. They have the need to access services as well.

So that is a challenge to the government. Ensure that the services are available to other people. Make a presentation to the CRTC to ensure that the telephone rates do not go up to a point where they cannot be afforded. We have enough people in this province who cannot afford a telephone right now, and those people will not be able to access the services. Think about other services that are needed to provide quality of life

in rural Manitoba. Ensure that they are able to access the services.

So, with those few words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we say that we support the steps that this legislation brings forward, but we also think that there is much to be done. We have to recognize that there are other people—and we have to recognize that there is a cost, but the costs that are there are costs that should be borne by the people of the whole province, because that is something we believe in. If a service is cheaper to install in Winnipeg, Winnipeg should not pay a different rate. We should distribute the costs so that all people in the province pay the cost but also that we have services for people throughout the area.

Of course, if we had maintained our telephone system, we would then be able to ensure that we would be able to provide 911 services in more communities. Through a publicly owned service, you have the ability to distribute the cost and treat people equally. What this government has done by privatizing, you have given up that ability to bring equality to people, and I fear for Manitobans with the direction this government is taking when they move towards privatizing our services. I fear for their intention on hydro and what that will mean for Manitobans.

* (1710)

But, as I say, we do support this legislation, because it provides, builds for better public safety for a large portion of Manitobans. There is work to be done. There are more people that need the—to ensure that we have 911 service. There is more to be done to ensure that we have other preventative services that will prevent many of the situations that require emergency services.

So this government has to look more at the whole picture of how Manitobans live and what we need, and the steps that they have taken will certainly hurt the opportunities for many people to get this service or it will result in the cost being much too high for people to afford. I believe that the government should reflect on the errors of their ways and admit that they have made a mistake, and what they have done will not improve services for Manitobans but could end up in some very

high costs for Manitobans, and having services such as the 911 may end up costing a lot more under the private sector than it would have under the public sector.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Very briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 18 is indeed a bill that all of us, I am sure, can support. The only thing that I would like to emphasize is the fact that not all of Manitoba, as the honourable member for Swan River makes reference to, has access to 911 services.

The success of 911 has just been tremendous, not only in the province of Manitoba but virtually on our continent, as more and more it becomes a number that is embedded in everyone's mind so that if something does occur, they know where to call. I am always pleased when I am talking to young people in particular, and it is from all different ages but young in particular, that they know that if something goes wrong with mom, dad, or guardian or whoever it might be, the number that you call is 911. I think whatever we can do in the provincial Legislature to expand that particular—and make it more accessible to all Manitobans would be a step in the right direction.

I would also want to take this particular opportunity just to give one last kind of a pitch on the piece of legislation that is before us to indicate how wonderful it would be to have, along with a 911 number, an expansion of the Health Links line as being another number that can be communicated to, again, all Manitobans, as being a 1-88 number or a 1-800 number so that individuals can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and get some advice on health care needs, which would in fact alleviate a lot of the people phoning the 911 number.

I would suggest that the government, what it does need to look at, and I know the current Minister of Health is fully aware of the concerns with respect to the Health Links line, but expansion of that particular line, I believe, would complement the 911 service and provide an excellent service again for all Manitobans.

With those few words, we are more than happy to see it go for Royal Assent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

**Bill 19—The Human Rights Code
Amendment Act**

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that Bill 19, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act (Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned on Bill 19.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 20—The Summary Convictions
Amendment Act**

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Bill 20, The Summary Convictions Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, to put a few words, it is interesting with respect to Bill 20. You know, the government says that it does not increase its taxes yet all different sorts of fines and other forms of revenue have assisted in bringing up the government coffers.

Now, that is not to say that we do not necessarily support some increased fines for speeders, but sometimes one has to question some of the statements put forward by the government. But we do support this particular bill but would just acknowledge that it will assist in the financial coffers of the province.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): As the member for Inkster has pointed out and as our Justice critic has pointed out, this is an increase in fines, but we would want the revenue to go down through a decrease in crime. I think that is the key element which we would support in the increased fines. The fines can sometimes be a deterrent for people who have a heavy foot. It sometimes, perhaps, cannot be a deterrent for people who have the same affliction, if you will, in terms of the vehicles and other areas that would be dealt with under The Highway Traffic Act and The Liquor Control Act.

We think that safety of the public should be the paramount priority in both of these bills, whether it is to start at the preventative end with the posting of speed limits and the conditions of roads and whether it is at the other end in terms of dealing with penalties for convictions that are contrary to the laws and conditions under which people are required to obey, if you will, as citizens of our province.

