

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 1, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for the Department of Environment for the '89-90 Estimates.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a ministerial statement.

It is with great pride and pleasure that I rise in this House today to announce the proclamation of Bill No. 3, the toughest drinking and driving legislation in Canada.

Every year hundreds of Canadians are killed while many, many more are injured by impaired drivers. The death, destruction and the hurt which results from this criminal offence makes it the most serious of all crimes. Our Government has acted to combat this senseless waste.

Manitoba now has the most comprehensive program for fighting impaired driving in Canada.

Starting today, anyone apprehended driving with a blood alcohol level in excess of .08 or who refuses to give a breath sample on demand by a police officer will automatically receive a 90-day suspension of his or her driver's licence.

Drivers suspended under the new law will receive a temporary seven-day driving permit to organize their affairs. They also have the right to appeal their suspensions to the Department of Highways, but applications for work licences will not be allowed.

This initiative reflects the fact that a driver's licence is a privilege, not a right.

Mr. Speaker, even though we expect this program to reduce the number of impaired drivers by imposing an immediate mandatory 90-day licence suspension, these initiatives alone will not be sufficient unless we also attack the problem of suspended drivers who flout the law and continue to drive.

We believe that the best way to stop this abuse is to seize any vehicle that is being driven by a person whose licence is suspended.

* (1335)

Effective today, when a police officer arrests a suspended driver, the vehicle will immediately be towed

away and impounded for 30 days. The registered owner may apply to have the vehicle released from impoundment by proving he or she had no knowledge of the driver's suspension.

Mr. Speaker, this aspect is unique in North America and perhaps the world. It takes dead aim at the problem of the suspended driver, whether that suspension results from an impaired driving conviction or from other causes such as accumulation of demerit points.

In addition to these measures, the new law provides that drivers convicted three times in five years for Criminal Code drinking and driving offences will no longer be able to appeal their licence suspensions.

Police will now have increased powers to stop traffic. Penalties for failing to stop have been increased to a maximum \$1,000 fine or six months in jail from the former \$100 fine or 30 days.

A second ALERT mobile will be supplied by the province to the RCMP before this year's holiday season for use in roadside driver impairment testing throughout the province.

Permit holders and hall owners now share the responsibility for proper operation of halls, under The Liquor Control Act.

Owners found in violation may lose the right to have liquor permits issued for events in their halls.

Mr. Speaker, every Manitoban has a stake in safe streets and highways. In the past five years, over 250 men, women and children, have been killed by impaired drivers in this province. With this legislation we are saying Manitoba is not a good place to drink and drive. We expect the new law will make Manitoba a safer place to live.

Thank you.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, we in the official Opposition harped on this Government for some 14 months to come forward with an initiative on drinking and driving. We were indeed pleased when they did come forward in May of this year with an initiative which very quickly became apparent that it was very ill thought out in detail.

The thrust of this legislation we have always been committed to. In fact our commitment went so far as to agree with this Minister in rushing this legislation into place both at the outset and more recently with the further 18 amendments put forward by this Government.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that I continue to be disappointed in this Government's action on the educational aspect with respect to drinking and driving. We were told in committee a couple of weeks ago by this Minister that there would be a well-thought-out, well-planned educational aspect to this initiative. That

was promised in his press releases of last May. We have yet to see that initiative.

Mr. Speaker, if the deterrent effect of this Bill is to do what it can and what it should do, the public needs to know about this initiative and they need to know about it in detail. We need to take that seriously not just to the public at large but into the schools of this province in a very real way.

The incompetence of this Government in working this Bill through this House, as I believe, in the words of a more experienced Member than me from the third Party, was unprecedented. The fact is that in a 16-section Bill they had need to come forward with over 30 amendments. I simply raise that to tell the Minister that cannot be tolerated by this House on any regular basis. I think the culminating -(interjection)- I am sorry, maybe the Minister of Justice would like to—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. James.

Mr. Edwards: I think I missed what he said. Mr. Speaker, the culminating incident on that was a rather bizarre and farcical statement, I would submit, but a quite depressing one by the Minister in the committee when he put forward this Bill as a flyer and then decided later on he would go back and try and get it right. Mr. Speaker, that was indeed I believe an abuse of this House and the time and the taxpayers' money that have gone into putting this Bill through on two occasions.

* (1340)

I put forward eight amendments at the first committee stage, all of which I felt will toughen this Bill and, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to have some of those pass. I was even more pleased, or I might say disappointed when the third Party stood up a couple of weeks ago and said they maybe thought now I was right about those amendments.

I will be the first to cheer if this Bill survives a court challenge. It will be challenged. It saw it in my amendments to strengthen it. I know that if it does not succeed we will all be very, very disappointed, and Manitobans will not have been well served.

I look forward to following the progress of this Bill and, as I say, we on this side certainly will cheer loudly if it succeeds through the courts. Given the incompetence of the Government so far on this particular initiative, however, I can say I do not have a lot of confidence in the thoroughness of their research on this issue. Again, let me say that we look forward to this being implemented with an educational aspect. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to stand on the statement of the Minister today. It may be rather ironic: I do not know which Bill we will have to look at first to use the notwithstanding clause in Manitoba, the pornography Bill that is proceeding to the Supreme Court, or perhaps this one which ultimately will end up in the Supreme Court.

We did not take the approach of a Philadelphia lawyer to this Bill. We believed that the principles in the Bill of swift and immediate sanctions of seizure of cars and suspension of licences makes sense. Any study on the whole issue of drinking and driving shows that immediate sanctions are the best way to go, and we believe the collective rights of our citizens supersedes some of the possible technical defences in the court.

We have never been able to understand why conservation officers have been able to seize boats, cars and trailers for fishing violations and why it has become such a big legal issue for purposes of protecting our people on our streets.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I think that even the Scandinavian countries have tougher provisions. This is not the toughest in the world. It is certainly a positive step in North America to protect people.

I would also like to say that you cannot do one thing on November 1 in drinking and driving and do something else in terms of other action of the Government. We are absolutely opposed to the reversal and what we consider to be a double standard with the passage of the liquor advertising laws and the liberalization of liquor advertising, supported by the Conservatives and Liberals last year.

We agree with the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba that recommended to this Chamber that we not proceed with the broadcast policies, and we believe that the issue, the way in which we should have dealt with liquor advertising which does promote more consumption of alcohol, was to get a ban across the country as we are trying to do in smoking advertising, rather than going the other way where the other provinces have gone. We applaud the Bill but we believe we should act consistently in December of last year with November of this year. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have this afternoon from the Ramah Hebrew School, thirty-seven grade 5 students and they are under the direction of Janice Allen. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

* (1345)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Public Schools Act Sexual Abuse Investigations

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Many of the proposed changes to The Public Schools Act have merit. However, one proposal under Section 41, requiring that school boards must report to the Minister any teacher who has been charged with physical or sexual abuse of children and subsequently allows the Minister to

suspend the teaching certificate therefore denying the teacher his or her right to employment and a salary, is causing many concerns even before the Bill has been debated or passed in the House.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) is: what support will be made available for a teacher, who has been wrongfully charged and maybe without gainful employment, as a means to provide for his or her family for a substantial period of time?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that the only change to the legislation is that we are now going to ask school boards, through their superintendents, to report any case where a teacher has been charged, not where there is an investigation being carried out but where a teacher has been charged.

The other portion, Mr. Speaker, has been in place for a long time. There are no changes to that portion of the Act where the Minister has the authority for due cause to suspend a certificate. I have to tell you that it is simply suspending a certificate and not cancelling it. The suspension only occurs for the period of time of the investigation, or the charges being laid. If that teacher is freed or if the charges are dropped, as has been the case in a couple of instances just recently, the certificate is immediately returned to that teacher so that teacher can go back to work and continue the employment.

We have a difficulty, Mr. Speaker, in that there is a legal problem in terms of whether or not a teacher has any rights under the collective agreement if the certificate is suspended. I have met with the Teachers Society on at least two occasions. I met with them yesterday to address this problem. We realize that there may be a situation here that has to be addressed, and I am prepared to address it. I have discussed it with the Teachers Society and will continue doing that over the next several days.

Teacher Certification

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, has the Minister evaluated statistics from other jurisdictions, such as Alberta for instance, that of 35 teachers charged only 12 were actually found guilty. As it stands now in our province, that would mean that 23 teachers would have their certificates removed without just cause. How can you address that situation?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, one of the important aspects of all of this is that we must ensure that in fact a teacher is taken out of the environment during the time that the charge is laid. That does not make any judgment on whether that individual is guilty or not. Our concern is that there not be a community kind of reaction, a negative reaction that could cause hardship and pain both to the teacher and to the parents of the children, so therefore we try to deal with it in the most prudent way that we can.

Mr. Speaker, there are indeed many cases where charges are laid and then dropped because there is

insufficient evidence or some other situations, and I acknowledge that. We have good teachers in this province and we want to keep them here. It is important that we deal with this in a very prudent and rational way and I am prepared to do that, and that is why I have met with the Teachers Society. I will be meeting with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees tomorrow and we will be addressing this same problem.

Sexual Abuse Investigations

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Could the Minister explain what methods of investigation will take place before the teacher's certificate is removed, in light of the very real possibility that Manitoba teachers may well become easy targets for defiant students?

* (1350)

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Well, Mr. Speaker, we are in a new kind of situation in all of this, and there have been some instances or some occurrences that have caused some concern with regard to how people are treated. Simply walking into a classroom, as a matter of fact, and arresting a teacher in a classroom and handcuffing that individual and taking him out physically may not be the most appropriate way to deal with an individual in our society.

Mr. Speaker, all of these things have to be addressed in a rational way. One of the things that we must always remember is that we want to be fair to the children, fair to the parents, fair to the teacher, and for that reason I have committed myself and our Government to ensure that we discuss this thoroughly with the Teachers Society, with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, and we deal with it in a fair and equitable way so that both the rights of the teacher and the child are protected.

Teacher Certification

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): With a new question to the same Minister: there is a need for changes to The Public Schools Act no doubt, but do we wish to draw targets on the chests of our teachers when the Minister talks about handcuffing them in the classroom and driving them away?

Winnipeg lawyer Rocky Pollock has stated that Manitoba teachers are like ducks in a shooting gallery. Our children are vulnerable but now so are the over 13,000 teachers in our province, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Minister explain how his letter dated October 11 suspending a teacher's certificate of a Winnipeg teacher only reached that teacher in his home on October 24? The day before that the Winnipeg No. 1 School Division sent a letter by courier stating that the teacher's certificate should be reinstated. Can he explain his insensitivity to that teacher and the teacher's family?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I will address the situation with

regard to the letter reaching the teacher at a late date, and I will tell the Member that I will investigate that and find out why in fact that letter did not reach that teacher sooner. Usually, in most circumstances that I am aware of, we have indeed tried to courier the letter and deliver it personally to that teacher so that there is no way that letter would be lost in the mail. Why this situation occurred I do not know at this time, but I will get back to the Member.

With regard to being insensitive, Mr. Speaker, I reject that totally. This is a very serious matter not just for the children and the parents, but it is also a serious matter for the teachers. For that reason we have been trying to address it in the most appropriate way that we can. I understand the sensitivity and the kind of harm and pain that can result to a teacher when this happens in an unjustified way.

We have to deal with that, Mr. Speaker, and we are trying to, but we also have to remember to protect the children of our school system and the parents within our school systems. We will deal with it in the most appropriate way, and that is why we are going through this consultative process at the present time.

Mrs. Yeo: Well, I doubt the sensitivity, Mr. Speaker, when a letter is dated October 11 and the Minister does not sign it until October 23 and sends it by mail, not by courier.

Sexual Abuse Investigation

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): What steps are being taken to assure uniformity and consistency in dealing with teachers who have been charged with physical and sexual abuse?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I thought I had answered that question. Indeed we want to ensure that there is consistency in the way that we deal with each and every case and, as I said, I would get back to the Member with regard to the delay in this particular letter. I do not understand that at this time but I have committed myself to get back to the Member.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that when we have the complete information, that is when we act. We do not act before we have all the information at hand because we would be criticized and justifiably so for having acted on a matter without having complete information at our disposal.

Mrs. Yeo: Mr. Speaker, with my last supplementary: how can the Minister justify removing the salary for a teacher, a parent and a husband, for almost four months without a court hearing, without a true conviction? Does he live by the adage, guilty until proven innocent?

Mr. Derkach: I can tell the Member opposite and indeed the House here that I do not support the fact that when a teacher is suspended the salary is suspended as well, but the teachers do not work for me. They work for school divisions. They are employed by the school division. School divisions have in some instances

suspended with pay and in some instances they have suspended without pay.

Clearly this is another problem, Mr. Speaker, that has to be addressed, but this -(interjection)- Exactly, the Member opposite says fix it. We will fix it, but we will fix it by consulting with the interest groups such as the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the Manitoba Teachers Society and the Superintendents' Association before we move on a rational approach to solving the problem.

Misericordia Hospital Bed Shortages

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Last year it took us about three or four Question Periods to get the Minister to eventually not admit but not disagree with the fact that 22 beds were closed at the Health Sciences Centre in the respiratory section, and that those were indeed replaced with offices.

* (1355)

Yesterday we asked the Minister a very serious question about the shortage of nurses and the impact on the intensive care unit at Misericordia Hospital. The Minister did not acknowledge there was a serious problem and did not acknowledge that there has been a 33 percent reduction in beds at the intensive care unit at the Misericordia Hospital due to the nursing shortages.

Could the Minister now tell Manitobans that there is indeed a reduction in beds from eight down to 12 in the intensive care unit, and what action is he taking to ensure that Manitobans are given the proper health care services that they deserve?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I think, Mr. Speaker, that is an issue of hiring that Misericordia is grappling with and are intent on resolving. From time to time, full complements of staff throughout any part of the health care system are not always available through to change in positions at hospitals, moving from facility to facility or even out of Winnipeg to rural Manitoba or vice versa.

Mr. Speaker, those issues occur from time to time. I remind my honourable friend that five years ago Government faced a critical shortage of intensive care nursing at that time. This tends to be cyclical. I indicated to my honourable friend a number of steps that this Government is taking to address the educational challenges facing the nursing profession. Some of those issues have been before Government for five years or better and we are addressing them today. So that issue at the Misericordia will be dealt with by the Misericordia Hospital in their hiring practices.

Health Advisory Network Nurses' Association Membership

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): It is unprecedented to have, last May, hundreds and hundreds of nurses out in front crying out for a

partnership with this Government so they can meet the medical challenges and be in a partnership with the Government rather than confrontation. This Minister continues to be on a confrontation with nurses and does not meet with the leadership way, the nursing challenges in this province.

My question to the Minister is: why has he not acceded to the request to have a member of the nurses' association on the Health Advisory Task Force? Why has he not agreed to put any members of the nurses' association on the subcommittees of the task force and have bedside advice on those task forces that I think are essential for good health care reform in the future of the province?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I regret my honourable friend is scrambling for issues lately. There are nurses on the Health Advisory Network Steering Committee. There are nurses, to the best of my knowledge, on subcommittees where nursing information, nursing expertise are required.

My honourable friend simply refuses to admit what has been indicated to him by myself. If my honourable friend wants to talk to the chairman of the Health Advisory Network Steering Committee, Dr. Arnold Naimark, Dr. Naimark will confirm that there are nurses on the Steering Committee.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend talks about difficulties in the nursing profession. We have met with the nursing professions in this province from MONA through MARN, et cetera. We are working in a co-operative project to resolve the nursing education challenge that was before the previous administration unacted upon for a period of over five years. That is progress, that is co-operation, that is willingness to work with the nursing profession by this Government.

Mr. Doer: You never get a straight answer from this Minister. I asked him about the nurses' association, and he knows full well he has not put one member of the nurses' association on those commissions because he does not want any representatives from the nurses' union on those commissions. He wants to hand pick who he would like on those commissions.

Misericordia Hospital Capital Projects

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): I have another question dealing with the Misericordia Hospital. We raised the situation of the X-ray machine yesterday. Can the Minister confirm that on October 12 the Maryland 4 Ward, the isolation and rehabilitation section, suffered a major sewer problem in the ward and the bedpans had to be emptied into buckets, which remained in patients' rooms, a deplorable situation according to the nurses?

What action is this Government taking to deal with a hospital that is falling around the staff and patients' ankles with the situation in the hospital?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, when my honourable friend asked his

questions, he posed two questions. One was about an X-ray development room drainage pipe which, when my honourable friend posed his question yesterday, the pipe had already been replaced with a five-inch pipe. The situation was fixed. Now my honourable friend will not admit that the issue which was four weeks old was fixed and his information is somewhat delayed. I do not expect him to be that forthright and honest with his presentation to the House, but I indicated that it was resolved, and it was.

* (1400)

On October 12, the sewer in the old wing of the Misericordia Hospital was plugged. They attempted to unplug the sewer with Roto-rooter. Subsequently the pipe broke and it resulted in requiring the installation of a new drain pipe. That took five days, and whilst that repair and replacement of the sewer pipe broken in the attempt to unplug it went on, the wing was closed because water was cut off until the new drain was installed.

Renovation Plans

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I stated yesterday that it had to be fixed twice, and I acknowledge the fact the X-ray section has been fixed temporarily, which I think is important. The whole situation that we are raising in the Misericordia is symptomatic of a bigger problem in that hospital.

I would ask the Minister to please table the renovation plans and the repair plans and the staffing plans to deal with what is obvious to be substandard renovation standards and substandard staffing standards, resulting in loss of beds in the intensive care unit and obviously a reduction in the health care services at that hospital for Manitobans.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I reject absolutely my honourable friend's allegations, the premise for his question. What my honourable friend refuses to acknowledge is that some short 18 months ago he was a Member of a Government sitting around the Cabinet table which had frozen all capital reconstruction budgets in the Province of Manitoba, a capital budget that was approved duly by this House with the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) as one of the Members giving the stamp of approval in the mid-summer of 1987 to that capital program.

