



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARR, James	Crescentwood	Liberal
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 8, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table several reports this afternoon: the Annual Report for 1989-90 for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation; the Annual Report for 1989-90 of the Manitoba Arts Council; the Annual Report for 1989 for The Freedom of Information Act; and the Annual Report for 1989-90 for the CCFM.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon His Excellency Ernst Andres, who is the Ambassador of Switzerland; and Mr. Ernst Keller, who is the Consul General of Switzerland.

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

Also with us this afternoon, we have seated in the public gallery, from the English Program at the Red River Community College 18 students. They are under the direction of Lucy Epp.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Economic Growth Job Creation Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, when we noted that the Conference Board had predicted that Manitoba would be last out of the recession, we asked the Premier a number of questions about what his strategy would be and how we could deal with the human tragedy facing Manitobans in this recession.

The Premier of course denied that we are in such difficulty. When later the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) raised the question about private sector investment in this province, again the members opposite guffawed and declined to recognize the real, serious problems we are having in this province.

My question to the Premier is: In light of the most recent private sector report that was released two weeks ago and again this weekend on the decline in private investment in Manitoba, the radical decline of private investment in Manitoba, how many jobs has the government analyzed are affected by this decline in private investment, and what action will this government really take to deal with the very serious human challenges facing our province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition's colleague, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), raised a similar matter on Friday morning, I said that none of us in this country, none of us in this province are happy with the effects of the national recession that is taking place in this country, but the Leader of the Opposition should not try and politicize it because, quite honestly, this is not an issue that knows political boundaries. If it were, then we might take particular glee at the province of Ontario, that has lost 223,000 jobs in the first quarter of this year under an NDP government.

We do not take any delight in that whatsoever, but we know that an NDP administration in Ontario is having a great deal of difficulty dealing with the national recession. That is one of the things that we do not take any particular delight in. The Leader of the Opposition may want to try and take political delight in that, and he may be happy about those things, but they are not the kind of thing that we think should be politicized.

We believe that we are all in a national recession. We believe that we are all faced with the consequences of national policies and, indeed, world conditions, and we are going to try and make the best of it.

The one thing we are not going to do, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to try and spend our way out of a recession the way the New Democrats did when they were in office in the 1980s, leaving us with the second highest level of taxation in the country and leaving us with a debt upon which we still have to spend over \$500 million annually in interest costs because of the wrong-headed proposals that they put forth at that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1335)

Government Initiatives

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Well, Mr. Speaker, the private sector investment in Ontario is projected to go up in 1991. The private sector investment—(interjection)—well, you had better read your statistics. Your private sector investment in this province is projected to go down, and it is this government that said we will give away tax breaks to corporations and they, in turn, will create jobs and create investment in this province. They said that three years ago, along with our other colleagues.

That has not worked. The private investment now is the lowest in per capita terms for 10 years, coincidentally the last time the Tories were in government. Given the fact that this Premier, in his Speech from the Throne, bashed the federal government but did not even raise the issue of the private sector and his own government's failure to raise investment in the private sector.

I ask this Premier on behalf of Manitobans: What is his government going to do to get this economy going again? When is he going to get us out of last place? When does he start caring about the economy in this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the economy is not in last place. The fact of the matter is that that very Statistics Canada report that he is quoting gives him the information that is accurate that would not support what he has just said. That very report says that six out of 10 provinces are expecting negative growth in private capital investment. That very report says we will be fifth in the country in private capital investment in 1991. That is what that Statistics Canada report says.

The fact of the matter is that the last year, the last full year that the NDP was in office, at the time when we were five years into the biggest postwar

economic boom in the history of Canada, 1987, private capital investment was negative in Manitoba under the NDP—negative in 1987, five years into the biggest economic boom postwar that this country has known.

We are in a national recession. We stand fifth best in the country in terms of private capital investment intentions for 1991. That is not as good as we would like it to be, but it is midpoint in the country as we think that we should at least be there. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, it is much better than what he would portray.