We would also note, as the member for Inkster points out, that the fines have gone up. Would it not be lovely, to paraphrase My Fair Lady, would it not be lovely, if, for example, some of that money was reinvested—

An Honourable Member: To victims.

Mr. Doer: To victims, of course, which, of course, was initiated by former governments and slashed and hacked by this government which is contrary to every one of their so-called election promises, although we are not going to stand on a point of privilege on that point, but we will if they say something different in Hansard. Would it not be lovely if we took some of that money from the increased fines and started reinvesting it in some of our roads, particularly in northern Manitoba?

I think that this would be very, very consistent with this act. You know, when we have asked these questions before to the government, they have stated that, well, they make decisions on the basis of the numbers of people that use these roads. That, of course, was totally contradicted and totally set aside with the precedent that was established to asphalt the road to see the ducks at Ducks Unlimited, not that there

is anything wrong with having Ducks Unlimited in Manitoba and not that there is anything wrong with the Oak Hammock Marsh which, of course, had a more passive approach in terms of pathways under the previous government. We always thought that the head office, if it is a head office, should be just on the edge of the marsh, so that the former Minister of Natural Resources—now who would that be—would not have to change the act willy-nilly and proclaim the act to allow for edifices in our provincial parks, as he had to, to evade a court challenge.

* (1720)

I would like to see some of the highways in northern Manitoba get some of the money from these fines to be reinvested for the safety of our roads because we know that members opposite, when it comes to priorities, are shortchanging northern Manitoba. They are shortchanging northern Manitoba in terms of the safety issues. They are shortchanging northern Manitoba in terms of the weather conditions. They are shortchanging northern Manitoba in terms of the remoteness of the communities and the distance of the communities and the services.

An Honourable Member: Why do you not drive through my constituency?

Mr. Doer: I have driven through the member's constituency, and I know how far it is from gas stations when you get further north from your constituency on Highway 6 and start heading into the beautiful northern Manitoba. Mr. Deputy Speaker, would it not be useful if this government would not just take money from people—and, hopefully, we could decrease crime—but also reinvest it in needed infrastructure, particularly highways, and reinvest this money?

So further to the comments of the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and the comments I had about decreasing crime, more money for victims, more money for safety on our roads and reinvesting in northern Manitoba, we will certainly support this bill. As the saying goes, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, we certainly would concur with that recommendation, but saying to the government, put money back to the people, put investments back into our communities, particularly in northern Manitoba.

Let us start building some roads for the people that are going to be safe for all of us to travel on. Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, would you call Bill 206, please.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 206—The Minors Intoxicating Substances Control Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Bill 206 (The Minors Intoxicating Substances Control Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le contrôle des substances intoxicantes et les mineurs), on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh).

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I believe this bill is standing in the name of the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Oh, I am sorry. The bill is standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey). Is there leave that this matter remain standing? No? Leave has been denied.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a few comments to place on the record in respect of this very important issue.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Essentially, Bill 206 is a bill to amend The Minors Intoxicating Substances Control Act and, as is well known, there is already in this province a committee that is looking at the issue of this very, very serious problem. There is the nonpotable alcohol abuse

committee, and I have met with this committee to discuss their progress and some of the steps that they wish to take in respect of this matter. It is clear that the issue of nonpotable alcohol, or sniff, as it is commonly referred to, is a very serious one, and we clearly support this committee's activities. The approach that this committee is taking is not simply a legislative one. It is clear that legislation is required. Legislation needs to be brought in, but there is a serious constitutional problem. The main constitutional problem, speaking generally without referring specifically to any provision of Bill 206 at this time, is the division of powers issue. The Zellers case out of the Manitoba Court of Appeal discussed that very difficult problem, and it was as a result of the Zellers case that various amendments were made and new approaches taken in respect of this particular issue.

When I received a copy of Bill 206, I certainly did want to look at it to see whether the government could, in fact, support this bill. Knowing, as I did, the constitutional issue that needed to be addressed, I was particularly concerned about that problem. I have no problem with legislation going to deal with this issue. What I have a concern about is if this Legislature takes the time to pass legislation, bring the infrastructure into place, that the legislation itself be constitutionally sound. So I referred specifically the bill, then, to the Constitutional Law branch of the Department of the Attorney General. As members opposite know, that is a highly respected branch in the Attorney General's department, probably even more so because I am no longer associated with it directly.