The moment this House adjourned, the NDP Government, of which he was part, froze the capital budget, never undertook one single reconstruction program. Those commenced on May 9 with the election of this Government.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. James has the floor.- (interjection)- Order, order. The Honourable Minister of Health has had an opportunity to answer the question.

Crime Prevention Programs Provincial Council

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. James has the floor.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Today is the first day of Crime Prevention Month in Manitoba. Yet, despite promises by this Minister to move in this area one year ago, another year has passed since Crime Prevention Month 1988 and there is no plan of action, no strategy and certainly no initiative that has come forward from this Government.

There is an enormous concern in this province that not enough is being done in the area of crime prevention to lower the level of fear that all Manitobans have of unacceptably high rates of crime in this province.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: when will this Minister and this Government be showing some leadership in the area of crime prevention by taking the first step and establishing a provincial crime prevention council, as suggested by this Party?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): One thing we know about the Honourable Member, he will suggest whatever he thinks sounds like a good idea at the time. There might be a different suggestion tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. We will see.

An Honourable Member: On the same issue.

Mr. McCrae: On the same issue. We know that last May 11 the Honourable Member suggested that the way to fight impaired driving was to increase the suspension in Manitoba up to six months, where it already was at that time, so we know where the Honourable Member stands on a number of issues, and that is everywhere.

Mr. Edwards: I think the Minister of Justice should read the law. The law is that there is a three-month federal suspension. The other three months is an administrative suspension. I said we should be as tough as Ontario.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are not debating here.

Government Agenda

Mr. Speaker: Would the Honourable Member for St. James kindly put his question, please?

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): I will try and keep on the subject of crime prevention given that this is the first day of Crime Prevention Month in this province. My supplementary question -(interjection)-

An Honourable Member: The NDP laughs at crime prevention again.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for St. James.

Mr. Edwards: The beauty of crime prevention is that it prevents a crime before there is a victim, and it can largely be achieved through volunteer efforts at the community level.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is: when will this Minister be putting an agenda forward for crime prevention in this province? Will he do it this month?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am surprised. Usually the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) says do it today. I am surprised the Honourable Member is prepared to give us a whole month, we really appreciate that. Indeed we are aware—

An Honourable Member: There is a softening of their position.

Mr. McCrae: It seems to be a softening of their position, as the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) reminds us. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, I have taken an active - (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: No, not yet. The Honourable Minister of Justice.

Mr. McCrae: Crime prevention and many other community activities takes more than lip-service like the kind we get from the Honourable Member. I have been to many, many Neighbourhood Watch meetings and have seen the tremendous attendance at those, sometimes attended by other Members of the Liberal Opposition for which I give them credit, but certainly not the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). I have not seen him there.

I think today would be a good chance for me to give credit to those Neighbourhood Watch and other crime prevention thrusts that we have in this province and to congratulate people like Hugh Coburn of the Winnipeg City Police, people like Mike Lagace of the Winnipeg City Police, people like Maureen Mislán and others involved in crime prevention efforts throughout the province.

If the Honourable Member would be interested, I might like to introduce him to some of these people any day, and perhaps he might learn something about crime prevention and what really works.

Mr. Edwards: I have been to crime prevention group meetings around this province. This Minister is the Minister who did not take the initiative to accept the invitation to go to an International Conference on Crime Prevention. This is the Minister -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

Drinking and Driving Initiative Education Programs

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. James, put his question, please.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed ironic today, the day that drinking and driving legislation

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

comes into place, that this Minister has not seen fit to bring in an educational package which would take advantage of the deterrent effect of that legislation, which would prevent crime.

When will this Minister come forward with his promised education package to maximize the deterrent effect of this legislation and prevent the crime that is indeed the worst crime in this province?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Usually the Honourable Member uses the newspapers as his research tools. All he has to do is read any public media in this province. The public media of this province have been extremely co-operative in splashing all over the newspapers the fact that Manitoba is bringing in the toughest drinking and driving legislation in this country. Now that is important all by itself.

We know that the broadcasters, to whom the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) referred in his response to my Ministerial Statement, have also played a part, as well as the brewers, as well as the insurance industry, as well as many others.

I say also to the Honourable Member that the Government has a role to play and the Honourable Member will see what that role is in the very near future with respect to the International Conference on Crime Prevention held in Quebec. The Honourable Member makes quite a scene of that when in fact three members of my department attended that. I have already had the report on it, and there are some very good things that came out of that conference.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for St. James, on a point of order.

Mr. Edwards: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister does not seem to realize that there were two conferences. One was for legislators after the bulk, the major conference. That was the one he was invited to - (interjection) - That was the one he did not go to.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. There is no point of order. This is a dispute over the facts.

Young Farmer Rebate Program Manitoba Statistics

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Today is the due date for many farmers in that today is the day their loan payments are due under the Manitoba Agriculture Credit Corporation. This includes of course those young farmers who are anticipating utilizing to the full extent the Young Farmer Rebate Program.

Can the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) tell us today how many farmers have in fact utilized to the maximum the Young Farmer Rebate Program?

* (1410)

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Farmers have till between November 1 and November 7 to make

their payment to MACC to qualify for the full benefit of the Young Farmer Rebate.

There has been a number of young farmers who have loans over \$50,000 who automatically qualify for an added-on portion in terms of the benefit. That went out to them in a letter. We will not know until November 7 as to whether they picked it up or not by making their payment.

I cannot give him an affirmative answer on the number at this point. We will know after the period of the next week.

Payment Policy

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Can the Minister give us some information today on what impact the federal Government decision to discontinue the interest-free advance payments is having on the ability of Manitoba farmers to meet the deadline for these repayments?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, everybody knows my position on that. We wrote a letter and spoke very strongly to the Minister of Agriculture that removal of that program was very untimely at this point because the farm economy is under stress. We said if you are going to remove it, at least remove it only on the last six months of the crop year, leave it in place for the first six months. There is no question that the farm community has been hurt by the lack of the presence of a cash-advance system. Not only do we not have the program interest free, we do not have it all at this point in time.

There has been serious impact in the rural economy with that regard, and many farmers I know are hurting right now because quotas have not been as large as they thought they might be. So, yes, there is an impact. Whether it will impact on this program in terms of repayment ability, we are not sure at this time.

Mr. Laurie Evans: The Minister has alluded to the fact that farmers have until the 7th of November in order to make payment and receive the full rebate.

Will the Minister review the policy of MACC which, as it now sits, means that if a farmer does not make the payment by November 7 he loses 25 percent of the payment? If for some reason he is not able to make payment prior to the 31st of March of the upcoming year, he could in fact lose the entire \$4,000 rebate.

Would the Minister review this policy to determine in fact whether some adjustment could be made, because there is an opportunity to the province to somewhat counteract the failure of the federal Government to provide the advance payments?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, the farmer loses 25 percent of the benefit if he pays between November 7 and the end of December. We will certainly look at that. It is my understanding that the federal Bill on the cash advances is in committee stage now, and the expectation is it will be in force by the end of this week. If that is the case, the cash advance will be available for farmers before November 7. If that does not happen we will give that consideration.

Seniors Directorate Minister's Responsibilities

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): During the last number of days we have been repeatedly stonewalled in Estimates by the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey). We ask questions about Pharmacare and he tells us that is not his responsibility. We ask questions about seniors housing and he says that is somebody else's problem. We ask questions about his Government's position on the Manitoba Society of Seniors court challenge and he says go ask the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). We ask questions about the goods and services tax and its impact on seniors and he tells us that he is unaware of any studies taken and we should talk to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on and on—

Mr. Speaker: No, you will not. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

Mr. Carr: —and so, Mr. Speaker, can he. My question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). If the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey) is not advocating on their behalf, what is he doing?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) may want to respond as well, but just let me respond very briefly to the Honourable Member.

This House reconvened on the 18th of September. We changed the timing of Seniors Estimates to be moved ahead, not at the request of the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr), but to accommodate the third Party. If it had not been for that we would not have had one question dealing with the seniors from the Liberal Party. It shows how little they care for the seniors of Manitoba when this is the first question asked.—(interjections)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Seniors Directorate Initiatives

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, let us just see now, with a question to the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey). Aside from the long overdue discussion paper on elder abuse, which was about a year late, and the information line, what specific policy initiatives has this Minister taken on behalf of Manitoba seniors?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, you know I find it very, very amusing that the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) is asking questions about what the Seniors Directorate should be doing, because it was his Leader and his Party that in the 1988 election campaign promised the establishment of a Seniors Directorate and gave it no budget, not one nickel.

I can tell you that they were expecting to do absolutely nothing for seniors, Mr. Speaker. That was their commitment to seniors. I have got it in writing.—(interjections)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Crime Prevention Programs Seniors

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): This is exactly the circus and the spectacle that we have had to put up with in Estimates for the last three days from this Minister and his Government.

Mr. Speaker, there has been an alarming number of muggings on elderly Winnipeggers recently. What specific action has the Minister taken to ensure that community-based crime prevention programs are implemented so that our seniors can feel safe in their neighbourhoods and in their homes?—(interjections)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I can only repeat what I said earlier in the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) with the information I gave to him about crime prevention.

The fact is the City of Winnipeg Police have done an excellent job in Winnipeg and they continue to expand their horizons in regard to crime prevention in Manitoba, the police in the City of Winnipeg as well as the RCMP across Manitoba. The job of crime prevention is an ongoing thing. It is not something that was just invented yesterday, as the Honourable Member for St. James would seem to have you believe. It is an ongoing matter that is under the auspices of the Winnipeg Police and the RCMP.

* (1420)

VIA Rail Churchill Service

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, the confusion on that side of the House, whether it be by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) or whether it be by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), continues as we see an epidemic of news releases from the Minister of Highways and Transportation as he returns from his presentations and meeting with the federal Minister of Transportation.

I ask the Minister to clarify when he on one hand advises the media in this province that he has received a five-year guarantee from the federal Minister for the service to Churchill when we had a 10-year guarantee last May, and then today he puts out a news release that says the guarantee is for only one year. Which one is factual, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, first of all I do not know where the Member gets his guarantee from 10 years from, because if there was a guarantee last year for 10 years I was not aware of it.

However, we knew and with the concurrence—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Albert Driedger: —with the concurrence of the Parties opposite, I had the privilege of being in Ottawa

the last few days to bring forward the concerns of Manitobans regarding the cuts of VIA Rail, and the privilege of meeting with the federal Minister. I expressed the concerns that we all have in Manitoba regarding many aspects of the cuts.

One of the major ones that we were concerned about was the one-year guarantee—only a one-year guarantee for the line to remote communities. The federal Minister has indicated and promised yesterday a five-year guarantee for passenger services to remote communities.

Mr. Speaker, the federal Minister also gave me the assurance that he would review the impact on the camper special, the Capreol line. What results are going to be from that, I do not know.

I would have to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that I was very proud of the Manitoba representation that we had the last few days in Ottawa. I think we raised many good concerns. We drew the attention of the Commons Transportation Committee. We feel very proud of the accomplishments that we had. Thank you.

Mr. Plohman: I cannot believe the answers from this Minister as he apologizes and continues to apologize for the federal Government. His news release of today says that the guarantee is only for one year. He should get his facts straight and his information straight that he is putting out.

Perishable Food Shipments

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I ask him, while the Minister, Mr. Speaker, is making assertions about the passenger service on the northern line, he makes no mention of a Northern Transportation Agency September 1 decision which in fact jeopardizes the provision of perishable food, of vegetables, fruit, milk and other perishables and mail to the community of Churchill.

In view of the fact that this decision of the NTA means little if any perishable food will be shipped to Churchill today on the VIA train that is travelling there, I ask the Minister whether in fact he has made any representation to CN to have additional cars added to that train.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I have not. What I have is the assurance from the federal Minister that we will have continued transportation services to remote communities. I also have the assurance from him that before any further decisions will be made regarding any issues with VIA Rail, we will have further dialogue on it.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to indicate, at the time when the decision came down on October 4, at that time it requested that the Council of Ministers of Transportation meet to further request that moratorium. I have to indicate that the chairman of the Council of Ministers for Transportation from Newfoundland, I have been in touch with him today. He is looking to reconvene the various Ministers to see whether we can continue to push for a moratorium to see whether we can have

dialogue and input into the decisions that affect the VIA Rail cuts.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Dauphin, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this Minister is not even aware of National Transportation Agency decisions, this decision being made September 1st. Those decisions are mailed to the Minister of Highways and Transportation and he has taken no action to protect the provision of food, perishable food for the people of Churchill.

I ask this Minister in view of this insensitive decision and the concerns that we have about rail deregulation by Liberal and Conservative Governments in this country, will this Minister ask for a review of that decision to have it reversed and a review of how those decisions are impacting on remote and isolated communities in this province?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, let me first of all indicate that I have very capable staff in the Department of Transportation, the same staff that was working for that Member when he was Minister. I can indicate that my staff are working on all the issues affecting especially the remote communities in the North of Manitoba.

Psychogeriatric Care Initiatives

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, a few days back the Acting Minister of Health (Mr. Derkach) took some questions on notice, and Monday of last week the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) refused to answer those questions during the Estimate process.

Mr. Speaker, the Psychogeriatric Planning Committee prepared a report as I said earlier, that was March 1988. This report had a lot of recommendations which will improve the quality of life for the seniors in Manitoba. Can the Minister of Health tell us today what recommendation out of that report has been followed so far?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I do not recall refusing to answer any of my honourable friend's questions in Estimates. Maybe my honourable friend did not like the answers or maybe we suggested we discuss them at the commission when personal care homes are being dealt with, but I do not recall ever refusing to answer any of my honourable friend's questions.

Mr. Speaker, what has the Government done in terms of psychogeriatric care? We launched a very progressive program as one of the initiatives last fall in I believe September at a cost of some \$300,000 in which three personal care homes in Manitoba will have a psychogeriatric team of professionals, each team made up of three professionals. They are staffed.

Their purpose is to provide staffing services, training in terms of how to deal with psychogeriatric patient care within the personal care homes in the City of

Winnipeg. That is a very progressive step. It provides service to all personal care homes in the City of Winnipeg, and will hopefully assist staff in dealing with difficult—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Psychogeriatric Planning Committee Report Recommendations

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Kildonan, a very short question.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey). On the same day, the Minister of Seniors said the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) will answer the question. The Minister of Health said that he will answer it in the Question Period. He has not answered my question.

Can the Minister of Seniors please—today he should read the report. If he does not have the copy, I will provide it to him.

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I take the question as asking me if I have the report, and if I have not, he will provide it. I would have to check the office to see if I have it, and if I have not, I would expect him to provide it.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

* (1430)

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I have a committee change. I move, seconded by the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) for St. James (Mr. Edwards); Osborne (Mr. Alcock) for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: McCrae for Cummings; Gilleshammer for Praznik; and Driedger for Enns.

Also I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Praznik for Helwer; and Mitchelson for Burrell.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call the Bills

in the following order: Nos. 27, 61, 62, 67, 73, 76, 31, 34, 42, 53, 6, and should we complete all those, the remainder in the order listed on the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker, I might note for Honourable Members that we proposed Thursday to be a day for the calling of Bills as opposed to getting into Estimates on Thursdays.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader for that information.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 27—THE FISCAL STABILIZATION FUND ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 27, The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act; Loi sur le Fonds de stabilisation des recettes, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne? (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for the Interlake.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on this Bill and have the Bill remain standing for the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock). I would like to take this opportunity and enter this debate today on this Bill that has been proposed by the Government to set up a stabilization fund. We have had considerable concerns about how this Government intends to manage this fund and also how this Government has in fact set up this fund.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at what has occurred in the past year, for example in the Department of Agriculture, for which I am the critic, you will find that the Government underspent in that department by some \$19 million over the budgeted amounts that were put into the Estimates—an underspending of some \$19 million at a time when this province went through one of its severest droughts, at a time when in fact many of the pillars of stability for Agriculture are under attack by the federal Government, by proponents of free trade, where they have in fact in many instances what I would call convinced—I guess that is the most mild word I can use—some leaders in the agricultural community that free trade is a boon, and would be a boon, or at least this deal would be a boon to agriculture, and on the other hand you see action after action confirming that orderly marketing is under attack by and as a result of this free trade deal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you see the whole notion of free trade is and has been put to the public, basically as a motherhood issue. I say that in a sense that, who can be opposed to something that is free? I mean that very notion in the minds of people connotes, why would I not want something that is free, and why would I not

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

want something when there is trade involved? So that notion to many people's minds was that you really cannot be opposed to something like that. The deal in itself was exactly the opposite. It had the exact opposite meaning when it is applied to agriculture specifically and society in general.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in agriculture we have seen now in this whole area, the milk system in this country, under supply management, under attack. We have seen the U.S. Government take the question of Canada's right to set import quotas on ice cream and yogurt to the GATT, and in fact GATT ruling that those products are not part of the milk industry and so they have ruled or recommended that these items should be removed from that protected list.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Canadian farmers have put their house in order. They have, by the supply management system, brought about some order to the marketplace in this country. They have not overproduced, and if they have in some instances in terms of the use of industrial milk, turning it into skim milk powder, they have had to pay for the removal off the market and basically the selling or the giving away of the surplus powdered milk through CEDA to the world community, which requires these foodstuffs in order to survive in many instances.

So unlike the farming community and the marketing system in the United States, which has had nothing but great big valleys and mounds of production where there has never been any attempt to level out the demand and the supply in that country through some order in the marketplace, Canadian farmers are being asked now to pay for what one could only say the inexcusable inability of the U.S. to regulate a marketing system that has been out of control historically.