All-Party Committee

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the municipalities that just got a 13 percent decline in the revenue based on the tax-sharing agreement know how bad the corporate and private sectors are doing and, notwithstanding the tens of millions of dollars that this government gave away in their last three budgets, our private investment is failing dismally. The Premier quotes 1987. The province with the lowest unemployment rate and the highest projected economic growth is in central Canada. Its name is Manitoba, according to a number of financial—1987, so let not the Premier mislead the people of Manitoba as he is continuing to do.

My question is to the Premier. We have offered the government the ability to have an all-party committee so that we can share together our alternatives. The tax breaks to corporations that the government has proposed are not working. We have proposed an all-party committee so that all of us can sit down and deal with this human crisis in an all-party way.

If we can have an all-party committee on the Constitution, why will the Premier not have an all-party committee dealing with our economy?

* (1340)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition has to hide. We have an all-party committee right here in this Legislature. We meet every day, Mr. Speaker, five days a week. We have debates on the throne speech, on the budget, on Interim Supply. We have debates every day in this Legislature, where they can give us ideas—(interjection)—well, he says we will not listen.

We know what happens under NDP administration. The Howard Pawley administration

gave us the second highest taxes in the country, gave us the highest increase in debt per capita ever in the history of this province or any province in the country.

We also have a test case of a New Democratic government in office in Ontario right next door to us—223,000 people unemployed in the first quarter of this year over the first quarter of last year— increase in jobs lost, 223,000 under an NDP government.

Do they have any answers that are better? Their unemployment rate is higher than ours in Manitoba. Do they have answers that are better? No, Mr. Speaker. I suggest that despite his desire to politicize this issue, we do not want to have his cheap politics. We will take his answers any day in this House. He is welcome to give us his advice.

Free Trade Agreement - Mexico Manitoba Benefits

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Since this government took office, 22 percent of the manufacturing jobs in the province of Manitoba have disappeared, largely, many people would say, because of the Free Trade Agreement. There have been more jobs lost in the last year than in any single year in the last decade.

Can the Minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Tourism tell this House and Manitobans what benefits, if any, they can expect from a similar agreement, a free trade agreement with Canada, the U.S. and Mexico?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the inference by the honourable member for Flin Flon about the impact of free trade in Manitoba in terms of its negative impact certainly are not conveyed to our department. Whenever any business is in any financial difficulty, we certainly look into what the reason is. We have discussions with them, and there is nothing to substantiate or indicate the kinds of accusations that once again are made from across the way in terms of Manitoba's economy.

In terms of a Canada-U.S.-Mexico free trade agreement, we are in the process right now of undertaking consultations with the citizens of Manitoba. We have our first consultation on Friday, Mr. Speaker, with the agricultural community. We

are holding a series of consultations to help our government formulate our position on that issue and also to raise the issues of concern for Manitobans and to be sure to convey them to the federal government.

Government Survey

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, investors turn their backs on the province—22,000 manufacturing jobs gone. On February 14, this minister signed a contract with Price Waterhouse consulting to do a survey of attitudes regarding the Canada-Mexico free trade agreement.

What purpose will this survey do and will this minister table the results of that survey?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I find the inconsistencies absolutely amazing from across the way. On the one hand, they have no solutions in terms of helping us as a government in terms of the economic situation. Their solution is an all-party task force instead of conveying in this House today the kinds of solutions that they might have in terms of assisting us in the government.

Now, on the other hand, here we have utilized the consultation process. We have gone out to several of the businesses and the people doing business in our province to ask them the impressions of Canada-U.S.-Mexico free trade to help us as a government formulate a position on behalf of Manitobans on that very important issue.

That is what is done, Mr. Speaker. I will undertake to look at the opportunities of making a copy of that available.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, we have given this minister and this government options: get out of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States; stay out of a free trade agreement with Mexico.

We are losing our manufacturing and industrial infrastructure day by day. Yesterday it was Manitoba Rolling Mills. Before that it was at Flin Flon. Before that it was Campbell Soup. We are losing jobs by the thousand.

My question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. Several months ago this minister refused to undertake a study of the impact of the Free Trade Agreement, its two and a half years now of implementation on the province of Manitoba. Will this minister now abandon a \$6,000 survey of attitudes and commit to a real economic impact of

the potential effect of a free trade agreement with Mexico? Will he get down to the meat of the issue? How many jobs are we going to lose as a result of that agreement?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, once again the honourable member for Flin Flon is trying to meld two issues and is creating nothing but confusion. On the issue of free trade with the United States, the Canada West Foundation recently published a report showing the impact in terms of the improvement in terms of our export situation.