There are some very, very good lawyers in there who understand broad policy issues. I could comment on some of these lawyers, but I do not think it is appropriate for me to bring in their names, but the research director of that branch provided the branch with certain constitutional opinions, provided the branch with some opinions in respect of this issue. Very generally, the position of that department was that there are constitutional problems with almost every section of this bill, and what is more important is that the problems cannot be corrected by simply redrafting the bill. There are fundamental flaws with respect to this bill. This is not in any way to denigrate the efforts of the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). This is a difficult issue. I know the Department of Health has

also looked at this issue, and their activities were also stymied by constitutional concerns.

So it is not surprising that the bill that has been submitted here by the member would also contain those kinds of problems. I think it is very important that we continue to look at this issue and that we continue to work with the member for St. Johns and the committee that is looking at this issue in order to ensure that when the Legislature of Manitoba passes a statute to address this particular issue, it is constitutionally sound and can be administratively carried out.

This is not to say that we cannot continue administratively at this time to deal with the problem and to bring new, innovative ways of dealing with this problem that do not necessarily need legislative change at this time. We recognize legislative change must occur, and that is what this committee is working on together with Manitoba Health and the Department of Justice, and, again, I would welcome the contributions of the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) in respect of this particular legislation.

I think just in order to give some assistance to the member as to some of the concerns that have been identified, and I am not going to get into a long, legal discussion on those issues—

An Honourable Member: Well, that is a relief.

An Honourable Member: That is comforting.

* (1730)

Mr. Toews: I know my House leader and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) indicate that it is a relief and that is comforting, respectively, and, generally speaking, I abide by their advice, and I see no reason to diverge from that today.

For example, the nature of the amendment to remove the reference to minors in the legislation so that this act would cover substance abuse by adults as well as minors, philosophically speaking I have no problem. The problem does not disappear when a minor becomes an adult, so that is clearly a recognition that the problem is greater than simply dealing with minors, but what this, in fact, does do is increase the danger of the

law from being vulnerable to a constitutional challenge on the basis of a division of powers, so that the impact of that is moving it from the area of health to the area of criminal law which is a federal jurisdiction, and I am not necessarily by saying that on the record saying that I necessarily agree 100 percent with that, but I am saying that given what the Zellers case has already told us, we have to be very, very careful.

Some of the other amendments which deal with a search warrant I am advised violate the standards set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Hunter and Southam* which was the first law on unreasonable search and seizure under Section 8 of the Charter, and I think that needs quite substantive reworking.

In respect of the penalties and Section 6 specifically, the way the penalties are framed increases the possibility that there would be a finding of cruel and unusual punishment or treatment and thereby contravene Section 12 of the Charter. This is because in Manitoba the courts have determined that a minimum fine and/or the possibility of imprisonment in default of the payment of a fine contravenes the Charter of Rights, and so the likelihood of such a finding under this particular provision can only be increased by the even stiffer minimum penalty for a second offence including minimum imprisonment for seven days and the possibility of an indefinite cease-business order; so again, one of the concerns that has been raised to me.

The issue in respect of the compulsory treatment of a person is, of course, something that the Supreme Court of Canada is looking at today as we speak and in relation to, indeed, a mother who had an unfortunate problem with sniff, and the extent of the Legislature's ability to deal with that particular individual is a crucial part of the case. So constitutionality, especially vis-à-vis Section 7 of the Constitution, is important.

Very briefly, two other issues, 6(7) and (8) violate or certainly the argument is violate the reverse onus or the requirement against reverse onus and also the presumption of innocence, so these are very, very serious problems. I commend the member for his efforts in this respect but, if the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) wants me to elaborate on other issues, I can go into that, but what I am trying to do here is objectively state my position without imputing any

motive. We can get into that issue if we want. Certainly I would reserve any comment in that respect if that issue becomes an issue in this House. I certainly would raise it if it does become an issue.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that all the words after the word "that" be deleted and the following substituted: "Bill 206 be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence."

Motion presented.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): The response of the government to the legislation has been, in one sense, shameful, and in another, given comments by the minister in Question Period on one or two occasions, scandalous, unfortunately. I just wanted to share with the minister our view that this legislation is not, as he alleged, some copy of some other document or taken from some other document of the Department of Health.

I just want to remind the minister that this bill contains 22 amendments. The Department of Health had been looking at amendments to the legislation and had come forward with eight amendments. There are only two that are similar, and that is because the word "minors" is taken out of one section and the consumption section is reworded to take out reference to all persons under 18. Those two sections could not be rewritten in any other way.