Not only that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this deal which in fact is going to play havoc on the poultry, egg industry in this country, will in fact place in jeopardy the entire supply management system. So when you look at the deal coming in and indicating and agreeing that import quotas will increase, open up the borders for duty-free processed product into this country, it only means that those food stuffs, when they are brought into this country, will be using in many instances, not in all instances—I imagine from time to time the U.S. market may be higher than the Canadian one but—generally speaking, lower priced U.S. product to compete unfairly. I say, unfairly, because of no supply management system in the U.S.

Whenever there is a surplus of product, boom, the product will flow at whatever price it takes to move it and in fact place great pressure on the pricing and the negotiation system in this country and directly, through the indirect system, directly on our producers which can only mean reduction, ultimate reduction, in incomes and place into question the whole supply management system and in fact the stability that producers in this country have counted on over basically the last decade and a half.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the underspending in this department and the silence by the Government and in particular this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) who

blindly supported the free trade deal is incomprehensible in light of their pronouncements that we are now setting up a rainy day fund. It is raining on the farm community. Farmers are losing their land. Just look at the statistics going through the Mediation Board, more than 300 cases coming before the board. Farmers are losing their land, and we have a rainy day fund by the Conservatives—Conservatives representing the bulk of rural Manitoba. Not only is it raining, it is snowing, it is hailing on the farm community, and the Conservatives are saying it is sunny here in the Legislature, let us set up a rainbow because this is our fund. It is our rainbow fund.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, could this in fact be a Grant Devine style of election funding for the next provincial election? Could this be? Obviously it had some impact on rural Saskatchewan in the last provincial election. When I talked to many in the farm community, there were more hot tubs—(interjection)—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Interlake.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, I said when I talked to people in Saskatchewan after the last provincial election, and smilingly many of them told me, there were more hot tubs put into farm homes as a result of the goodies in the election campaign by Grant Devine to rural Saskatchewan.

* (1440)

I wonder whether this fund will be used for that kind of electioneering. One has to have some indication from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Government as to how this fund will be used, because that one area of House expansion and money into rural Saskatchewan did in fact at that time practically garner—not practically—it garnered the majority of rural seats for the Saskatchewan Conservatives, but they lost virtually every seat in urban Saskatchewan, in small town and urban Saskatchewan. So I think the Conservatives here have to put the record straight as to how they intend to manage this fund. I think there is some concern that this fund not become a slush fund.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how did we achieve this fund? Just ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in terms of underspending in home care, in terms of underspending in capital facilities. At the expense of rural and urban Manitoba there were vast underspendings in many departments that deliver necessary services to Manitobans. In Family Services our children are abused. Those programs were in fact underspent in that department. They could have used that money. They now have a fund that will look at some of the difficulties that Manitobans are facing.

Agriculture and rural Manitoba is facing a particular crisis. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke on this matter. I expect the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) will want to be dealing with that in his remarks tomorrow when he goes to Arborg. The question of, and he should be aware, and I will tell him that the community of Arborg is very upset as a specific at the lack of initiative

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

on behalf of the federal and provincial Governments in reaching an agreement for sewer and water facilities for rural Manitoba. In fact the Member of Parliament is being now chastised and has been chastised by the mayor of Arborg in not coming up with funding, and so he should be, the Minister of Rural Development indicates to me.

You are right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all pressure should be put on. I expect that the Minister of Rural Development will not only deal with the notion and the virtues of decentralization for rural Manitoba as being part and parcel of the need for revitalization of rural Manitoba, he will have to deal with the quality of life issues that they have in fact not been able to deal with in some way.

Whether it is their stand on Meech Lake, whatever it is, open-door policy and the close linkage to the Conservative Party in Ottawa has not paid off for Manitobans. Manitobans have been patient up to this time but they will not be very patient for long, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I say to the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), some of those commitments have to be made to ensure that the quality of life of rural Manitoba is in fact protected and that there is required a major role on behalf of the provincial Government to be played in making those services available and the renewal of those services for those communities across this province.

I want to say to the Minister of Rural Development as well, that when they do finally, and maybe they will not have the opportunity to, we will know in about six months time whether anything occurs because they put in funding for a federal-provincial agreement, a budget ago, a year ago. Nothing has happened.

We have been relatively patient here in this Chamber. They are not going to get another six months, I do not think, from the electorate to say, well, we have given you two years. I say to the Minister of Rural Development, he likely will want to tap into this fund to make sure that the commitment of this Legislature can in fact review the funding formula for sewer and water and could come up with a formula that has been suggested by my colleague from Dauphin and our Party in the last campaign, that in terms of the crucial issues for rural communities in not being able to obtain the necessary funding or on the other hand provide the necessary borrowing that in fact the share of the program may have to be upped and should be upped by two senior levels of Government.

What else should happen is that any new agreements that are entered into by the Water Services Board on behalf of the province should have a stipulation that there be a reserve, an ongoing reserve established in those communities so that 20 years from now at least a portion of the funds required for the renewal that will have to take place are in fact within the reserve.

The Minister says look at the new legislation. I am saying to him that direction was given, and I expect that, and I hope that he will follow those directions in this whole area. With respect to the Stabilization Fund,

you just watch the panic. You just watch the panic in six months time if there are no federal-provincial agreements. You will see these Conservatives scurrying all over the place because their federal colleagues will not have delivered what they told Manitobans 14 months ago that they would if they were put into office. You just watch the panic as to what will occur with that fund. It will, and it could become a nightmare fund for the Conservatives.

They are not the only ones that have to look over their shoulder. The so-called Government-in-waiting, your Party, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have, and spokesman for your Party, said that they oppose the setting up of this fund, that it will be a slush fund. That is essentially what I got and I hear the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) indicating, yes, that is exactly what we are saying. If they oppose the setting up of this fund, they why are Members of their own caucus saying let us spend this fund, let us now spend on health care, the Health Critic, the Member for Kildonan is it, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema)? The Child Care Critic, the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), who is eloquent in her addresses, wants to spend this fund.

I asked the Liberals, how can you spend something that you are opposed to setting up? You cannot have it both ways, you really cannot because that is essentially what the Liberal group does not seem to understand in this Assembly. They want on one hand to say, we oppose this, and on the other hand, let us spend it, let us spend it right now. This fund and the ability of this fund could not have come about unless there had been some action taken some time ago. I guess part of that action cost us the election and I say that Manitobans saw us as a Government that taxed Manitobans heavily.

The Conservatives now, one can put it very crassly, are smiling all the way to the bank. They have had the opportunity to (a) cut back, but at the expense of the most needy in society and on the other hand they have had the luxury to provide some of the tax breaks to Manitobans. That is why we supported this last budget, because there were measures that helped average Manitobans in terms of the amount of taxes that they pay to the province.

* (1450)

We will not support the kind of tax breaks that your Party has in fact put forward and that is tax breaks for the wealthy, tax breaks for the large corporations which were brought in by the first budget of the Conservatives, breaks for Inco when Inco showed this year, what is it, a \$197 million profit this year on top of a major profit last year and we, your two Parties said, let us give them a break. Let us give them a break on the health and education levy because that has been the position and the policy of your two Parties. The health and education levy is anti-business, and so we will give away millions of dollars to corporations which show -(interjection)-

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. People wishing to carry on private conversations, please do so outside the Chamber. The Honourable Member for the Interlake has the floor.

Mr. Uruski: The whole question of child care in this province requires urgent addressing because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while the Premier of this province (Mr. Filmon) has indicated he will not deal with workers who were threatening to walk out, he would not discuss with them the problems in terms of salaries for the child care workers.

The child care workers, if you look at the turnover by workers in the child care—I call it industry but that is not a good word—field, is in fact a withdrawal of services practically every two years. The turnover is horrendous. Child care workers, professional workers, who are well trained and society requires those well-trained people to provide the kind of quality care for the future of our province. They are in fact withdrawing their services, virtually every worker every two years because there is such a massive turnover in that field.

When the Family Services Department underspends and then the Minister says we cannot provide the kind of necessary agreement with child care workers that would see them move into comparable salaries to other fields, it is no wonder workers become frustrated and really take their frustration out and say there is only one way of doing it and that is to totally withdraw our services to show the kind of solidarity and support that we have for the workers and from the families, that we will close the day care centres down for one day.

I hope that this Government can and will deal with this matter urgently as it requires, because as the frustration builds more and more people leave the industry. Mr. Deputy Speaker, use the fund, you have the cushion, set it up, use it, put it into being and continue to keep the day care system the best as it is known in Manitoba, the best anywhere in this country.

What I do not like to see happening, and this I will admit is not an easy issue to deal with, and that is the notion in society that somehow those who are wealthier should pay more and a greater proportion of the costs. I believe that is correct, but the way that both Liberals and Conservatives are going about to say, while having a ceiling on the rates we want to lift that ceiling.

The notion, I am sure for some is a popular one, to say, well, if I make \$50,000 a year I should be prepared to pay more. You should be able to pay more and you do. We should be having a fair taxation system in this country that does bring about the necessary revenue through progressive means of taxation and that there be a ceiling in terms of access to this program and rather than, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have a system that requires what I would consider an ongoing means test as to the amount of fees to be charged to families, especially those who I would consider are in the \$25,000 to \$45,000 range. Those will be the families who will face the hardest challenges in terms of the additional burden that such kind of a scheme will bring about.

For many in society they will say, right on, they should pay more. They should pay more but they should pay it through the progressive means of taxation and that is the way to achieve the necessary funding for day care and as many programs as we can in fact as a society deem appropriate to provide for our citizens.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that this fund can in fact do some good. The concept of putting money away

for what one could say, a rainy day, I have no difficulty with in respect to the concept. It is basically indicating that we have had a surplus and we will put it away for future use for predetermined areas. I think there needs to be a greater clarification as to how this Fund will be managed and how the regulations will be set up to manage the Fund. This legislation as presented broadly sets out the concept and I have no difficulty with the concept, but let us not set up the fund at the expense of sectors in our society that we are cutting back on, and that is the difficulty that I have with this Government's actions. On the one hand they are setting up a fund, and on the other hand it is raining in terms of child care, in terms of health care, in terms of rural development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is raining in Lynn Lake, in fact it is storming in Lynn Lake and we have the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) changing his story daily as to what will occur with respect to the negotiations between the partners in the gold mine and the community. We do not know where this Minister is leading us. I am not sure that he knows where he is leading. He is lashing out at times and in terms of the media statements that he has made he wants to negotiate but, in the meantime, he is kicking key negotiating partners on the other side of the table in some difficult places in an effort, I do not know whether to soften them up or what his intent is, but clearly the stance, the public stances that he has taken in the media have not been conducive to the kind of negotiations that have to take place on a delicate area such as this, to save the future of this community.

* (1500)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened to the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) who appeared on the radio program the other day dealing with the question of Lynn Lake, and I want to say that I was indeed saddened by some of the commentary that came forth from Manitobans, many of whom I expect called in who were Manitobans from south of 53, indicating that no way should any tax dollars be used to prolong or extend the life of this community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was saddened because all that points out to is to a society, or some in society, that are leaning toward a very individualistic society that as long as I am okay, Jack, to hell with the rest of you. So I find that disheartening when I see citizens of the larger community, the broader community, saying to hell with the rest of you, basically saying, down the tubes, when in fact the rest of the community in northern Manitoba has, through the wealth of those resources, provided many of the benefits that we in southern Manitoba have taken for granted—\$300 million of tax revenues in the last two years alone from mining royalties. That provides for a fair bit of provincial revenues in areas of health care, in areas of home care, in areas of child care, in other areas of provincial programming, in education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not everyone would want to say, I am going up beyond 53 and I am going to make my home there, and make a community there and live there and make what I would consider some of the sacrifices

that many of us in southern Manitoba would not, for (1) fundamentally, of course, the jobs; but secondly, that there are people who have the pioneering spirit and who want to go up to the northern areas of our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Manitobans they deserve the same consideration as any of us do in southern Manitoba, that the impact on Lynn Lake, the impact of the loss of this major industry is so severe as to virtually cripple and shut down that community, that all of us in southern Manitoba and the rest of the community should say, we will attempt to do what we can to make sure that that community is preserved.

In fact, a rainy day fund of sorts was proposed in the budget that was defeated in 1988, that budget was defeated. There was a rainy day fund, a stabilization fund for mining communities that a portion of the revenues—(interjection)—Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the budget was defeated. The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) informs me that the fund is still there, it was legislation setting up that fund specifically. I will take his word for it and say the fund—oh, I know—the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Connerly) says there has been a \$10 million fund that has been there for a long time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes, that money has been set aside in a fund but specifically the fund to take revenues from royalties was not there, a special fund was set aside. I do not dispute what the Minister of Consumer Affairs and the Minister of Rural Development have issued and I thought that somehow I had made an error and that I am prone to doing that. I am not infallible. So that fund should have in fact been instituted so that those kinds of situations could be dealt with in a systematic way to provide for the longevity and the needed assistance to communities when they run into trouble. That type of a fund is, I have to say, very similar to the Stabilization Fund, very much the same, so while I have raised some concerns, I say to Members opposite that the concept of the fund I personally do not have any difficulty with. I really do not.

So I would like to hear from Members of the Government that this fund—and I think the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has to show us how this fund—and should tell us—how this fund will work, how he intends to report on this fund to the Legislature and how he intends to—I guess one would say—govern the nature of this fund for the benefit of this province, but clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I criticize the Government for setting up this fund at the expense of sectors and citizens of this province at a time when they require the assistance. Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Bill No. 27 will continue to stand in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne.

SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 61—THE CITY OF WINNIPEG AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs) presented Bill No. 61, The City of Winnipeg Amendment

Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, this the second Bill to be introduced in this House dealing with The City of Winnipeg Act. It is one of three Bills that we presented at the present time. I am pleased to introduce for second reading Bill No. 61, an Act to amend The City of Winnipeg Act.

As members may recall when I introduced Bill 32 during the first part of this Session in June, I indicated that in the fall I would be bringing forward further amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendments in this Bill, like the ones in Bill 32, are part of the process of introducing civic reforms to various parts of The City of Winnipeg Act. This process, which essentially is a major review of The City of Winnipeg Act, considers the recommendations for change proposed in the final report of The City of Winnipeg Act Review Committee. It also incorporates certain features of the provincial White Paper issued by the previous administration. The major review of The City of Winnipeg Act is ongoing and I will be bringing forward in future other Bills with substantive amendments to the Act.

Also included in this Bill are some minor amendments requested by Winnipeg City Council. Mr. Deputy Speaker, before presenting you with the content of Bill 61, I would just like to add that the civic reforms being proposed here have been endorsed by City Council in a brief which they submitted to me.

Let me provide you now with more specific details on the nature of the amendments in Bill 61. First of all, amendments to Part 2 of the Act, Administrative Organization. As part of this Government's ongoing initiative to implement civic reforms to the Winnipeg Act, Bill 61 includes amendments under Part 2 of the Act which deals with the city's administrative organization. The current provincial legislation regarding the City of Winnipeg's administrative structure is overly prescriptive and detailed. For example, the legislation requires that the administration of the city will be managed by a board of commissioners consisting of a chief commissioner and as many other commissioners as are necessary to manage the city's departments. Moreover, the legislation goes on to address matters dealing with the meetings of the board of commissioners, voting, the quorum at meeting, appointment of a secretary of the board, duties of the chief commissioner, and so forth.

* (1510)

Another example of the way in which provincial legislation involves itself in administrative matters which really should be left to the City of Winnipeg Council to determine is with regard to the establishment of their different departments. The City of Winnipeg Act requires council to establish by-law the administration divisions of the city, and to designate the departments of the city which shall compose each administrative division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not to vary too much from the prepared text, you did mention in your remarks on Bill 32 in regard to the Board of Commissioners. I told you at the time I would be bringing in further Bills to answer some of your concerns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to go on, while the administrative organization of the City of Winnipeg is dealt with in great detail in Part 2 of The City of Winnipeg Act, The Municipal Act, which governs the rest of Manitoba municipalities, does not contain these type of provisions regarding local government administration which are quite so perspective.

The Government believes that the City of Winnipeg, as a responsible municipal government, should have full authority to establish and revise the administrative structure of the city. On that basis, Bill 61 proposes to provide the city with greater flexibility in establishing its own administrative structure and procedure, rather than the detailed and prescriptive legislation which now exists.

Bill 61 proposes instead enabling legislation—and I must emphasize—which this Government believes their responsibility is enabling legislation which permits Winnipeg City Council to determine the type of senior administrative structure which it wishes to have. This effectively means that the proposed legislation is drafted in such a way as to leave it up to council to decide whether it wants to have a chief commission, or a chief executive officer, or a city manager, or whatever alternate best suits its best needs. The legislation will no longer require that council establish a board of commissioners. It will now be up to council to determine by by-law the form, the structure and the procedure of its senior administrative management group.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, coupled with expanding the degree of autonomy which council has, the type of administration organization it establishes, Bill 61 also amends the present legislation to clarify that the city's senior administration body takes its direction from, and is accountable to the City's Executive Policy Committee. This fills in with a Bill that is before the committee right now dealing with the powers of the City Executive Policy Committee. I believe they now will be on a different course and they should be allowed to establish their administration roles by by-law.

In the area of suspensions and dismissals, for instance, the current provisions enable the board of commissioners to suspend or dismiss a department head and then report it to council for their ratification. Bill 61 proposes to amend this provision to have the city's senior administrative body advise the Executive Policy Committee on suspensions or dismissals of department heads.

Given that Bill 32 expands, as I mentioned earlier, the policy-making role of the Executive Policy Committee, it is important that this committee be empowered to mobilize and direct the administrative resources necessary for the effective implementation of city policies. Mr. Deputy Speaker, apart from substantive changes which I have just outlined, all other provisions contained under Part 2 of The City of Winnipeg Act remain unchanged. In other words, the

provisions for statutory officers, such as the City Clerk, the city treasurer, the city auditor and a medical health officer will remain intact as will the provisions regarding employee pension and insurance plans. The only changes in these section, under Part 2, are rewording or reorganization in order to clarify, streamline and, where possible, condense the legislation.

Since the Act will no longer mandate a board of commissioners, this Bill also contains a series of other amendments in other parts of the Act where reference is made to commissioners.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, minor amendments to the Act also will be introduced during this Bill. These are minor amendments requested by the City of Winnipeg with consultation. It will be probably coming forward—as long as we have The City of Winnipeg Act, there are new means and new requests by the city.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, apart from the civic reforms to the legislation of city's administrative organization there are also three minor amendments in Bill 61 which have been specifically requested by Winnipeg City Council. The first proposed amendment deals with the building standards and would enable the city's supervisor of Building and Inspections to report any apparent irregularities in building plans or specifications to the Association of Professional Engineers or to the Manitoba Association of Architects. The amendment also contains provisions which protect the city and its staff from any action against them for informing these associations of any apparent violations, and for releasing any plans, specifications, or other related information for investigation by these associations. This is in consultation with the City of Winnipeg and the associations and engineers that are mentioned in this first -(interjection)-

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Can we have some order, please? I am having some difficulty hearing the speaker.

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the second amendment requested by City Council, which is included in this Bill, enables council to prescribe a fee for ambulance service. This provision is similar to existing legislation in the Municipal Act. The third request by the City of Winnipeg, third minor amendment in Bill No. 61, deals with the existing provisions for the city's gas tax that was affected by a ruling of the Public Utilities Board last summer. The amendment proposed is aimed at ensuring that those who purchase gas from non-local sources are still subject to the city's gas tax. This amendment is necessary since the existing legislation did not take into consideration where companies in Winnipeg would one day be able to purchase gas directly from firms in other provinces. The amendment will ensure that all commercial industrial consumers of gas will be taxed equally.

* (1520)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to sum up, I would just like to restate that the civic reforms to the city administrative organization like the amendments introduced in the previous Bill No. 32 in the spring part of the Session are a further step in our Government's legislation

program respecting changes to The City of Winnipeg Act. During upcoming Sessions, I intend to bring forward more civic reforms to other parts of The City of Winnipeg Act. In conclusion, I would recommend Bill No. 61 to the Honourable Members of this Legislature for their consideration and adoption.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): I move, seconded by the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I have some changes to make to the committees I would like to make at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Ernst for Downey.

Also, I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet, that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Driedger for Helwer.

Also, I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet, that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: Connery for Enns.

BILL NO. 62—THE CITY OF WINNIPEG AMENDMENT ACT (3)

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs) presented Bill No. 62, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (3); (Loi no. 3 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg), for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Ducharme: I am pleased to introduce for second reading Bill No. 62 of The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (3). The Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) will probably be delighted that at least the Urban Affairs Minister is starting with some of his planning requests that he was questioning during Estimates. First of all, this is a very short Bill to deal with the additional zones. Then I would be introducing after consultation with the additional people, a further Bill dealing with the total planning in the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendments contained in this Bill are part of this Government's and I have admittedly openly a multiyear legislation plan to implement major reforms to The City of Winnipeg Act. Anyone who was at the meeting last night to hear the delegations, and I think there was something like 21 or 22, would see why this particular City of Winnipeg Act cannot be introduced in totality. I think right now it is multipages, it is close to 400 to 500 pages and I believe that it has to be done through a consultation

process with the City of Winnipeg and with people who are affected in the outlying areas.

The sole purpose of these Bills, of course, is to improve the operation of the City of Winnipeg and I think that the main concern is to make sure that we have permissive legislation with the City of Winnipeg. We elect city councillors to act accordingly and be responsible for their actions and we should not be on the road to have everything descriptive in The City of Winnipeg Act. We should have some type of permissive legislation so they can act upon, but not be there to make sure that we are responsible for the getting the—make sure the pencils are sharpened and everything else they do in their everyday duties.

The sole purpose of the Bill 62 is to abolish the additional zone area. The additional zone is an area of land in municipalities adjacent to the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg over which the city has been delegated planning jurisdiction under the original City of Winnipeg Act.

The zone was established, I believe in 1961, to enable the Metropolitan Government of greater Winnipeg to control all future development of lands in the rural municipalities in West St. Paul, in East St. Paul and portions of the Rural Municipalities of St. Clements, St. Andrews, Springfield, Macdonald, Tache, Ritchot and Rosser.

In 1972, when The City of Winnipeg Act was proclaimed, the City of Winnipeg inherited planning authority over the previously mentioned municipalities, except for St. Clements and St. Andrews, which had been allowed to withdraw from the additional zone in 1967.

The Planning Act in 1976 enabled municipalities in the additional zone to gain land use control if they joined planned planning districts.

In 1980, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the rural municipality of Rosser joined the South Interlake Planning District and then again in 1983 the rural municipalities of Macdonald and Ritchot were allowed to form their own planning districts. Earlier this year we saw West St. Paul. Now they have left the additional zone to join the Selkirk and District Planning District, thereby reducing the additional zone original size by 65 percent. This reduction calls into question the continued usefulness of the additional zone concept.

The City of Winnipeg Act Review Committee consulted extensively on this question and in its report of 1986 recommended the discontinuance of the additional zone. My recent meetings with those areas and the City of Winnipeg and working—I know anyone who worked under this system in the last six or seven years realize that this additional zone system is no longer working. The Government has received representation from the Association of Rural Municipalities, Winnipeg Region, supporting this move of doing away with the additional zone.

For these reasons the Government proposes in this Bill to remove all statutory references to the additional zone from The City of Winnipeg Act. Upon proclamation, final decision-making over land use and development

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

in municipalities formerly in the additional zone would be transferred to the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner). Under The Planning Act zoning approval authority would be delegated to those municipalities for which a development plan, basic planning statement or zoning law have been adopted.

Authority for subdivision approval could be transferred to municipalities which have formed a planning district and adopted a development plan. Until a development plan is adopted, the provincial land use policies, a regulation under The Planning Act will be used to guideline use and development decisions for additional zoned municipalities without an approved plan and to remove any planning statements and development plans they prepare.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the City of Winnipeg has expressed concern over the proposed area over the abolition of the additional zone. In 1988, it requested that the province undertake the preparation and adoption of comprehensive policies and guidelines designed to manage development within the City of Winnipeg's commuter shed.

In response to this request, I have initiated and this Government has initiated the establishment of a regional committee to bring together the City of Winnipeg, surrounding municipalities and various provincial departments to identify and discuss common planning and development issues in the Winnipeg region.

As a first step, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the municipalities have been invited to submit their concerns. These issues will be compiled and will provide a starting point for the Winnipeg Region Committee's discussions which are to begin following the civic fall elections that we have just had.

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

I did meet with the group about two months ago and went through what our plan of action would be, and they are in full agreement with the plan. They are willing to partake in this consultation. The committee will consist of the provincial Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), the Rural Development (Mr. Penner) and Environment (Mr. Cummings) and elected representatives from the City of Winnipeg and rural municipalities in the Winnipeg commuter shed.

Mr. Acting Speaker, to make sure and honour our commitment that the committee's municipal representatives are able to participate freely, the Government felt it is necessary to abolish the additional zone at this time. The City of Winnipeg will no longer make planning decisions on lands that belong to other municipalities. Therefore, come this month, each municipality participating in the Winnipeg Region Committee will be recognized and this is very important, will be recognized as an equal player in developing a long-term strategy for addressing planning and development issues in the Winnipeg region.

To the Acting Chair from St. Vital, in conclusion I would recommend Bill 62 to the Honourable Members of this legislation for their consideration and adoption.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), that debate be adjourned

MOTION presented and carried.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

* (1530)

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon James McCrae (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could ask you to move, rather than to Bill 67 next, I could ask you to call Bill No. 76, The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act and perhaps after the Honourable Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery) has introduced his Bill, depending on the circumstances at that time, perhaps we could return to Bill 67.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? (Agreed)

BILL NO. 76—THE REAL ESTATE BROKERS AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) presented Bill No. 76, The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act (2), Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les courtiers en immeubles, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Connery: I rise to offer a brief explanation on the main principles outlined in this Bill. By way of background I remind Honourable Members that at the present time all registered real estate brokers in Manitoba are required to file with The Registrar of Real Estate Brokers Act surety bonds in amounts ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 depending on the size of the particular broker's operation. The purpose of these bonds is to pay claims made by a broker's client where the broker or an employee misappropriated or stole client's trust money.

Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Securities Commission and the real estate industry have for some time felt that better protection could be afforded to the public by way of a reimbursement fund. To further this goal, this amending Bill will permit the Manitoba Real Estate Association to establish a fund to reimburse clients where a claim is made against a member broker or one of his employees.

While the actual mechanics of the fund's administrative procedure and the claim limits will be set out in the regulations under the Act, the claim limits will be substantially higher than under the present bonding. Final details regarding the parameters of the fund will be determined in consultation with the association which will be administering the fund.

The Manitoba Securities Commission will continue to act as the regulatory and investigative body with regard to any claims against the fund the grounds for

making claims parallel to those applicable to surety bonds. This increased claim limit provides greater protection to the public and at the same time it will result in cost savings to members of the Manitoba Real Estate Association.

The regulations will provide for the fund to be established and maintained by a system of levies on association members. Independent brokers who are not members of the association will continue to be required to file surety bonds as in the past. I would like to add that consideration is being given to offer additional protection to the public by increasing bonding for independent brokers.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend Bill 76, amendments to The Real Estate Brokers Act, to the Honourable Members in the Legislature and look forward to their support.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), that debate on the Bill be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on House Business?

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I wonder, rather than moving to Bill No. 73 at this time, if you could move to Bill No. 31 or 67, return to 67 and 73 at an appropriate time, perhaps after the Honourable Minister of -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: We are going in order. That is what has been listed.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, you could move to Bill 73 at this time, if that would please Your Honour.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, fine.

BILL NO. 73—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (6)

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation) presented Bill No. 73, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (6); Loi no 6 modifiant le Code de la route, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I have copies here of the existing legislation as well as the proposed and explanatory notes that I would like to give to each of the critics which -(interjection)-

An Honourable Member: The former Minister would not do it.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Okay, fine. I -(interjection)- no, I have one, thanks.

Mr. Speaker, I have brief notes here that I would like to put on the record, regarding Bill No. 73, and in the meantime we will have copies given to the critics so that they know the impact of that legislation.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 73, forwarded for legislative approval, provides for the enabling legislation necessary to introduce the Government's new photo driver licence initiative. Reflecting the Government's commitment to a photo driver licence program, the Bill provides the enabling legislation to take drivers' photos and to maintain a driver photo file to ensure a secure and reliably creditable program that is both administratively efficient and convenient to the public.

Among the most salient features of the Bill is the provision for the discretionary authority to exempt certain persons or groups who, for religious reasons, would object to being photographed. Security of the driver photo file is ensured by restricting external access to the file only to law enforcement agencies and the justice system.

Finally, the enabling legislation provides for a swift and reasonable implementation schedule to ensure the entire Manitoba driving population is issued with a photo drivers licence in a convenient and fair manner. It is the intention of the Government that the proposed photo driver licence program to be mandated by this Bill will give the Province of Manitoba the most secure, convenient and technically progressive coded driver licence program in Canada.

* (1540)

Mr. Speaker, those are my introductory remarks on the Bill. If the Members or the critics have any further concerns after they have had a chance to review the impact of this legislation, they can either address it through second reading or committee stage, or can also get in touch with my office and we will have somebody like Mr. Dan Coyle, who is the Registrar, take and deal with some of the concerns, if there are specific concerns about it.

With those remarks, I welcome the debate that will take place on this.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I just have a question for the Minister. Do I need leave for that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Dauphin have leave to ask the Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation a question pertaining to this Bill? The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, are we to assume from these amendments that the Minister will be proceeding with photo licence plates in the next licensing year?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, it is the intention based on the progress that we are making with photo licensing that we would be implementing it as of January 1, 1991. We are in the process of assessing a tender we have received. We have to go through certain stages with this whole thing to do the implementation end of it, and I will make that information available as well in

terms of the programming that we have staged. I will check with the Registrar to see exactly where we are at. The timetabling of it is something that I think I have indicated before has been rather frustrating. I had assumed that we could do that in a much faster time; however, even comparing it with other jurisdictions, there are all kinds of implications in terms of the timing of it. I will make that scheduling available for both critics as well.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, with a supplementary question on this to the Minister, can he also make available to the Legislature the cost of this program and the cost to the individual licensee? Obviously, there is going to be an additional cost in licences for this program and that will be contained in regulations that are made further to this legislation. It is an appropriate question that Members of the Legislature do have access to that information.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate to the Member that we are in the decision-making process right now. I know it is not proper to say that Treasury or Cabinet is dealing with these things, but it is under active consideration at the present time. It is under active consideration. Once the decisions are made I will certainly bring forward that information so that they become aware of exactly what the cost is going to be and how the circumstances will unfold.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on House Business.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, would you now call Bill No. 67.

BILL NO. 67—THE SOCIAL ALLOWANCES AMENDMENT ACT

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services) presented, by leave, Bill No. 67, The Social Allowances Amendment Act, (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale), for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mrs. Oleson: It is a great pleasure today to introduce Bill No. 67, which is an amendment to The Social Allowances Act, and to introduce it for second reading.

Once enacted, this legislation will give newly separated single parent families applying for social assistance direct access to the provincial Social Allowance Program in Manitoba. I urge all Honourable Members of this House to support this legislation which will result in improved economic stability for Manitoba's families.

In March of this year, the Women's Initiative Consulting Committee released its final report concerning the status of women in Manitoba. This report made many recommendations aimed at improving the quality of life for women. One of these recommendations was that all single parent families in financial need be immediately eligible to apply for provincial social allowances benefits without first having to apply for municipal assistance.

Our Government is committed to improving the quality of life for all Manitobans. Therefore, in response to the recommendation of the Women's Initiative, I am pleased to introduce this legislation which I believe will be a further step towards economic stability and security for single parent families in need in Manitoba.

Currently there are approximately 9,700 single parent families assisted by the Social Allowances Program in Manitoba. About 95 percent of these households are headed by women. Under the existing legislation, individuals who become sole support parents through separation or desertion must seek financial assistance if they require it through their local municipality during the first 90 days of single parent status.

It is our intent through this legislation that single parents and their families be spared the inconvenience of this transition process and be immediately enrolled with the provincial Social Allowances Program. This would essentially streamline the social assistance process. Eligible families would consequently enroll directly in the provincial program, thus eliminating the need for them to transfer from one system to another and helping them to focus their concerns and their energies on their emotional needs and those of their children.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, you will understand that at this particular time if someone suddenly finds himself and their family in this position, it is a traumatic experience for them and not a time when they need the extra strain of going from place to place and changing their Social Allowance Program, should they happen to need one. They face many difficulties and many decisions at this time when they are experiencing emotional trauma. If we can help them in any way I think it behooves us to do so. Economic uncertainty and instability can only add to the stress and the worry which already confronts them. Requesting financial assistance should be a process which adds as little concern and confusion as possible to their situation.

My department has already begun preparations for this anticipated policy change. I believe it was in June that I announced this initially, or perhaps earlier than that. In that time my department has been preparing for this and of course that makes it even more important that this Bill be passed. We estimate that a thousand single-parent families will be enrolled directly with the provincial program as a result of this new eligibility rule.

In anticipation we have allocated an additional \$2 million to the Social Allowances Program budget to accommodate the increased caseloads in this fiscal year. It is my intent that this new policy be introduced at the beginning of 1990, only a few short weeks away, Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware. I urge the Honourable

Members of this House to support this very progressive legislation.

* (1550)

Earlier in the year I announced our Government's commitment to improve the lives and well-being of single-parent families in Manitoba through direct access of the Social Allowances Program. Bill 67 is the legislation which must be enacted to implement this commitment. I encourage all Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me and my Honourable colleagues in the support of this important legislative amendment which will enable progressive change in social assistance policy in Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise and talk on Bill 67, The Social Allowances Amendment Act. We are certainly pleased that this came forward, and certainly the Minister can count on our support for speedy passage of the Bill through so it can be implemented immediately. On the other hand, we are extremely disappointed to see such a badly flawed Act, an out of date Act, be treated with such a band-aid approach to the subject of social allowances for the citizens of Manitoba.

There are many other sections of this Act that have lied dormant for years and years and years, some in excess of 20 years. It seems that in the 18 months that this Government has been in office this is the best that they can do. We welcome this, naturally, but it is only a very small section of what has to be done to bring some inequity and social justice in this province.

Previously we talked about social conscience. Unfortunately it is something that we have not seen from either the previous administration or in the 18 months so far from this Tory administration. Every day we get calls, calls which should not be coming to the Opposition, telephone calls that should be handled by the Government. There are matters of interpretation of the Acts, interpretations of the regulations and rules. It seems that in far too many cases the rules are, where there is a discretionary power and a ruling to be made, that seems to go against the recipient or applicant for funds.

Quite frankly we enjoy, well, I guess enjoy is not the right word, but we certainly appreciate these calls. We appreciate the opportunity to help the citizens of Manitoba.- (interjection)- I think I even enjoy them sometimes, yes, I often do. I was going to bring that in later on, because what we do enjoy—the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) brings it up that maybe I enjoy, yes, I guess that might be right, we do enjoy seeing the satisfaction of people who have been trod on by this Government and their regulations, that when we are able to resolve their problems, the looks on the faces, and we see their letters of appreciation and their phone calls and their support, that we at least are caring for them and looking after their interests.- (interjection)-

The Minister chirps, but she well knows that she put little thought on reconstructing The Social Allowances Act. She should be ashamed of that rather than chirping and smiling at a very serious subject.