Having got that out of the way, I want to comment that I believe the minister's reactions on the constitutional issues are really concerns about the risk of certain sections in the bill. They are indeed, as he said, concerns. We have had those concerns and Legislative Counsel has had those concerns as we drafted the legislation, but it was important that this legislation be put forward with a view to dealing with health promotion, health prevention and not comprise a new regime of what is a crime or criminal law.

With that objective in mind, we put in here sections that dealt with prohibiting businesses from selling sniff knowingly, to deal with the disposal of inventory, to deal with restrictions on business in a preventative way, which we are of the view went to the issue of health

promotion versus criminal law. As well, and I think more importantly, because we are aware of earlier opinions from the minister's department as expressed through the Pharmaceutical Association's committee, that if we dealt with consumption, not by way of fines and penalties, but by way of exposing people to treatment, this legislation could be saved from any strong argument that this is, indeed, criminal law and not within the jurisdiction of the provincial government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we think that if the government did have concerns about particular sections in this bill, it had every opportunity to make amendments so that we could work co-operatively to deal with this tragedy in this province. It is interesting that we as a provincial jurisdiction have certainly spent numerable resources and passed legislation and regulations dealing with the control and abuse of liquor, and, arguably, the abuse of inhalants is even more tragic. We know that inhalants dissolve the brains of the abuser, yet, we as a provincial jurisdiction have not taken action to deal with the control of inhalants. I think that speaks not only to a constitutional issue but how this province and this government, in particular, have not been paying attention to these crises which disproportionately affect those in the inner cities and in northern communities.

* (1740)

So with those comments, we thank the minister for his comments on the bill. I think it is important for the government's view to be recorded, and it is our hope that we can proceed with other legislative initiatives, always though recognizing that legislative initiatives are a very small, albeit, important part of the solution to solvent abuse. It is critical that this government move towards preventative and educational programs and towards effective treatment for sniffers. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Acting Speaker, I just want to put a couple of comments on record. When I first saw the bill and participated reading it after my colleague put it together, I was hoping that something could come out of this, because you see so much tragedy happening here in the city and

especially in northern Manitoba. If any bill, whether brought forward by my colleague or the minister or member of the Liberal Party, it does not matter who brings it forward, if it saves one life, I think it is very valuable and it warrants support. It is not who brings it in, it is who is saved. I think that is how we have to view this.

I am saddened today when I see that, like my colleague said, if there were some problems, maybe amendments should have been brought forward so that way we could pass something that has a little bit of bite to it. If you would just look at the past, you can go for a ride anytime—even right now—and you will see individuals walking the street holding Kleenex and rags to the mouth and they are breathing in through the nose. It is a sad, sad shame because all those individuals are doing is killing their brain cells, ruining their life and what future they have.

If there are any measures that could be taken to bring an individual in for assessment and have someone with the experience to at least give information to the individual, what they are doing, possibly, that would lead to treatment and, hopefully, stop at that point so that individual would have a chance for a future instead of losing the brain cells and eventually hurting any chances that they have. A lot of them unknowingly start at a very young age and they figure it is a great kick. They are high and they have a lot of fun, and after a while they get addicted to it and it is pretty hard to stop. So the sooner we can stop it and the sooner we can put measures in—I know that members of the nonpotable committee have been working for years on this, and they have been trying to find a solution to deal with that. For example, when the bill was brought forward just dealing with minors, it is hard for the police to lay any charges on unscrupulous owners, because they cannot use undercover officers because they do not have anyone under 18 years old that could go in and see what they are selling.

So anything that changes the whole law or the ability of the police even to bring someone in for assessment, education and treatment, we have to support that. As I said earlier, if we could save one life, that would be worth whatever the costs are, because if you look at even the long-range health cost to treat individuals as they progress in their life when they start at a young

age, teenage and go on into their adulthood, if they are able to stop that bad habit or that damaging habit at a younger age, it would save us a lot of health care dollars, but also we would be doing a lot to help the individual to live a meaningful life that we all choose for ourselves and hopefully choose for all others.

I would encourage this government, if you see this bill as cannot support, look at bringing your own in. If you bring something in that will help individuals, I am sure that you will have support, because I think the No. 1 is to help the individuals, and it does not matter who wants the credit for it, if we save one life, that will be a bill that will be worth voting for.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I want to say a few words as well, and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), I want to congratulate him on sponsoring the bill. I am glad the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) has commended him today in the Chamber for that bill, because I was quite disappointed. I expect the back and forth in Question Period, and I think all of us expect to get as much as we give, and that is fair ball, but I thought the segue on Bill 38 and the disagreement we were having with the minister on the sniffing proposal was right out of line and right out of line with the desire from all members of this Chamber to make a positive difference for the people who are working on the streets, as the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) has pointed out, working on the streets, on the front lines with people who are very, very vulnerable and are even exploited in terms of their unfortunate habit with sniffing.