I suggested earlier that this Minister should spend more time with those people that are disadvantaged in our society, not just use rhetoric to describe what she hears from her staff, but get out there and really see what is happening. I do not know, the phone calls come directly through to me, Mr. Speaker, and I do not know whether any of them get directly through to the Minister. I know that on occasion I send memos over and details and certainly the resolve of those problems does not come very quickly. I will illustrate one very shortly.

In the meantime there was a period when we were swamped with calls from people. I think that by us being able to go through these issues case by case in a varying degree that we are able, and I say this humbly, to bring some of the senior staff into line as to how they should be treating people and how they should be interpreting some of the regulations.

Then the Government had a really good idea that they brought in some sort of a special assistant to the Minister. This was supposed to look into the inequities in the system and see that people were treated better. I imagine that is why they paid that money to put that person into the job.

I will tell you what the results have been. The results have been that we have gone back to where we were before. In fact we detect perhaps, and I hope I am wrong, but we detect that indeed the staff, some of the senior staff at least, have taken the attitude that we in the Opposition, when we try to resolve a problem for welfare recipients or otherwise, are interfering and that we should not be able to do that.

Indeed we hear platitudes almost whenever we have contact with the staff and particularly this new person, this special assistant I think they call him, that, oh yes, we will be resolving that problem tomorrow, or we will be resolving it next week, I have a letter in the mail to you, and we will be addressing that, and our staff is on it, and all sorts of excuses. We keep waiting for these letters. We keep waiting for these phone calls. Meanwhile our files go higher and higher and higher and people make more and more phone calls because you know you say, well the Minister's office said that we will have a resolve on that problem very shortly. We used to at least take them at their word but unfortunately we cannot do that anymore.

We are back to the old grind of answering the phones, making phone calls to the department, investigating the complaints. The Minister and the Government might indeed say, well because I think this is their attitude, a lot of these people on social allowances are really just a nuisance, they are just a necessary sort of thing out there that we have to handle and we have to have a department. Every one of those families and every one of those people have their own story. They all deserve the respect of certainly the Minister and indeed all Members of this Legislature.

The law of Canada under the Canada Assistance Act says that they are entitled to the basic necessities. That is the entitlement of all Canadians no matter how they lost their money, or how they are broke, or what their disability is. Therefore this is not charity, this is a right of every Canadian when they are disadvantaged.

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

I think that if the Minister was listening she could impart that perhaps on some occasions to her staff, that they do not have a stick over these people's heads and indeed they should treat them with dignity. I am not saying, Mr. Speaker, that all the staff and all the senior staff treat these people with less than dignity, but I am saying the proportion that do treat these people with little respect is far too high. Indeed if there is one case of such, it is too many in this province, especially a province where we like to think that we have a social conscience.

Mr. Speaker, I want to back that up by a specific case of what I think is an uncaring Government, an uncaring Government that does not have a bureaucracy that is in tune with the needs of people, disadvantaged people, whatever reason for their disadvantage, in Manitoba in the 1980s.

I cite a case of a young child, four years old, goes with mother to the laundromat, and gets her fingers caught in one of the machines, and loses all the tips of her fingers—four years old. They go to court, and the court recognizes that this will be an impairment for the child when the child reaches the age of majority. Probably their decision was that it will not be all that bad while the child is growing up and going through school, but at some time later on that this child indeed might need some prosthesis or some other assistance in either training or indeed of earning a living.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

The courts award the child \$13,000, of which \$3,000 went to legal fees, so there was a net of \$10,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be used when the child is the age of majority. Subsequently the money is invested in a trust, unable to be touched until the child reaches 18.

This seems to work for a while, you know, and I very seldom like to give credit to the NDP administration, but during their administration everything seemed to be set in that manner. The money cannot be touched, the funds are not available for the child's upkeep, which is somewhere in the nature of \$245 a month plus medical, plus health care and other benefits. All of a sudden we have a Tory Government come into power, and somehow they discover that this money is in trust for this child. So what do they do? They just go down and cut off all payments to the child and say, that is enough. You are not getting any more because you have this \$10,000 in trust.

* (1600)

The courts have said that the money is frozen till 18. It is not even available, not even the interest for the money is available to the child till 18. The Government says, you know, enough is enough, and that is the end of it. They need money so badly to build up their \$200 million fund, I guess, that that is one way of going about it.

An Honourable Member: Even you know better than that.

Mr. Rose: Well, I think I do, yes, but I do feel badly in these cases. I want to put my feelings forth on that, because I really do care for these people.

So we investigate this, and we think that this is unfair. It goes to social allowance's appeal committee and even there it is delayed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the point where it goes past the point where the final appeal of funds is cut off. So right now the child has no funds from social allowances, and the mother I guess has to scrimp and save on what she has left.

In regard to that, even when I intervened directly in the department, nobody seemed to care. We send a letter over and five or six days later we get a reply back from the Minister's department, not saying that they are looking into it, not saying that there is a solution, not saying that there is some way we can help these people or give them any hope, but merely saying that the letter has been received in the Minister's office. Very Good. This is a week later. It has been received in the office and it will be brought to the Minister's attention. It does not say what time, what day, what week, what month, but it will eventually be brought to her attention and she will look into the matter. In the meantime, the child is suffering without any income from social allowances, which the Canada Assistance Plan says that that child is entitled to.

Of course, we realize that this is not the first time. Certainly we have recorded many, many cases of this callous disregard for the regulations of the Canada Assistance Plan. Just earlier in the year, we saw the federal court of Canada rule on the Jim Findlay case, where this Government was making deductions. In other words they say, for the minimum necessities in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you need this number of dollars for basic needs, and you need this much for housing. Then the Government turns around when they are saying that is the minimum that that person needs to live even minimum in this city or in this province, they go and make deductions for it.

After 13 years there is a ruling in the federal court of Canada that says that is against the rules, and if the province of Manitoba continues it, they will be cut off federal funds forthwith—sixty days I think it was, thirty days as a matter of fact. So the Government looks at it and looks at it. The decision was so simple for the Government.—(interjection)— Well, the Minister says spend more money.

Well let us talk about spending more money. Let us talk about the \$200 million fund that you think that I should know better about. Let us look at the fact that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) takes pleasure often in looking across and seeing what Liberal Governments across Canada do.

I wish that those Ministers, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), I wish he would take a drive through the North end of Winnipeg where most of this need is, and then go over to Tuxedo and the other areas, and see the discrepancy between the livelihood and the way that those people are living. Then he will not be saying spend, spend, spend, because spending money on those people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, spending money on those people is not a cost.

If you looked at it properly and you had a social conscience you would say it is an investment. This

Minister, she is content to have 60 percent of the young people in the inner city of Winnipeg go to school hungry every morning. She is content to do that, and she thinks that that is a good way of spending educational dollars, to have children go to school so that they cannot concentrate and study on an empty stomach. She says that is spend, spend, spend.

She thinks, and certainly the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) thinks the same way, that spending money on programs that are preventive are costs. No, they are investments. I believe, and most people in North America believe, and I think in the world believe, that if you put people in decent circumstances, decent home, decent schooling, some food in their stomachs, that you will reduce crime, you will reduce vandalism, you will reduce truancy in the school, and the whole social fabric of the north end will be improved. That is one of the reasons why we have the Core Area Initiative, to increase training and social programs and facilities for people, so that they can gain some dignity.

It is also interesting to see that this Government's attitude and the Tory Government's attitude towards even the Core Area Initiative. They would rather build—what did somebody say?—monuments to themselves for the future, in The Forks or on North Portage rather than spending it in the north end. Or indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they would rather put it in a fund of \$200 million, and then what will they do with that \$200 million? They will go and do some inducements not directly to the people who are in need, but to all the rest of the people who vote, and say, hey we need another term here, and dole it out as election promises. Well, the fact of the matter is, I do not even think they will do that because we know of many of the election promises that they made just 19 months ago that have been broken.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to get back to the comment of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) about spend, spend, spend. I would also like to respond to the comments that I heard, if I heard properly from the people who also did not do anything for 16 years, and the NDP saying, I think they said something about, and it just shows you how ill-informed they are. I apologize if I did not get the remark properly—(interjection)—Yes, that is what I heard, he sounds like a socialist. Well I sound like a socialist. Mr. Deputy Speaker, did you hear that? I am sounding like a socialist. Well that is what I always thought. These socialists do not even know what a socialist is. You can see by their programs. Have you every seen a socialist once there was a little bit of money around, how they grabed it and went after it and increased salaries and went to all the free benefits? That is socialism. Oh, yes. They do not understand what socialism is. The inference is that I was and you know well what the inference was.

The Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) would probably call Conrad Black sounding like a socialist. The reason I say that—I have got a lot to say here, so I want to get on with this rather than this heckling. I am just barely through my file here, but I was going to say that earlier in the year, it was Conrad Black, one of the leading, if not the leading industrialists in Canada, one of the wealthiest people indeed in Canada,

who suggested in Ontario that the social welfare system had to be revamped.

The figure that he pointed out at that time is, he figured that to get rid of the social injustices and bring it just up into a minimum, that they would have to spend—I would like the Minister to hear this—\$450 million more in Ontario alone on social programs. The NDP would like to refer to him as a socialist I guess, because he advocates some social justice in this country and has a social conscience, because that is what Liberals are. They are free enterprise with a social conscience. I guess that is why I am on this side of the House, because I recognize that—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

* (1610)

Mr. Rose: Anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what did happen—maybe a push prompted as a result of Conrad Black's announcement—some weeks later, the Liberal Government of Ontario announced a \$450 million increase in funding for social programs. I think even the Minister could equate that to the population of Manitoba, and how much we are behind, because we were behind before.—(interjection)—Well, do we have to have them come here to get some action? Is that what you are suggesting? If so maybe they will. Right. I think that is what they have to do. They have to have more marches on the Legislature. So we cannot say that the Liberal Government, certainly of Ontario, does not have a social conscience in that regard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just recently, just to show you the heartlessness of the Minister and her department, I got a call from a lady desperately crying that she had to have some blinds on her apartment. She has a son that has a very bad heart condition, and she was told that blinds were not a necessity. They were sort of a real luxury. I would like to know if any of even the real socialists to my left think that blinds on a home, on a children's bedroom, who has a heart condition, are a luxury. They said, hey, we will be heroes to you, we will let you spend \$110 or something on these blinds. So the lady went ahead and bought the blinds.

Then a little while later her insurance bill came up. Now that is not a basic necessity of life, to insure your property. That would have to be ridiculous, according to the Government. So she came to them for \$113, and they said, oh, no, no. You cannot have that. You go without any insurance.

So here is a lady with a young child with a heart condition. She has her blinds. She is very thankful for that, and she has lots of money left in her excess special needs. The Minister will say, well, that will not buy insurance for furniture, but by a stroke of the pen she knows that she can make it and can allow it to buy insurance for household effects. So now we have a family living in fear for a lousy \$113, that if something happens to their furniture, either stolen or burnt, they do not have anything then. It can happen. One of my constituents the other day, their place got struck by

lightning and dissolved a lot of their stuff in the apartment, so even things like that can happen. That is why people have insurance.

It seems to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in this case the Government could have done quite a few things. I suggested they do this and none of it happened, is that they could make some allowance in the regulations to let people borrow a couple or \$300 or \$400, they could have advanced the money until she gets money back from income tax in December, or they could have, indeed, there was a fund there, some \$349.99 for excess special needs. But, no, they would rather have it without insurance.

If there were a fire and she lost all the furniture, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder what would happen. Here she is, a lady with a child with a heart condition living in a home without any furniture. Well, she would say, furniture and fridges and stoves, they are a basic necessity of life so she would go down to the welfare department—and I hope that they would, the rules say that they should—they would have to buy it all new for her, so the Government really is not insuring her personal property, they are insuring their own because they have a stake in it. They are not far-sighted enough to see that, we have to point it out to them.

So what do we do, we have to arrange for a charitable organization to donate them \$20 or \$30, so at least she can carry her insurance until she gets her insurance rebate from the child subsidy on her income tax in December.

So these are the sort of things that this Government can sit down and think that they are content and doing a good job for the people of Winnipeg, but they are not.- (interjection)-

Mr. Rose: Management, and respect, too, no respect for the people. Mr. Deputy Speaker, could you tell me how much time I have left?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. Rose: Oh, that is plenty. A fellow phones up a couple of days ago, he says he is paying \$392 rent on his apartment. The fellow is in a wheelchair, but he has notice that the apartment rent—I can document for the Minister, in fact, some of them I have sent the files over to her, she knows that I am talking factually, no exaggeration—he gets notice it is going up to \$406.00. No, it is a regular rent increase, but the Government says, hey, no, no, her department said we cannot do that. In fact we are not even going to pay the \$392 anymore, you have all this audacity to ask for this extra money. So they said, you go out and find a furnished residence—the Minister should hear this—he said find a furnished residence for \$255.00.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

An Honourable Member: Do not worry, I am listening, I am hanging on every word.

Mr. Rose: Well, do not hang on every word because if you do not hang longer than that you will not be

there very long, that is the problem. So the fellow goes out and, could you imagine what you could find, furnished, with services in the City of Winnipeg for \$255.00? Never mind the Minister, I wonder if there is one of her employees who would try to live on that kind of a housing allowance—services, furnished. So the fellow goes out, the best one he could find is \$380 that he could live in. He has a wheelchair and he has to have some reasonable access with the wheelchair. Of course, that is something that even the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) does not care too much about because those people are a nuisance, I guess, to him. But do you think that they would say, no, we are saving \$12 and agree with that? No, they said, we are not going to go for \$380 but we will increase your \$255 to about \$280.00. It was only when I directly appealed to the department, directly intervened myself then, that all of a sudden in about five, ten minutes, the \$406 was acceptable. Why would somebody in the Opposition, an MLA in the Opposition, have to intervene in a simple case like that when we have high priced and, hopefully, qualified people who are supposed to know the rules and can help on something like that?

* (1620)

As I say, I repeat, not that I begrudge helping these people because one way is you learn the departments very quickly and you learn about Government and understand its workings or non-workings.

Mr. Speaker, I have a very interesting document here. I alluded earlier to the federal court ruling where they said you could not make these deductions, so the Government may have waited until the last moment, and I guess they were able to convince the federal Government to appeal the case to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Look at the waste of money. There was no conscience in it at all. It was a logical move to say we are going to stop making deductions. There are other means. If somebody defrauds the Government it is a criminal charge. They have never done that.- (interjection)-

Well, the Minister says, are you going to drag people into court? Then if there is a murder, she would say, oh, that is all right, do not charge that person with murder, you will have to drag him through the courts. That is why the laws are there for them to be adhered to and that is one of the problems with society today.

We have Ministers and other people who do not insist that people live the law because you know, Mr. Speaker, this Minister knows that the amount of welfare fraud in this province is very, very, very low. That would indicate almost that they were too stringent on the people but let us not put that on the record. We will put on the record that all the audits show that the fraud is low. So really as when they are fraudulent, there will not be too many cases that have to go to court. If they are fraudulent, whether they are on welfare or otherwise, they have to pay the price and if the law says that is fraud, then they should be prosecuted rather than you making the deductions from their cheques so they can go ahead and do it another time.

In this particular case, I can understand where somebody has a rent allowance of, say, \$250 and the

Government says this is \$250 and they go and they look all over the city. I have gone out looking for some people in the west end of Winnipeg and the north end for facilities. I do not know whether the Minister has ever done that so she can see first-hand what is available for \$250, \$300, \$350, \$400, and they should do it on a regular basis because it changes from month to month and from year to year.

I can understand where they say to a person, either a man or woman, that you know you are going to pay \$300 in there, but all we can pay is \$250 so what the person says is, well, maybe I can scrimp a little bit on the food or scrounge a little bit here and maybe break the rules a little bit there because I am sure that the Government does, by their stringency, they force people to become dishonest, that is the problem.

I can understand that and then that person says, well, my child, or two children and myself will cut back on our food allowance because it is important that we have a home with a little bit of dignity, not one that is infested with cockroaches and what have you. They make that decision hoping that there will be better times ahead and maybe hoping that they can help to swell the soup kitchens and the bread lines by sending their children there to get a meal. - (interjection)- You would know if you ever went into the north end. The same thing exists in my constituency but I referred to the north end. - (interjection)- The Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) would know that the bread lines are growing every day in Winnipeg and it is because of inadequate food allowances by that Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand where they say that, but I cannot understand this document where the Government—right off the cheque—in defiance of the federal court of Canada, in defiance of anything that anybody would have with a social conscience, makes the deduction right off the cheque, in other words, right off the payment cheque.

In other words, what is happening here is the Government is paying the rent, Social Services paying the rent, and they overpay what the full rent is and the over allowance of \$40 is taken off the basic needs allowance which is only \$221.70 which reduces it by \$40—\$181.70. So they are saying to these people, we have given you this money, now we are grabbing it back. The only way you can make it up is wear your clothes out, which is not very much allowance to do that. The main thing is, is to cut back on that food that you are buying, it is really not necessary. If it is in the case of children, they go to school hungry. They cannot concentrate, we waste educational dollars, they find that they have to steal to ease their hunger pangs, it leads to crime, you have to hire more policemen, build more jails, more counsellors and all the ensuing problems with society.

So this Government will not take the move and obviously is not moving in the direction of the Ontario Government and recognizing that there really is a problem. It is more than just people being hungry and people living in unsafe and unhealthy conditions in homes, but it is adding to the crime rate and the amount of illiteracy in this country. We can pour all the money in the world into those programs, but if we do not pour

them in at the base so that people can live in decency and have a decent meal on the table, then it is going to come for naught.