I sat in a legislative committee that dealt with a private member's bill a few years ago and I listened to people on the front lines, and I was reminded when I was listening to their public presentations—these were police officers and social workers and others—about my own voluntary experience when I worked as chair of the YAP [phonetic] drop-in centre which became the first Boys and Girls Club in Winnipeg. In the inner city, it was a huge problem, and the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) knows this full well. People in the inner city who are trying to deal with this—not just the inner city but across some of our other communities—need help. Yes, we need to have

measures that will prevent the usage of sniff in our communities, and then we need to deal with those people who, in my opinion, are unscrupulous and are selling these products to individuals in our communities.

I was disappointed. We passed the bill a number of years ago that was supported by all political parties at the time. It was supported by all the people on the streets and in the communities. I believe it was sponsored by Judy Wasylycia-Leis, the former member for St. Johns. I remember we worked very hard in our caucus on this bill. We had two private member's bills that session in a minority government. The other one was smoking in public places, banning smoking in daycare centres and schools, and a lot of us would like to go even further on those provisions. We worked very hard on the bill, and after we passed it at third reading, and after the public and police had presented their briefs and said, yes, pass this bill, we did not proclaim it for years. Then we came back with a bill that we felt, to say the least, was watered down in terms of what people on the streets needed to help them do a better job on behalf of our people.

I think the member for St. Johns—it is appropriate that we bring this bill in. It took a lot of time and effort from members of our caucus. The member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) worked with the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). The member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) has worked very hard on this issue as well, but all members of this Chamber share a responsibility to get something done.

Why are we not able to develop a law or develop amendments today in the Chamber to deal with a problem we know is not something that just happened overnight? It has been a problem that people have been talking about for years, and people on the streets have been really crying out for help right now. I have talked to city councillors, Mark Lubosch from our area, who, I know, has met with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and others who came to us—or we talked about this during the flood in some of the public events we were at. He said let us get on with it, let us just—you know, the Nike commercial, let us just do it. That is what the police officers are saying; that is what the social workers are saying; that is what the people on the

streets are saying. Let us just get it done. If the minister has legitimate concerns under the Constitution—[interjection] There have been times before that this Legislature has passed bills knowing that there is some concern about potential challenges in the courts under the Constitution. There were all kinds of concerns raised about the constitutionality of some of the driving changes that were made—

* (1750)

An Honourable Member: Not on this side.

Mr. Doer: Not on our side either. We voted for it. The attitude, then, was if it is in the public interest and that is what the people on the streets need and that is what they are asking us for, let us just do it. The interesting option, I agree with the member opposite that you do not want something challenged in the court and you certainly do not want to lose, but in the absence of something else that is there, why not pass this bill. What if it is—let us pass the bill. It may pass in the courts. It may not be struck down. The Minister of Justice has said that he has reservations about his own legal opinion. Let us pass it and if there is something there that may be more vulnerable to the courts, let us amend it next year before they get it to the Supreme Court and in the meantime we have done something for people who are crying out for help.

So I do not agree with the minister's strategy to hoist it. I agree with the member for St. Johns' strategy to just do it, get it done, get it going. I think this Legislature has actually been very hesitant to listen to the cries of people who are working with people who are going through this horrible affliction and the people who are exploiting them through that affliction with the unscrupulous sale of these products to these people. I am against the hoist. I think we should go ahead and let us take on the courts. Let us use the best lawyers we have to defend action rather than go into a full fetal position and do nothing because we are afraid of a future court challenge. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice—that is on the amendment, is it the will of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): All those in favour, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

An Honourable Member: It is eight to six.

An Honourable Member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): On division.

* * *

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Acting Speaker, would you call private members' resolution 76, please?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Before we get to Private Members' Business, we will deal with the main motion as amended. Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): The question is on Bill 206, as amended. Is the House ready for the question? All in favour of Bill 206 as amended?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Voice Vote

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): All those in favour, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

An Honourable Member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): On division.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 76—Recognition of Flood Effort

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau),

“WHEREAS the Spring of 1997 witnessed the worst flood in over a century requiring the evacuation of 28,000 Manitobans from their homes; and

“WHEREAS countless volunteers, community organizations, the Armed Forces, municipal and provincial employees and officials and businesses sacrificed great time and effort to ensure flood protection and to assist flood victims throughout the province; and

“WHEREAS many Manitobans are continuing their recovery from the strain and personal loss and are involved in the clean-up and rebuilding from the flood.

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly acknowledge and recognize the flood victims of Manitoba who have suffered great strain and loss; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly thank and commend the volunteers, organizations, the Armed Forces, municipal and provincial employees and officials and businesses for their selfless dedication to the flood effort and for the spirit of community shown during the 1997 Flood of the Century; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly applaud the decisions of authorities and individuals, such as Duff Roblin, legislators and public servants, for their foresight and the public investment in flood prevention infrastructure such as the Winnipeg Floodway and the permanent dikes and waterway improvements throughout the Province which proved their great value during the Flood.”

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: I wonder if there might be leave of the House not to see the clock until this resolution is dealt with.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Is there leave of the House to not see clock? [interjection] And also for committee changes. [agreed]

Mr. Mackintosh: This resolution was constructed jointly by this side and the other side, and I thank the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for his input. I also want to acknowledge at this time the role of the member for St. Norbert in the flood effort. It was an absolutely extraordinary effort that he put in. Of course, I also want to acknowledge the role of other members in the flood effort and also the minister that was mainly responsible for the flood effort.

The remarks that I will put forward on the record today really regard the effort on Scotia Street. I want to just acknowledge the role of some of the people that resulted in us being able to hold back the waters. There were so many schools from north Winnipeg that were involved in this effort. It is extraordinary to have seen the number of youth that were streaming in the gate every day. I just want to note that the schools went out of their way, not just by way of their daily effort but by the decisions of the school authorities, to recognize that participation in the flood effort was also an education. I saw on the dike lines how people interacted, how very different schools were on the same dike line, how youth were on the same dike line as seniors, how south-enders were on the same dike line as north-enders.

People from all walks of life were sharing this experience and contributing to a common goal, and I believe that even though we were able to see the effects of the flood effort, we were able to see the sandbags,

we did not see directly the good outcome of the effort which is, I think, greater bonding between Manitobans. So I think it is important that we do look for some of the positive outcomes of the flood, because there are not many obviously. This was a great tragedy for this province. I think, at least through my experience on Scotia, we now have a closer knit community, and I hope that the benefits of that will become known over time.

I want to acknowledge as well the parents who brought their children down to the dike lines. It was so important, I thought, for these children to see, as their parents understood, what was happening in this province, what was happening in their community and more importantly, though, to understand the importance of putting others ahead of self and putting aside time, whether it is in front of the TV or anything else, to come down and contribute to the flood effort.

* (1800)

There were great lessons that were learned. It was important, of course, for the youth to be involved as well, and many youth, they asked, they begged for their schools to let them out to contribute to the flood effort. When they found out that they were all equal on the dike line, when they found out that they were needed, there was a difference for these youth, and I think it explains or it shows the importance of ensuring opportunities, both recreational and employment, for youth. They have so much potential, and they have so much to give.

I want, as well, Mr. Acting Speaker, to note the tremendous contributions of the City of Winnipeg workers. I think there is a renewed respect for city workers. I saw troopers from the City of Winnipeg do work that was absolutely extraordinary. I know there have been difficulties and attacks on city workers, particularly lately, and I hope that what transpired during the flood effort in the city of Winnipeg will change the minds of those who have not, I think, appreciated the critical value of our city workers. I also think, of course, of senior officials in the City of Winnipeg. I think of the Salvation Army. I think of the police. I think of those who worked at the canteen, those who worked at the registration desk, those who

drove the bobcats, the businesses which provided food and supplies.

I cannot name them all, and I wish I could. I think of the churches. I think of all of the Brownie and Guide troops, the classes that did baking, but most important of all I think of the residents of Scotia Street. They were the ones who, of course, had to be most involved, and not only did they have to suffer under the strain of the threat of the waters, but they were working so hard to their abilities.

Now, the flood has reminded the community that when the neighbour has a problem, so do we. We are all in it together. Let us hope that this reminder will now flourish and grow to rally or struggle for greater protection for those facing misfortune not only due to flooding but due to poor health and disability or injury, joblessness or poverty. Thank you.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Acting Speaker, I just want to add a few comments to this resolution.

I appreciate the fact that this resolution is before us. I think it is timely. I think that the co-operative manner in the manner and in the way this resolution is before us does indicate that we are capable in this Chamber from time to time to set aside partisan differences and collectively make a statement.