I noticed in going over the legislation that we allow a person \$50 a month of earnings. Let me stop and say that we heard earlier that the Minister did make one move and that is that she allowed children who are dependent children on welfare—and I congratulate her for that, it is another little move she made, a little twitch, but it is worthwhile and we appreciate that and it is just common sense. I think at the time, you will recall, I was way more critical of the socialists who should have corrected that and incidentally, getting back to the Bill, they should have corrected that months ago too. Years ago a person, mostly single mothers, had to wait 90 days to get any payment. What do they do in the meantime, in the 90 days?

An Honourable Member: They got welfare from the municipalities.

Mr. Rose: You know the ensuing rigamarole that they go through to do that. In other words, they have to go through the process twice.

An Honourable Member: That is right.

Mr. Rose: Well, the Minister seems to be arguing now that she should not have changed the Bill. That is okay as things were before, is that what you are trying to say?

An Honourable Member: You do not know anything about the Bill, that is what I am arguing about.

Mr. Rose: I know everything about it and I would suggest that if you got down and learned something about it you would know, because if there was not a flaw in the legislation you would not be putting this amendment through to correct it.

An Honourable Member: We are putting it through, you are debating it, carry on.

Mr. Rose: I try to give the Minister a compliment on the children's—that when they go out and deliver papers in 35 below, 40 below or go babysitting at night and stay out late, and do odd jobs that this Government, the previous administration and indeed, Mr. Speaker, this administration was gouging, clawing that money back from them, every nickel of it except \$50.00. So what incentive was there for young children to learn because these odd jobs, paper routes and that, they teach these children something about business and the responsibility of money, but this Government for 18 months allowed that disincentive to be allowed. Having done that, I say that the NDP allowed it for many, many years.

So I congratulate the Government, at least they did make that move, but we get back to the \$50 earnings, again the same sort of a thing. A person goes out and tries to better their standard of living and earn some money, and the Government at the present time social welfare claws back everything but \$50.00. They leave

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

them \$50.00. Now, we could all plainly see how that would lead to abuse of the system and this is something that we would look to the Government to address and revise that has not been revised for over 20 years. We would like to see the Government, as far as social welfare people increase, and this was one of the main objectives of the Core Area Initiative which has been overlooked now, the training of people on social allowances.

Certainly housing, their survey should be made of housing particularly in the City of Winnipeg and see what the values are. They should do like has been done in Ontario and that is that people are paid the dollar amount of the house or the apartment that they are living in, that they do not have to dig into their food money to make that up.

Special needs is the same thing. It has been years and years and years since the special needs has been revised, and this is something that we would look for the Government to bring some equity in the system.

As far as excess special needs, that is a program that the Government, particularly people new to welfare, keeps as a secret that it is only under most duress that people get access to that money. I think that everybody should be well aware that the money is available, and the workers should be able to tell the people that if there is an urgent need or a special need that those funds be given readily too.

In that regard when the Government would bring in amendments to the legislation, I think that it would be wise for them to extend the boundaries or the criteria for special needs so that more situations could be covered for it. I think that the Government should be not only providing more money in that area, Mr. Speaker, but they should be expanding considerably the criteria for such a thing.

* (1630)

I think that we will leave the rest of the notes for a later time. I see the Minister has already absorbed enough for one day and I thank you.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I move, seconded by the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Mr. Jerrie Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I have a committee change. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that composition of Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Uruski for Plozman. (Agreed)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I have a committee change, also. I move, seconded by the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko), that Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) for

St. Vital, the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) for Transcona; and the second committee change that composition of Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Transcona for St. Vital, Inkster for St. Norbert. (Agreed)

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 31—THE LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), Bill No. 31, The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Johns? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Concordia.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): It is indeed a pleasure to rise on the Bill today to deal with the repeal of certain rights and measures in The Labour Relations Act, a rolling back of workers' rights, workers and their families' rights in this province, by the Conservative Government of the Day.

I think it is important to note that The Labour Relations Act is a dynamic piece of legislation and, as a dynamic piece of legislation, we have always believed that changes and innovations in The Labour Relations Act must reflect the changes in our economy and changes in our society. We always proceeded to innovate and change The Labour Relations Act to deal with the changing economic conditions so that working people and their families could deal in the early change of the century with the changing realities of going from primarily an agricultural economy to a manufacturing and industrial economy.

Mr. Speaker, as the economy of our country and the economy of our province change from a manufacturing economy and an industrial economy to an information economy, we too want to be on the leading edge, not on the reverse and repeal edge of The Labour Relations Act, but we believe in being on the leading edge.

A change and innovation in our economy means change and innovation in terms of our Labour Relations Act as it reflects and affects the rights of working people in this province. Changes to The Labour Relations Act are always fought by the employers and their political puppets in this Chamber. It is fought -(interjection)- Well, I will look both ways when I talk about this, Mr. Speaker. When the mine rules and laws were changed, employers disagreed with it and fought them. When child labour laws were changed, employers and their political Parties fought those provisions. When changes were made through the 20th Century in terms of our industrial society, employers and their political cousins also fought against those changes.

Mr. Speaker, we again are proud to be on the leading edge of change to deal with changes in society, not siding with the employers and the Chambers of Commerce to repeal and take away rights from working

people and their families to deal with the challenges of our changing economy.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) outlined some time ago in the first debate on this Bill, and believe me this will not be the last debate but the first debate on this Bill, he quoted John Kennedy. I think it is worth noticing and noting again today when he talks about collective bargaining and negotiations, John Kennedy once said, let us begin anew remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, that sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate.

Mr. Speaker, as a person who has probably negotiated more collective agreements, and I am not that old than anybody in this Chamber but maybe even in the province, over the years I was involved in labour relations, I came to this Chamber in terms of negotiations with some experience. I was even brought into negotiate contracts nationally when we had to deal with certain situations over the years.

I always prided myself that civility, whether it was dealing with political Parties or whether it was dealing in the private sector, whether it was dealing from management or whether it was dealing from a union perspective, civility and sincerity and flexibility and innovation were the keys to collective bargaining. I believe that the best kind of collective agreement that can be achieved is one that is always achieved between the two Parties.

Mr. Speaker, I also recognize the reality that collective bargaining is not a high school debate. It is an exercise in power whether we like to admit it or not. Sometimes there are groups in our society, particularly as our economy changes, whose position of strength is affected by the changes in our economy and changes in our society.

If one is not to reflect that with innovation in our labour relations laws, if one is not to move forward, indeed one truly shows whose side they stand on in terms of working people and their family. I suggest this is the litmus test of which side people stand on when it comes down to labour relations in this province. Do we stand on the side of the Chamber of Commerce who has always fought against changes to the Labour Relations Act, or do we side with working people and their families who need in our changing environment as much protection and legislative rules to help them reach a collective agreement as possible?

Mr. Speaker, the Tories are predictable in this area. What you see is what you get. They make no bones about it. They always take a position that is consistent with the captains of industry whether it is federally with free trade or federally with GST or federally with UIC changes and the rollbacks and changes, or changes in pensions and the clawback in pensions, or changing the Canadian Labour Health Facility, the Tories are very transparent. They stand with the captains of industry, and they make no excuse about it.

In Manitoba it is the same situation. Unemployed Help Centre, first program to go. Rising employment,

a cost-effective program, what do the Conservatives cut first? The two unemployed help centres. Even their own MLAs and their own Members of Parliament are involved in getting cases settled at the Unemployed Help Centre and then that is the first program the Conservatives cut costing the province money and working people and their families money.

They rolled back the cancer-causing regulations at the workplace and in the environment, not because that was the independent advice they received from Health and Safety experts, not because it was the independent advice they received from a Health Advisory Task Force, not because it was the independent advice they received from a Chair who is the former executive assistant to Duff Roblin, but because the two captains of industry said, oh, roll it back it is a little difficult to enforce these cancer-causing goods.

* (1640)

Mr. Speaker, they of course changed those regulations and increased the risk of cancer at the workplace and in the environment. Only after we raised it for week after week after week did we get the Government to commit itself to reviewing those regulations again.

The Labour Relations Act is another example where the captains of industry have whistled and the Tories have jumped in terms of making changes, changes we have suggested do not make sense.

Workers Compensation, another example where the Conservatives have agreed with the captains of industry and are making a situation where we have walking wounded at the workplace because employers do not want people to put in claims because they do not want their rates to go up.

What is even more shameful, Mr. Speaker, is whether it is Workers Compensation or now The Labour Relations Act, the captains of industry can depend on two political Parties in this Chamber because they can depend on the tried and true Conservatives, which we would expect them to be able to depend on, but now we have the Liberals siding with those very same people with the corporate elite of this province and going against working people and their families, both with the Workers Compensation provisions and with the repeal and rollback of The Labour Relations Act.

If the Liberals think they can just skate through this issue and think they can get away with it without a big fight, they are sadly mistaken. I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that in every working class district that they represent, we will make sure that every working person and their family knows that they cannot rely on the Liberals to represent working people because they will side with the captains of industry when it comes down to a major crunch. I make that pledge in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, do not ever kid yourself. Do not ever kid yourself of how important this is when you start repealing The Labour Relations Act, the fundamental piece of legislation that protects unions, working people and their families. Do not ever think that you can skate through this issue. You may be able to do it in the short

run, believe me. In the days of disco journalism and 10 second clips, yes, you will be able to skate around it, but we plan on a prolonged war on this issue. We do not plan to let anybody, not one single Member, off the hook when they have a chance to vote at the various stages of this Bill, I assure you.

Let me look at the words from the Liberal Labour Critic (Mr. Edwards). He had the audacity, Mr. Speaker, to stand up in this Chamber and say, we have studied the effects of this law and that is why we are siding with the captains of industry and going along with this Bill. Then I read a speech after that, it looked like a Dorothy Dobbie speech. There was not one shred, not one study, not one bit of evidence to support his position and I am surprised because I expected more. I expected him to go along with his Leader, one of the twins from Tuxedo, in terms of the captains of industry, but I expected him to come up with more than a Dorothy Dobbie speech in terms of the presentation he would make. He is an intelligent person and an articulate person—(interjection)—Well, I do not want to comment. Not one shred of evidence was produced in his short speech.

Let me produce the bit of evidence. There has been an independent study done on behalf of economics professors at the University of Winnipeg. Let me talk about the first year of final offer selection because there has been some research done, and it is not just propaganda from a political Party, it is research. They point out that there has been 42 applications in 1988 and 10 were negotiated settlements reached prior to the vote being conducted by the Labour Board. They further point out that in 24 out of 29 instances in which the membership opted to use FOS, negotiated settlements were subsequently reached prior to the selector rendering a decision. In five cases therefore, the complete FOS procedure was utilized.

Mr. Speaker, what happened in those five cases? We have the current research, but I was just commenting on the Liberal Critic's inadequate speech and inadequate research. In terms of the research, Mr. Speaker, three out of the five cases went to the union presentation and two out of the five went to the employer. More importantly, what are the overall conclusions from the research that was conducted the first year of the final offer selection?

First of all, FOS proved to be flexible in permitting ongoing negotiations. Most of the applications were made during the first window and would appear to have been undertaken as an additional option in the event of a breakdown in negotiations. Moreover, several agreements were concluded prior to a vote being conducted or prior to the selector's final decisions.

Secondly, FOS has acted as a safety valve for small bargaining units, most of which have women, by the way, in them in the changing information and service economy. It would appear to be a safety valve for small bargaining units wishing to avoid a long strike. What is wrong with that, Mr. Speaker? Why are the Liberals against small bargaining units? Why are the Liberals against women that mostly constitute large bargaining units in the province? If you do not think the women's movement is not going to take a the stand on this as

they go along in this issue you have another thing coming, because they are very concerned about this legislation.

Thirdly, the FOS has been used to settle a number of disputes that would have, in former times, been resolved potentially through a strike.

That is just the first set of research we have in terms of the final offer selection. We have more current data that is more consistent with the fact that FOS does indeed settle disputes and has negotiated contracts usually between the parties. Most of the settlements, as I say, are achieved without having a selector and only five in '88, and where was the turmoil on the streets? Where was the crisis? Where were the problems?

The fact of the matter is, in a changing economy you have to have changing ideas, and the Liberals want to roll back the clock and go to an industrial society. I read the speech from the Liberal Critic on the strong unions, so to speak, in terms of the third party process. Society and the information economy and the service economy—with many, many of the people in the service economy being women and lower-paid workers—is not the same kind of society as the industrial society that we have had over the last 60 years. The Liberals do not seem to realize that or they are neglecting that in their will to follow through with the Tories in going with the captains of industry in terms of these changes.

The Liberals also mentioned in the Bill that they do not like third parties to settle disputes. Well, Mr. Speaker, you are a third party, you settle disputes. Judges are third parties. Arbitration cases—

An Honourable Member: You are the third Party

Mr. Doer: Well, the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) mentions—one should be very careful not to be too arrogant, because what goes up comes down, especially by those who rise by a single suspender, as they say.

Arbitration is a third party dispute. If the Liberals do not like a third party mechanism are they throwing out arbitration next? They are going to get rid of arbitration as a way of settling disputes. Even Mackenzie King supported arbitration. I do not know how far back the Liberals want to roll back the clock, but the Liberal Labour Critic says, oh we do not like a third party process.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals further state that this would cause a considerable problem for the business community and for some of the unions. I do not agree with that. Again, I say that as a person that has negotiated over 300 collective agreements in my time and has some experience in this area in terms of collective bargaining; collective bargaining which I suggest is not a high school debate as I have suggested before.

The Member in his speech talked about the building trades union in terms of their presentation in the Legislature. He fails, in his illustration of the building trades, to point out the first time FOS was used in the province of Manitoba it was used by workers under

the building trades, and it was used by a group of employees I believe in the rural municipality of Springfield. So I am surprised that the Liberals did not caucus that issue in terms of its effect.

* (1650)

The first time it was used was by the power engineers, and they have since reversed their position on final offer selection. They have since passed resolutions at their convention to say that they support final offer selection. Again, the Liberal Labour Critic is totally out of touch with what is going on in terms of labour-management relations in this province. He takes a rather technocratic view to labour-management relations. Mr. Speaker, labour-management negotiations are flesh and blood issues. They are not little technocratic legal Philadelphia lawyer issues, they are real people that have to put their livelihood on the line to achieve a collective agreement.

The Member mentioned a number of other unions—oh, I should mention that the first time it was used in the community of Springfield it prevented a strike. The municipality administrator said it was very good. They have never used it before, it worked very, very well. The union said it worked very, very well, and the union reversed its position on final offer selection because it worked. It saved a strike in the municipality, it saved a loss of wages for the workers, it saved the township the difficulty of having to reduce services, and it worked out very well.

In the summer of 1988 it was again used. In very, very hot summery days this proposal was used by the brewery workers. We had a situation here where the employer was going to lock out every brewery worker in the province in the middle of a drought. Now I do not mind going without a lot of things, but I want to know how many Members in this Chamber would like our economy to be slowed down in such a way that we lose our beer in the middle of a drought, in the middle of a summer. We would lose—

An Honourable Member: That would never happen.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) said it would never happen. Well I would refer the Member for Morris to the business agent, and unlike other provinces, like Tory Alberta which locked them out and had them out for three months, in Manitoba we had a settlement. It was at the cost of living; it was one the union liked; it was one the breweries liked. The consumers of beer were not made dry in the lockout. The province itself did not suffer a major drop in income in the drought summer.

Why did the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), the Labour Critic of the Liberal Party, or the Labour Minister, not give us that case example in terms of the review of the final offer selection and its impact on real collective bargaining?

The Member for St. James, again in his criticism of the Bill, used the excuse that some people at the committee stage were opposed to it from both the business and union sector. Well, again there was another

group that presented a brief at the committee stage, as I recall, in 1987, the Association of Education Support Staff at the University of Manitoba. That initially came out against final offer selection in the presentation of the Bill in theory. Lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, a year and a half later they were in the very tough situation of having to either go on strike or settle for a very low settlement, and they chose to use final offer selection and voted to take final offer selection rather than going on strike.

The Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) should remember that years ago when that group had a situation of trying to go on strike they had to take a 0 percent settlement when the professors got 3 percent and 4 percent because they had final offer selection. AESES, the lower paid secretarial staff at the university did not have final offer selection before this Bill was passed. The university professors did have final offer selection. The university professors that are paid \$60,000-\$70,000 a year got the settlement and got a 3 percent or 4 percent settlement, I believe, that year. The lower paid clerical women service sector of the university got zero.

That did not happen this year, Mr. Speaker. What was different? Well, the lower paid service sector had the option of going to final offer selection again something that was not researched by the Liberals, and I am quite disappointed because who are we representing? Are we representing Dorothy Dobbieok or are we representing those lower paid clerical workers at the university? Are we representing Molson's or are we representing the brewery workers and the legitimate consumers of this province and the producers of barley and other agricultural products?

An Honourable Member: I assume we are representing all people.

Mr. Doer: That is right we should, instead of the corporate pack that are donating money to your Party, and your Party, and jamming this Bill through against working people and their families—(interjection)—

Well, I would not be surprised if you are tired, because we stand on different sides of the fence in this issue—(interjection)— That is right, and that is why The Labour Relations Act should not be repealed, because it is working.

Let us deal with the presentations made at the Chamber of Commerce level, Mr. Speaker. How many owners were out there complaining about the final offer selection? In fact, the first president of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Wright, said it was a great idea, we should try it. If we can reduce the number of strikes in this province, we should try it. Look at his public comments in the early 1980s, he said, this is worth trying, this is worth going ahead with. Innovation is a good idea.

That was reflected in the fact that when we got to the committee very few owners of companies came forward, it was a few management lawyers. They do not own anything. They are hired guns. It was not the owners of companies that came forward. They were

not really upset with this. It was the hired guns that make fortunes on the breakdown on labour-management relations, because lawyers have to be hired, and they bill out at \$300-\$400 an hour. That is who came forward. Look at the record.

So we have a situation where even some of the unions that were initially worried about the Bill—and I understand that. Innovation and change causes uncertainty. Innovation causes uncertainty for people, and I understand why people are concerned about change, they always are, they always will be, and they should be.