My statement, quite frankly, is one to remind us of a gentleman who had a great deal of responsibility in providing the flood protection works for the city of Winnipeg, namely my predecessor in the then seat of Rockwood-Iberville, the late George Hutton who was the Minister of Agriculture and Conservation, as it then was known, the department for Duff Roblin, and whom I succeeded, both in his seat, on June 25, 1966, and then, somewhat to my surprise, succeeded right into the Department of Agriculture into Duff Roblin's cabinet in 1966.

If I may be permitted just to put on the record, it was my privilege, and I consider it a privilege, to have authorized the last half-million-dollar payment on the Winnipeg Floodway. The floodway had been completed, and on time and on schedule, and, Mr. Minister of Finance, within budget. On a massive

project like that, a consortium of contractors did have some differences with the engineers, and a very formidable senior lawyer in the city of Winnipeg, regrettably also late, the late Dick Hunter, from one of our law firms was representing the consortium of contractors. They had a difference of some \$370,000 to \$400,000 of the total \$60-million project that they felt was owing to the contractors because of changes, some minor modifications that the engineering staff of the Department of Agriculture and Conservation had made to the original contract justified their claim.

I am happy to report that we were able to settle without going to court but, to this day, I am pleased that I had that role in the construction of the Winnipeg Floodway and was then pleased on a year later together with Lester Pearson, the then Prime Minister of Canada's Minister of Agriculture, Joe Green, and the then Premier of the province, Walter Weir, to officially officiate in the official opening of the floodway in 1967.

I must say, and I want to put on the record as we, and certainly I think all Manitobans, appropriately acknowledge the role of Duff Roblin, the then Premier, my first boss, my first Premier that I served, in the vision and the decision to do this. Let us also acknowledge that with the help of the then Northern Affairs and Natural Resources minister, a long-time standing member from Brandon, the Honourable Walter Dinsdale, helped persuade the then Prime Minister of Canada, John Diefenbaker, in putting up 60 percent of the money. That was a major diversion, if you like, of eastern money into western Canada, compliments of that.

I was then privileged in that capacity to oversee and be responsible for the completion and the building of the Portage diversion and to let the first initial contracts on the Shellmouth Dam. Regrettably, politics intervened; I was thrown out of office, and the Shellmouth Dam was left to members opposite to complete, which was a major \$22-million project. The then Minister responsible for Water Resources, the honourable Sidney Green, and Ed Schreyer, you know, completed that third leg to the tripart support of flood protection, which included, of course, the Winnipeg Floodway, with its primary dikes in the city of Winnipeg, the Portage diversion and the Shellmouth, a \$100-million

commitment that has stood us so well in the province for far too many occasions and, regrettably, geography has not changed, likely to stand us in good stead for many years in the future.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I just wanted to acknowledge the role of those former public servants, Honourable George Hutton, the Honourable Walter Dinsdale, and, of course, the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker in providing, along and together with the principal that this resolution also includes, my first Premier, my first boss, the Honourable Duff Roblin. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I would like to put on a very few words in support of this resolution. As has been said earlier, this effort put in by all citizens of Manitoba was nonpartisan. The best example I could give about that was when I was sandbagging on Kildonan Drive, and I saw an unusual sight in that I saw a federal candidate for the NDP, Roman Yereniuk, pass a sandbag to Rosemary Broadbent, who was a Liberal federal candidate, who passed the sandbag to myself, who then passed it on to a Reform school trustee from River East, who passed it on to Mark Lubosch, and nobody really talked about politics.

I made it a point during the entire flood fight to go to areas, West St. Paul and other areas, where I was not known. It was interesting listening to conversations about what people thought of politicians—I made sure no one knew I was one—with the conversation that occurred. It was wonderful to see, as the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) mentioned, people from all different backgrounds, the wealthy, the poor, the young, the old, from all different races and religions working together. It was a very uplifting experience, I know.

I attended Maples Collegiate grad yesterday where the councillor from West St. Paul, to show that community's appreciation for the volunteer effort put in by Maples Collegiate students, presented a scholarship to one of the students who was recognized for overall volunteering efforts during the year. I think whether it is the students, all citizens of Manitoba, the volunteers that came from outside of the province, the military, the police, the RCMP, we all worked together, and I think it was an uplifting experience and something that

maybe should happen more often. So I fully support this resolution, as do my colleagues.

* (1810)

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): I, too, would like to rise and support this resolution. It is good to have a resolution, as the honourable member before me said, that we can all agree upon. Certainly, the value of the floodway to those of us in Winnipeg, I think, is something that all of us can agree upon.

On a personal level, we bought our house simply because the floodway was there. We bought our house in 1968. The floodway was not yet proven. Houses on our street went very inexpensively, although to a young couple, we thought it was a lot of money, but houses did not move very quickly on our street before the floodway went in. So our front street is a primary dike, and until this year we had never sandbagged—not that we are on the river, we are on the right side of the dike—but still it was an experience on a personal level.

As an MLA, I also experienced the advantage of the floodway working with the residents of Kingston Row and Kingston Crescent. It turned out in the end there were 192 houses that were evacuated for many a long week, but it was a very good experience working with those residents. They pulled together as a community, and for me working with them, it was a real pleasure to be able to help a group of people.

Something else which I think all the other members have also spoken to is the way everybody, wherever you lived, whether you lived in Winnipeg, outside of Winnipeg or even outside of the province, how Winnipeggers, how Manitobans, how other Canadians, and indeed likely Americans came in, and helped when the call went out. So I know I say thank you, on behalf of all of the Kingston Row, Kingston Crescent residents, to all the people, be it students or, as I say, other Manitobans, other Canadians, who came and helped our community because it was their help, along with the floodway, that saved the 192 houses on Kingston Row, Kingston Crescent.

So I will just end by saying thank you to Duff Roblin and his government and the public servants that were there during that time that put the floodway into

operation. Before I forget, I should mention that I also had the pleasure of meeting Ed Kuiper, the Dutch engineer who is a resident on Kingston Crescent, and many a delightful hour we spent as we passed each other with sandbags and whatnot, but listening to his stories on the background, the building up to the floodway, most interesting. It would be very interesting to have him as a speaker here, sort of outside of this Chamber, just telling about the 1950 flood and sort of the, as I say, the background building up to the building of the floodway.

So again, Mr. Acting Speaker, just on behalf of the residents in my constituency of Kingston Row, Kingston Crescent, we are very, very grateful that the floodway went in, very grateful to Duff Roblin.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to thank the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) for bringing forward this resolution. I was very happy to second it with him. The member for St. Johns did a great job up in his area, in the Scotia area, by co-ordinating all the volunteers.

As a matter of fact, I am not sure if I should thank him for first talking to me about the idea when we were standing in the hall, because I was not going to be doing anything at the time, but I figured after talking to him that maybe I should open my office up as he did, and it tended to blow away on me after that. I think I would have rather been in the House after a while. Mr. Acting Speaker, he has got to be commended for the job he did within his community. It has just been fantastic.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it would be hard to try and thank everyone who got involved. All I can say is that I am proud to be Canadian, and I am proud to be a Manitoban. I have never seen anything that brought people together as well as what Mother Nature did this past spring. There were no political boundaries. As the flood knew no boundaries, the politicians knew no boundaries. We worked together and we got the job done. I do not think if we would have drawn those lines we could have gotten the job done the way we did. The government workers, the MLAs who were out to help us in the evenings and during the day and whenever they had that spare time, the staff within our building who were there, all the government

employees, the city workers were fantastic. The honourable member for St. Johns has named a number of people. I do not want to repeat them. I think he has covered off that list. I do not think there is any way to say thank you. I have said this before.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) had the dike behind his home. Other members had water around their homes in Emerson and in Morris. It was phenomenal when you looked at it. When you flew over the site it was a war zone, and yet the day that my wife was taken from Fort Richmond, they came and picked her up and said they just wanted to get her away for a while because that was all she had been doing for those 42 days was fighting the flood, and they came and they picked her up and they brought her down to Osborne Village. She said it was as if nobody knew what was really going on. Everything was normal. She saw the people cutting their lawns and golfing and shopping, and she said they did not really see the impact. They did not have that same vision as those who were on the front lines and fighting it.

The news clips, the newspaper stories did not cover what was really there. You had to smell it, see it and feel it, and it got into your heart, and it brought tears to people when they lost their homes. The victims that were out there, you had to feel for them, and you had to do all you could to try and preserve what they had left, and in some cases it was not much. The people got together and in some cases pulled toys and small things from homes that were being flooded at the time as the dikes were giving in. We had people who gathered toys

for some of the children who had lost everything, clothing, and it was within the community and that community spirit.

So I am more than proud to second this resolution brought forward by the member for St. Johns. I think it is a great effort, and I think working together we have shown how we can combat Mother Nature, we can win, and we can be proud to be Canadian. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Is it the will of the House to adopt the resolution?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Agreed.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh); Osborne (Ms. McGifford) for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), for Thursday, June 26, 1997, for 10 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): The hour being after 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned, as previously agreed, until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 25, 1997

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