The question is: are we going to adapt and change as we move along in our changing economy? Are we going to deal with the large number of people in the service and financial economy, the information society. Are we just going to sit back and do it the same way as we did it when mines were opened in the 1890s, 1895.

So clearly, the research indicates this does not cause chaos in our system. Clearly the research has indicated that the settlements are generally achieved at the bargaining table. Surely the research has indicated this has not gone badly over the last couple of years. It has worked quite well.

The question becomes: why are we afraid to let it go on for five years? Why do we want to rush in and repeat it?

An Honourable Member: What do they fear?

Mr. Doer: What do they fear, or whose tune are they dancing to? That is a bigger question. I believe the captains of industry have two Parties in their hand right now. We can look at the donations for political Parties to see that, and I believe the captains of industry have both the Conservatives and the conservative Liberals in their pocket in terms of that Bill.

Because why would we be afraid to have a five year period which is almost—it is two years now as of January 1. Why are we afraid of three more years of innovation? Why are we afraid of three more years of creativity? Why are we afraid to be on the leading edge? Why are we afraid to try another method besides striking? Why are we afraid not to adapt our changing labour-relations environment for changing times?

Yes, a few union leaders criticized us, and that is to be expected, because it is an innovative new idea, and we believe in an innovative new idea.

What are the people—the other Parties—afraid of? Why are you going to stick your finger in the eye of working people and their families for three more years of innovation? If it does not work after five years then it automatically expires. It is a sunset clause. Why do you have to crawl over working people and their families and vote with the Tories to repeal this Bill when there is absolutely no chaos, crisis, or any other reason to do it? Why do you have to do it? You have not answered that question. I read sort of a Friedmanist speech from the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) on this thing. You know, it really is a speech that might is right and

strong unions do not like this and let the chips fall where they may, kind of a Darwinian approach to labour relations in my opinion that only strike is the best way to solve these things.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker -(interjection)- the Member does not, but if he thinks that thing is going to go through without a major fight, if he thinks that they can speak quickly and have this thing go to committee, if he thinks that the Liberals think that not every working person in Transcona knows that they stand with the Tories, every working person in Inkster stands with the Tories, every person in Burrows stands with the Tories, every working person in every working riding is going to know who is in favour of voting with the Tories to repeal the fundamental Act for labour and working people of the country.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that I can continue my speech at the next opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: I am interrupting the proceedings according to the rules. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have nine minutes remaining.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

ORDERS FOR RETURN, ADDRESSES FOR PAPERS REFERRED FOR DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan)—

THAT an Address for Papers do issue praying for:

- (a) a copy of the Report on Churchill Rocket Range conducted by James Spiece Associates of Winnipeg; and
- (b) copies of all working papers and documents related to the report; and
- (c) copies of any staff analysis of the report to date.

Standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

On the motion for the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock)—

THAT an Address for Papers do issue praying for:

- (a) a copy of the report on the impact of the goods and services tax on the provinces, recently prepared jointly by the provincial Deputy Ministers of Finance; and
- (b) a copy of the study commissioned by the provincial Finance Ministers from the Conference Board of Canada on the regional impacts of the goods and services tax.

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Speaker, with leave, we would like to leave this standing in the Member for Osborne's (Mr. Alcock) name, please.

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

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. NO. 16—CHILD CARE SYSTEM

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for St. Johns, Resolution No. 16, Child Care System, the Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer),

WHEREAS under the former NDP administration, Manitoba had the highest child care standards, the greatest number of child care spaces per capita and the highest public expenditure per capita, in the country; and

WHEREAS Manitoba led the nation in building a fair and equitable child care system by establishing and enforcing standards, incorporating training and salary subsidies for child care workers, providing grants for the creation of non-profit spaces and providing parental subsidies based on need; and

WHEREAS Manitoba taxpayers strongly approved of the policy of providing public funds only for the development of quality non-profit child care; and

WHEREAS the need for child care far exceeds the funds committed under the federal child care program; and

WHEREAS the largest percentage of the funds committed under the federal program is to be spent through this tax system, which benefits wealthy Canadians and gives nothing to most low income families; and

WHEREAS under the federal program, provinces can target money to commercial day cares, which will result in an inefficient use of tax dollars; and

WHEREAS a quality national child care program requires national standards, which are lacking in the current federal program; and

WHEREAS no real maternity and parental leave program that would give parents a choice of staying at home with young children has been included in the federal program; and

WHEREAS it would have been much more fiscally responsible and created more spaces if the federal Government had followed the former Manitoba plan for a national child care program with adequate funding to ensure the delivery of accessible and affordable quality community based and non-profit child care.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the federal Government

to strengthen its national child care program by incorporating the changes outlined within this resolution to ensure the delivery of accessible, affordable, quality, community based and non-profit child care and adequate maternity and parental leave; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly direct the Clerk to forward copies of this resolution to the Prime Minister of Canada and the federal Minister of Health and Welfare.

MOTION presented.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I in the NDP Caucus are very pleased to sponsor this resolution to bring this issue once again before the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, and to try once more to urge all Members in this Chamber to support its intent to take a step forward for Manitoba families to fight on behalf of working families everywhere in Canada. This resolution is in our humble opinion both timely and very urgent as we see events unfold here in Manitoba and, of course, in Ottawa.

We have seen recently the most historic, unprecedented developments here in this Chamber with this House debating on two occasions, on an emergency basis, the situation regarding the child care system in Manitoba, a debate which has forced all Members in this House to try and come to grips with the urgency of this matter to try to raise the priority of family matters to the top of our political agendas. We have made some progress in terms of education of Members within this Chamber, but we have a long way to go.

It is clear, based on the political vacuum in this Government here in Manitoba, in Mulroney's Government in Ottawa and, of course, some vacuum I believe on the part of Members of the Liberal Party here in this Chamber when it comes to the most serious issues of child care, of family policy, of working families and the choices that they must make because there is little evidence from this Government here in Manitoba, from the Government in Ottawa, and from the Liberal Members here in this House, that they recognize the incredible responsibilities that working families are under, that they are able to try to come even to grips with the difficult choices and decisions that parents must make in trying to balance their jobs and be responsible members of the labour force and their parenting responsibilities which are very heavy, onerous, and difficult.

So it is our intention on every occasion to raise these issues to the top of the political agenda to try to convince this Government, the Government in Ottawa, and our Liberal friends here in this Legislature that family issues are of the utmost importance, that we, by their lack of action, by their indifference to these issues are forcing families in this province and in this country into crisis situations. We are facing a crisis with the family of unprecedented proportions in this province and in this country, and it requires a clear, determined effort to put in place a policy that is sensitive to the contemporary family, a policy that reflects the fact that in many, many instances families require two income earners to make ends meet.

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

It requires a policy that is sensitive to the increasing number of single parents in this province and country, primarily headed up by women, and for the most part living in poverty and facing enormous difficulty in trying to become full-fledged members of our labour force and all aspects of our society. It requires a policy on the part of this Government that both recognizes the working families in this province and recognizes the needs of families who choose to spend some time, all their time, full time in the home caring for children. It needs a policy that recognizes the importance of child rearing and care giving as incredibly important occupations, professions, in our life in our society today.

To date, we have seen nothing forthcoming from this Government here in Manitoba, we have seen nothing, despite promise after promise from the Mulroney Government in Ottawa, and we have received an incredibly mixed message from Liberals in this Chamber and outside this Chamber. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is time in this debate for Members of the Liberal Party to clarify their position and tell us whose side they are on. Are they in favour of families in this province, in this country? Are they in favour of supporting the choices of families? Are they heckbent on restricting those choices and siding with the Conservatives in this Chamber, and making life more and more difficult for families everywhere?

* (1710)

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there is a policy vacuum in this province, there is a policy vacuum in the Mulroney Government in Ottawa, there is a lack of commitment on the part of all levels of Government to deal with these issues in a substantive way. There is, even worse, a tendency, a clear indication from the part of this Government, like their counterparts in Ottawa, to drag this province and this country back in time, to try and live again the old romantic notions of the family and ignore the realities of the working family today.

Mr. Speaker, it is our hope, through this debate, to try to get this Government to open its eyes, to put some pressure on its counterparts in Ottawa, to put in place the policies here in this province and in Ottawa that are responsive to families and are sensitive to the difficult choices that parents have to make.

One of the most obvious examples of the lack of a family policy on the part of the Conservative Government has to do when it comes to day care and, Mr. Speaker, we have been dealing with this issue day in and day out for over two months in this Session and going back to the beginning of this Tory Government, some—what?—16 months ago, and we are making little progress.

We are having an enormous amount of difficulty trying to get this Government to understand the realities of the family today and to act accordingly. The day care fiasco is an embarrassment for us in this province right across the country. This province used to be No. 1 not only in Canada and North America for its progressive, sensitive day care program, it was No. 1 in the eyes of politicians, in the eyes of community leaders and in the eyes of families. At the very moment when other

jurisdictions were looking at the model for day care from this province, the present Government, the Conservative Government, the right-wing agenda of that Government, is pulling apart that model and dragging Manitoba back years in time.

Mr. Speaker, we are determined to try to get a stop, to put on hold that backward direction, that backward sliding, the regressive movement on the part of this Conservative Government and help them to put back in place the basics of a sensible progressive reasonable day care policy in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the instability that this Government has created for families, for day care workers, for day care centres, for day care providers everywhere in this province is inexcusable and it is causing chaos and lack of faith and worry on the part of parents everywhere. Nowhere else in this country, except once in the history of this country, have day care workers been forced to take to the streets to send the message to the Government of the Day because they would not listen, would not sit down and talk, would not agree on any kind of long-term plan in terms of the needs of day care workers and the funding situation of day care centres today.

Nowhere, Mr. Speaker, has this happened before in the history of this province, and I think that Conservative Governments should take note of that development and realize that a profession that is determined to be nurturing care givers and to do the best in their professional capacities have been forced by the intransigence of this Government, the negligence of this Government, the insensitivity, the uncaringness of this Government and been forced to go to the streets and make their point.

Mr. Speaker, that situation is intolerable and must be corrected. At the federal level the situation is little different from what we are seeing here in Manitoba. In fact, there is no better example of the Conservatives' ability to break promises than when it comes to the Mulroney Government in Ottawa. The so-called national strategy on child care, where is it, what happened? Promised 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, still not before us. What happened in the 1988 election? After promising it for so many years Brian Mulroney stood up and said, this is a priority, this is an urgent matter for Canadian families. We recognize that it is not just a question of lifestyle or personal fulfillment and, of course, that is something that Members of the Conservative Government here in Manitoba should take note of because it is certainly an attitude that has characterized their work in this area, but he said it is a matter of basic economic necessity. For working mothers, proper child care is an essential investment of economic fairness and equality.

The 1988 election came and went, and that priority lasted exactly as long as it took Brian Mulroney to get back to Sussex Drive, and he cancelled the program.

A new Minister was appointed and before you know it what are we hearing coming out of the mouth of that Minister, Perrin Beatty? This Government is considering backing away from a legislated child care program in Canada, said a meeting of Ministers of provincial social services on September 19.

Our question on this side of the House is: where was our Minister of Family Services? Where was the voice of Manitobans in that meeting? Who stood up for working families when those Ministers gathered together at Meech Lake and talked about dismantling any notion of a national child care strategy? Who stood up for parents, families, and children, in Manitoba and right across Canada?

It would appear that no one stood up. This Government in Ottawa, with the assistance and duplicity of the Conservatives here in Manitoba, is intent on breaking forever its election commitment and not putting in place any notion of a national day care program.

Mr. Speaker, there are some two million children in Canada of parents who either work or study full time or part time. A small percentage of those children are able to get into quality child care spaces. For the most part, children are left in often precarious situations, unlicensed situations, or families are required to borrow on the generosity of families and friends in their communities, because of the inaction of Governments at all levels right across this country.

There is an urgent necessity for steady progress to be made in this country in this progress towards meeting the needs of those thousands and thousands of children who are left without good, quality, licensed care. That must be our top priority.

We do not expect this Government, or the Government in Ottawa, to overnight come up with a million spaces or two million spaces. We do not expect the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) to come up with the 100,000 spaces here in Manitoba that presumably would respond to the entire need in this province. We expect to see this Minister showing some leadership and moving us forward in a steady, progressive way with targets that are set, with goals that are in place, to show the families of this province that there is hope that care will be provided; that this Government is serious about the difficulties that parents and families undergo, in trying to be good responsible members of their communities and our society.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, as I see time slipping away, conclude my remarks by reminding the Minister, this Government, and my Liberal friends, of the essential ingredients of a day care program that will be responsive to the families in this province and in this country.

There is absolutely no question in the minds of Members on this side of the House, and I believe on the part of community activists and progressive-minded people everywhere right across this country, that any national day care program, and provincial system, must respect the principles of increased availability of child care services. I think that has got to be stated over and over again. It must provide parents with the assurance of quality.

There must be an immediate infusion of federal funds and provincial funds to ensure that steady progress is made, in terms of meeting the needs of our children. There must be a guarantee that those funds are directed to non-profit, parent-run, co-op, day care centres and

arrangements in this country. That, Mr. Speaker, is not suggesting that we embark upon a state-run approach, because our approach has always been one of directing funds to our communities to provide a wide variety of child care options.

We must ensure that real choice to Canadian parents is provided by making quality care spaces available everywhere, in all kinds of settings and all kinds of arrangements.

* (1720)

The principles that we stand on have not been respected today by this Government. They certainly are not respected by the Mulroney Government in Ottawa. Parents and working families are crying for that kind of leadership from all levels of Government.

Let me conclude by referring this Minister, this Government, and Members of the Liberal Party to the words of a respected Senator in this country, by the name of Mira Spivak, and I will just conclude very briefly, Mr. Speaker, by saying in her words: it is often said that standards and regulations cannot ensure equality. We agree. It is committed people who breathe life into regulations.

In the case of child care, the commitment is most likely to come from those who have an interest in children, which is independent of their livelihood. Mr. Speaker, that says it all when it comes to a non-profit, quality, affordable, accessible—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member's time has expired. The Honourable Minister of Family Services.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to respond to the resolution put forward by the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis). I just want to put a few thoughts on the record of the work that we have been doing, with regard to child care in this province, and also to remark on the disappointment that we also share with the Member, although we do not share all her thoughts of course on this.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

We do share the disappointment that the federal Government did not come forward with their planned Bill, before the election of '88, and come forward with a plan for child care in Canada. I should remark though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this Member's Party in Ottawa can take part of the blame for that legislation not going through, because they raised such a row and so many complaints about it that obviously they did not like it. Now they are complaining, because the Government did not put it in. So you have to wonder just what is going on here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is certainly no question in my mind of the importance of children and families in our society. It is one of the priorities of our Government, as stated by the very fact that we now have a department called Family Services, that we of course are interested in families in Manitoba and the protection and care of children.

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

My Department of Family Services not only deals with child care, in the case of children in day care spaces, it deals, as the Member well knows, with a great many more issues to do with children and families. One of the top priorities of course is the protection and care of children who are at risk in our society, and that takes up a great deal of the time, energy, and funds in our department.

With respect to the federal initiatives and the commitment by the federal Government to child care, as I indicated before, I am disappointed that initiative did not come through, because not only Manitoba but many other provinces in Canada are really finding it difficult to put the funding in that we really need in the child care area.

When I was at the meeting in Ottawa, I believe the Member referenced it, which was held at Meech Lake on the 18th and 19th of September, there was some quite lively discussion on the subject of child care. I particularly recall the Minister from Newfoundland expressing his frustrations in how difficult it was for their small province to put in enough funds to get enough child care spaces. They also were pressuring, as well as myself, the federal Government to come up with their plan.

At that time Mr. Beatty indicated to us that a national child care program would be introduced before the next federal election. During their mandate they have promised to put in a federal child care program. He also indicated that some of the things that they had put forward with their initiative before still stand. They could go ahead, without the Bill.

Of course there was some question of one of the funds that they had earmarked, could we change its focus and use it for some other part of child care? He indicated that he would be willing to look at that. So I see some definite willingness, on the part of the federal Minister, to act on this. He did indicate to us that he is not tied and married to the previous proposal, that was put forward, so I sense with him that he read and heard what was being said, with regard to the former program, and sees that it does need some improvements.

There was particularly one item in it that people complained about considerably that was that there were no standards enunciated in that. I guess we in Manitoba take some pride in the fact that our standards are quite high, and we would expect that other provinces would follow suit. Other provinces perhaps have not included those type of standards with their child care initiatives and perhaps should look to doing so.

The federal Government had indicated of course before that they were not willing to force standards upon provinces. That was the prerogative of the provinces, and where we want to be independent we do though want something, on behalf of the federal Government, that would indicate some at least minimum standard that would be insured.

We have to remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that while we are not a federal program as such, and are disappointed about that, that in the interim we still

receive the cost-sharing, the 40 percent of our expenditures on day care under the Canada Assistance Plan. So we are not completely left adrift by the federal Government in this issue.

They did not cut off the Canada Assistance Plan monies. They left them in place. There was some feeling on the part of many provinces, and ours was one of them, that had they gone ahead with the other program, that Mr. Epp had introduced, that perhaps we would have still been better under the Canada Assistance so we would have had that choice.

Now I hope that when the new program comes forward that we will still have a choice of looking at weighing how it would respond to our particular province, and having the option of staying with Canada Assistance if in fact that will be the better approach.

So we will look with interest to see that and hope that they come along with the programs very soon.

Now I really take exception with the remarks of the Member, which he continues to give with regard to our commitment to child care in this province. It seems repetitive, but one seems to have to say it over and over again. I suppose maybe that is the same tactic she is using. She feels that if she says it over and over again, someone will believe her. I put the facts on the table, once again to the Member. I know I will not convince her, but maybe someone else will be convinced by this, but the commitment to child care she says we have a day care fiasco, there is lack of action, and what else? Oh, she said a lot of things, we are dragging the whole system apart.

The system that is in place now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the same system that was there when that Member was a Minister in the NDP Cabinet, exactly the same system. The same regulations are being carried out. The funding -(interjection)- Oh, there is a difference. There are \$13 million more dollars in the system than there were when she was in Government.

So I do not know how she can stand in her place, or wherever she says it, to say that we have completely ruined the whole system if we have increased its funding by 45 percent in two budgets. I find that hard to know why she can talk like that.

She was in the same Cabinet with Muriel Smith, who was at one time the Minister in charge of child care, who spoke at Estimates on the subject of funding when people were complaining that the salary enhancement grants were low, that person, when she was the Minister, indicated that the child care workers will have to wait their turn. Everyone has to wait their turn in society, she indicated.

* (1730)

At one point, and of course I know this well having been involved in that profession, the teachers were very, very low paid. I would hesitate to even tell you what I was paid, when I first taught school, because that would indicate to you when it was.

Anyway this is what that Minister, Muriel Smith, indicated to people, at that time they were debating

Estimates, that these people should be patient, and they should wait. Well, they waited, and there were no demonstrations out in front of the Legislative Building. There were no little children being requested to bring peanuts to Muriel Smith. I do not recall it, if there was. There were no big demonstrations over it. Apparently the people felt that they could wait. Well, something triggered them not to wait this year, when the salary enhancement grants were increased again.

Now the whole thing comes to mind, and really should come to the mind of the Member, that in the first place if you had set up a system that was supposed to be so perfect and so wonderful—I am not saying that the system is not good, but the financing of it is not good. If you set up a system whereby you have to admit to the whole world that salaries are so low that you have to enhance them, then there is something wrong with the system.

That is what our Government is attempting to do with the working group we have set up to look at the funding of child care. We have no quarrel, some people may, but it is not a major issue with me—the regulations. They are being followed through. The child care centres are inspected from time to time and the regulations are enforced, and that is not one of the major hang-ups with the whole system.

I have not had the associations come forward and say: look I want this regulation changed and changed immediately. So obviously they do not have a great concern with it. Over the years, we may of course have to look at some regulations that maybe there could be improvements, but the whole thing centres around the funding, not just the salaries of the staff, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is another issue in itself, and we admitted from day one that they were not adequate salaries. We were working toward improving them.

The other mix is the grants and so forth that go forward to day care centres, and it has been set up in a very ad hoc way. There are grants for this, and grants for that, and when you get right down to it, it is hard to identify exactly what a space costs in a centre. That is something that we are going to ask the working group to look at, identify exactly what the costs are, and how we could fund the system better. There must be something wrong with the funding system that has massive injections of funds into it and has everybody out riding the streets complaining about it. There is something wrong.

There is definitely something wrong with the system. I will be the first one to say that, and say that we are committed to improving it, because it did not happen just yesterday, or last month, or even in August, the day I announced the child care funding. It did not happen then that the system was underfunded. To have added this much in funding and still have major problems certainly causes one to wonder how we can best fund this. The question of course arises: should the Government be doing all this extra funding, or should the fees from the parents be higher?

That is something that will all be considered in the consideration by the working committee, so that we can improve the system. It cannot happen overnight,

but we have committed to make improvements for next year's budget and work on longer-range plans for the future. That is a definite commitment by our Government, and one that we will follow through on.

One of the problems I guess that has plagued the system is that the NDP when they were in Government were dedicated to, and still are, universal day care. Is my time running out, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It has run out. Oh, sorry about that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member's time has expired. The Honourable Member for Ellice.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I certainly am pleased to be able to speak on this particular resolution this afternoon. I think that this resolution, which speaks to the need for accessible, affordable, and a quality child care system that certainly all of us in this House, I would hope, would support such laudable goals as presented in this particular resolution.

In the comments that have been made this afternoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must refer to some of the comments made by the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). She started out her remarks by speaking about the family and the importance of family. I think it is important to note when we talk about family, and it is very important, child care certainly is a very integral part of our family system as we know it today.

Child care is one important component and there are other important components of the family. There are issues that we need to deal with in regard to family violence, issues related to poverty and the entrenchment of poverty for families in the inner city and in northern areas in some rural areas of our province. There are issues which affect families in regard to the social assistance and the very poor resources that are available in that area. There are issues that affect families in relation to crime and crime on our streets, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are issues which affect families who are dealing with vulnerable citizens living at home whether they be the elderly, whether they be the mentally ill, or whether they be the mentally handicapped.

As you think about these issues on family, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think of the issues on family violence and the mentally handicapped and the poverty issues, which Party is the one who has championed these issues in the House in the last 17 months? It has not been the third Party. It has been the Opposition. It has been the Opposition Party who has championed the issues on social assistance rates, on issues related to vulnerable citizens such as the mentally handicapped, on issues related to crime prevention, on issues related to the foster parents, issues related to child and family services and the need for much more comprehensive programs and services in the area of economic development for women in the areas of equal opportunity and affirmative action for women.

It has been the Opposition Party who has championed those causes, who has looked at the total family and the family unit and has looked at what types of programs and services are necessary and are needed over a

period of time for the family. It has not been the third Party, it has been the Liberal Party, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We hear about the child care system, and we have admitted many times in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and my Leader when she was the lone Member in this House certainly was not wont to again say that in fact we had a very good child care system in this province. Certainly we can give credit to the former administration, and we will give credit where credit is due in regard to that. We have no difficulty in stating that and we hope in fact that those high standards and that as Manitoba has once been looked on as a model for other provinces that in fact we can continue in that area.

* (1740)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about the family and we talk about child care and we talk about services, I know oftentimes the Government says that we do not compliment the Government when they make some important announcements. I must take this opportunity to compliment the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) who has finally come forth with some dollars for day programs for the mentally handicapped and certainly we applaud her. We are pleased that she has seen the light and has felt that there is such an important need because it is something that we have been asking for, for quite awhile. We will give credit where credit is due for that move forward.

Getting back to the issue of child care and the child care in Manitoba, part of the difficulty—and the Minister for Family Services said today that she finds it difficult to understand how Members in this House can say that the child care system is crumbling in Manitoba. Well, I think that the Minister has to look at, and she mentioned them herself, the fact that we have had rallies at the Legislature, she has had peanuts delivered to her office, and she says, well, now why did they not do that with the former NDP administration? Why did they choose this Minister of Family Services, because certainly we know that everything was not perfect with the former Government, and there were improvements that needed to be made in the system?

I think though the differences being, what has been the series of events that have occurred over the last 17 months or 18 months of this Government's administration which has led an entire child care community in the Province of Manitoba to feel such frustration and anger that they must not only come in droves to the Legislature and drop peanuts off at the Minister's doorstep, but in fact they must hold a rally at the Legislature where over 2,000 people attended that rally to show their displeasure of the Government and the Government's action, or basically lack of inaction (sic). I think that speaks something for the child care community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you have a child care community who felt that they have followed along in a process in good faith, who have worked and consulted, or have attempted to, with this Government for the last year and a half and have felt stonewalled at every corner, who have felt frustrated at every turn

in the road because in fact they have not got feedback and honesty back from this Government. They have not been told how things are going to work and what is going to happen.

When this Government has their own task force at a very high price tag of \$400,000 the child care community says from the beginning, well, we do not really agree with this task force, but we are willing to work with the Government. So we will work along with the people in this task force because surely when the entire province and community has an opportunity to provide feedback then we hope that those recommendations that are brought forth to the Government, that there will be some movement and that the Government will understand the needs and what is needed for services and programs in regard to child care.

What happened then, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What happened was that the Government had their task force, the report was made, it was written, it was nicely bound and the main recommendations in that task force related to salaries for workers, related to training for workers, and related to spaces for child care. The Government chose to literally ignore that one important recommendation in regard to training workers, in regard to salary.

Now I know that the Government and the Minister, herself, oftentimes like to say and they said it at the rally—the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) quipped it from his seat again this afternoon, we have given a 45 percent increase to child care in this province. Well, you hear them say that on one hand but on the other hand you hear the Premier who openly admits, well, that 45 percent really does not go to increase the salaries of these underpaid child care workers. So we know that there is a problem.

So on one hand they try to use that as, look Manitobans, look at this 45 percent increase, but on the other hand the Premier continues to say, we know that there is a funding problem and we know that 45 percent increase is not getting to the child care workers.

The Minister, herself, has said this afternoon, this problem did not happen overnight. We know that there are some difficulties with how this system is funded and we know that when salary enhancement grants were added, and they had to be used as the mechanism to increase child care workers salaries, that perhaps that was not the best way to do it. The system was not appropriately funded in the beginning. So the Minister has admitted that.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Then I asked the Minister this question, why did our Leader of the Opposition recognize in 1986 that there is a problem with the funding and that we needed to relook at how things operated and this Government, who was in Opposition for six years and has now gone through two budgets, is only now in the last few months coming to that realization? It is incomprehensible, Mr. Speaker, why now it is actually through to them—aha, we have a funding problem.

Mr. Speaker, when our Leader of the Opposition is the lone Member with no research assistance, with not

the resources available as an entire Opposition knew that in 1986 and put it on the record and was saying in 1986, we need to look at this. So now we have the Johnny-come-lately. It is the Conservative Government who all of a sudden because they are in a bind they are saying, well, there is a difficulty with the funding formula and we have to look at the entire system. Well, why did they not do that when they became Government 18 months ago? Why did they not recognize there were those serious problems in the six years that they were in Opposition?

Mind you, when we consider how this Government operates and all the promises that they make during the election and they are then not prepared to do when they become Government, we at least know that they are consistent. In fact, they never seem to do what they say, or they all of a sudden say they need all this time to study the issues and the concerns, and yet we know that those issues and concerns are there.

The Minister really does not know why peanuts were not given to Muriel Smith and peanuts were put on her desk, and I think the answer to that question can be summed up in one sentence, and that is: The issue is that with this Conservative Government, the community out there, whether it be the child care community or whether it be many other communities and agencies are saying, we do not feel that we have an open communication system with this Government and we do not feel that we have a consultation ability, a system where we can work with the Government, we can participate openly, we can get feedback; we do not feel that we have that with this Government.

The Minister says, well, what is different with the child care system now under her regime as was different with the NDP Government? For one thing, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the morale is terribly, terribly low in the child care office. We know that when you take a director and you say that you are going to remove her because you do not want her there any more, yet you still keep her there because you cannot find somebody in the community who will take the job, surely to goodness that is going to affect the morale of an entire office, never mind the rest of the department and the rest of the Civil Service. So if the Minister wants to know what is different, one answer is the morale has changed. The morale is terribly, terribly low in the child care office because of direct actions that this Minister and her Government have taken in regard to the staff in that office.

The second thing that has changed with the child care system, Mr. Speaker, is that there is no confidence on the part of the child care workers and their advocacy associations in this Minister and her Government; that in fact there would be a long-term commitment to child care in this province. I really believe that the child care workers are a very reasonable group of people. I believe that the parents and the boards of the directors, who were out on the steps of the Legislature supporting the child care workers, are reasonable people, and being reasonable people they know that resources, whether they be human resources or financial resources, are not infinite. They know that, but what they are asking for is a commitment, not just lip-service from this

Minister, not just comments that, well, we really believe in the fact that you are underpaid, but I cannot tell you what you are going to get in the next year's budget because we only work year to year. What kind of a commitment is that? Are they going to believe that from the Minister, given the history of what has gone on in the last 18 months? I think that they have decided they are not going to, and that is the difficulty.

* (1750)

In summing up my comments, I think it is important to note as well the one other comment I wanted to say, and it has been said before. As much respect as I have for the NDP Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), I have to say that I really do not believe she has been able to foment an entire crisis in the child care in this province. As much as I respect her ability as a MLA, I do not believe she has that ability to do that; I do not believe she has done that. I believe that the concerns have come from the child care community, and for this Government to continually suggest that there has been that fomenting of a strike and a crisis is really an insult to the child care community, and it is really an insult to all the professionals and the parents and the boards of directors who have worked very hard and in a concerted effort to improve child care in Manitoba.

In summing up, we support accessible, affordable, quality day care and we hope that we can encourage this Minister and this Government to ensure that those standards are maintained and that in 10 years we will still have the best system in Canada.

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this resolution, and I just would like to put a few things on the record. As I listened to the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) talk about her Leader being the lone voice crying for change in the day care field—I sat a couple of seats from the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) and through the day care Estimates we pursued questioning all along. At the time that she was in Opposition she was in favour of subsidies, I believe, going to parents in any day care, whether it was independent or whether it was non-profit. Then during the election, when she was in a forum where all the day care community was there, I saw a complete about-face where, all of a sudden the Liberal platform changed in midstream, and then what you had was that the only time that someone could go to a independent centre is if there would be one space available.

So it did not matter if the parent of the child lived in St. James, it did not matter if the parent lived in Fort Garry, if that space was at the other end of the city that was the space, obviously, that this person had to go to. It did not matter on convenience. When you have a complete about-face on a policy right on the spot, you are not going to come up with a very sensible platform.

Unfortunately that type of forum is not in Hansard so it is not down verbatim, but I heard it and I would like to put it on the record that the Liberal Party changed in midstream. I am sure that the candidates out in the

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

field did not know about that change, Mr. Speaker, whichever the winds blows that is the way that the Liberal Party is going to be. When we talk about day care, there is one thing. All the time I was in Opposition, since '81, we were very supportive of the former Government's day care policy and regulations when it came into place. There is no doubt that they brought in regulations, they brought in a day care system that was very good for Manitobans if you were in a 9 to 5 system. It was a regulated system but it was a good one, the regulations were good and we all agreed that was so.

One of the things, in Opposition, that our Government was pushing for was flexibility because we heard from people, and I am sure the Government of the Day did as well, that of shift workers, of farm families who needed seasonal work, they wanted some flexibility and part-time workers because one of the areas that is of particular concern, and I did hear this when I went door to door anytime that I was talking to mothers, is people who were working, young mothers who are working, it was single parents, and they lost their job, they were on unemployment insurance, but they could not pull their kids out of day care because they could not afford to lose that space. This was one of the areas that makes the system very inflexible and it is one area that I hope that the child task force, the Advisory Committee on Child Care will be able to take a look at to give parents a bit more flexibility in the system because that is terribly needed. There is something wrong when a parent is at home and wants to have their children at home, but they know that they are going to be going back to work and they do not dare give up that space. So this is one area that we need to be able to look at.

We certainly need some flexible day care so that parents who are on shift work have some way of paying what some people might consider a babysitter. I believe, I firmly believe, that kids belong in their own beds and that is where they should be, not leaving them somewhere else, but they should be in their own homes if at all possible, or in a neighbour's home, so that if they come home at two in the morning, if they have to pick their children up at seven, they do not have to hop a bus, interrupt their sleep, hop a bus and go out and pick these kids up because most of the people who are in these positions really cannot afford transportation. They do not have cars and they are using the bus system and that type of system does not work well. So there are a lot of areas in the day care system that need to be fixed.

One of the areas of course that has been at the forefront have been salaries. We recognize that the salaries for day care workers are too low. We know that, but at the same time, when the Members of the former Government, the NDP were in power, those same workers were making \$12,000 to \$14,000.00. That was pretty incredible in itself and yet we did not have a peanut day then.

I do not blame the day care workers for wanting more money and wanting it now because it has been a long haul for them and I recognize that. When you are at \$12,000 and they are moved up to, what is it now, I think an average of 17,500, that still is not very

much money. What we are asking the Advisory Council is to look at the whole area of funding because when we meet with all the people in day care, they indicate that there is something very lacking, very much lacking in the system.

It is not just the Salary Enhancement Grant which, yes, you could give more money there. It is the whole way the funding is done. We would like to give a lot more flexibility to the centres themselves, to the boards themselves, in being able to structure their own pay structure in how they work their day care centres. I think it would be far more efficient. I think that they want more control of their lives instead of probably going from pocket to pocket to pocket, stealing out of this one so that they can pay something else and constantly having to juggle.

One of the areas that we really do see the day care office providing, I believe, is more help when centres get into trouble financially. I am not talking about the obvious one that has been in trouble, but there are a lot of non-profit centres who need help with finances. Not everybody understands how to keep their books. You have a lot of volunteer boards who could use help and I think this is one area that the day care office would be able to give a lot of help in. I am sure that they have been trying now, but I think we need a lot more nurturing coming out of that day care office than maybe has been previously happening because they have had to work at looking at always swooping down and looking at the licence provision.

I do believe that there are a lot of changes that can be made with child care without having less quality in day care because we understand that children are our greatest asset. We want to make sure that they are well looked after and that is one of the reasons that our Government and Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) is looking to have more family day care so that children are in a more natural setting. Where there are fewer children they are in a home setting and it is more like the areas they come from and I am not taking away from the centres that are presently there but we do feel that in rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba it is much easier to have smaller areas and in homes family day care than to have the really structured day care centres that we have in the City of Winnipeg.

I am really pleased that we are going to be giving some help so that we can start workplace day care, because I think very often that mothers get on a guilt trip because they are not near their children all day, they have a hard time visiting them in lots of cases and so where you are able to encourage workplace day care, I think it is going to be wonderful. It may be either the father or the mother where the day care is and it would be pretty nice to be able to drop in, have lunch with your child, stop in during the day and give some words of love and comfort, and just to show that there is some more continuity in the family.

I think that when we look at all these different areas, I really believe that the way the Conservative Government is heading in day care is going to make it a better system. We are going to build on the system that was there before and make it a much better system.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am interrupting the proceedings according to the Rules. When this matter

Wednesday, November 1, 1989

is again before the House, the Honourable Minister will have five minutes remaining.

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