In terms of the Canada-U.S.-Mexico potential free trade agreement, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that the NDP have obviously formulated a position, and I am sure it is well documented and based on statistical analysis and information that they would gladly share with us. I have not seen it. I am not so sure what they are basing that suggestion on.

We are going to undergo a consultation process with Manitobans, with people doing business in Manitoba, with people who work in Manitoba, with labour representatives in Manitoba, to help us as a government formulate a position on Canada-U.S.-Mexico free trade.

* (1345)

Child and Family Services Information Release

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I had rather hoped the Minister of Family Services would stand today and correct the information he put on the record on Friday.

On Friday, I asked him about a clause in the agreements that had been circulated to Child and Family Services, which prohibited these agencies from disclosing any information having to do with the delivery of their services without written agreement from the minister. The minister at that time said no such clause existed.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 8(b) of the agreement says that: An agency, employees or agents shall not disclose or permit to be disclosed to any person, corporation or organization such information, data, reports, documents or materials without first obtaining written permission from Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us now why four agencies have been allowed to sign agreements with the department without this requirement?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated on Friday, we are in the middle of a process with the agencies whereby they have come forward with service plans, and we are in the process of releasing deficit money and signing funding agreements. It is not our intent to prevent agencies from advocating for children, for providing information, but we are exchanging certain documents with agencies, and there is certain information about children that we feel should not be made public.

The agency in question has received this information, and we have been in contact with them. As indicated in the paper, they have not had a meeting to discuss it yet. We have been in consultation with them last week and today. We expect after their meeting tomorrow that people in our department will be able to enter into a dialogue with people from this agency and sit down and resolve this issue.

Mr. Alcock: My question, Mr. Speaker, was why two agencies have received their deficit funding without signing such an agreement and now this agency is being made to.

Mr. Speaker, these are the only vehicles we have in society to advocate on behalf of children who have no parents. This is why you put them in place, to protect these children and represent their interests.

Why is the minister continuing to deprive them of their ability to speak? Confidential information is covered in the legislation. Nobody is expecting the release of confidential file information. That is already prohibited. Why can they not speak on behalf of their kids?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The member perhaps did not listen carefully to the answer. We have indicated that there is certain information, funding information and other information related to children that flows back and forth between the department and the agency that we feel should be confidential. We have indicated a willingness to sit down with the agency in question. I would say that they have kept their comments between the agency and the department and that there are others in the House and in the field who are making comments publicly about this.

The agency in question is having a board meeting tomorrow, and we have indicated to them that we are prepared to sit down and discuss this agreement

and any of the clauses that pertain. So we expect that this process will continue and we will have an opportunity to enter into this dialogue.

The member talks about service to children. I would say very clearly that the point of view of this department is that we are here and the agencies are here to serve the vulnerable children and families in Manitoba, and there is no question about that.

What we are talking about is the deficit relief that we are going to flow, the deficits that the agencies have built up over the years and the funding that government has provided. We believe that agencies should be accountable and should be responsible.

There were comments in the press on the weekend that at least one agency president finds that distasteful. We feel very strongly that anyone receiving public money should be accountable.

* (1350)

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, on Friday the minister denied this clause existed. Today I have a signed document in which it exists. This is the most incompetent piece of work I have ever seen this department do, and this minister chose to sign it.

What I would ask him to do is guarantee to us that clause will be withdrawn from this and any future agreements. Will he make that guarantee today?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the member would make comments about civil servants and people working very diligently to bring forward these agreements.

An Honourable Member: You signed it.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am sure the member . . . to allow me to finish.

I know that agencies often seek out consultants and seek out advice. I make no comment about the level of competence of the consultants that they hire.

I would say again that we are in the middle of a process, and we have discussed with the agency our availability to discuss the contents of this funding agreement. They have indicated some interest in sitting down and talking to it. If we have to make some minor adjustments, we are prepared to do so.

Rail Line Abandonment Government Position

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. -(interjection)- I am glad you are interested. We will see how interested you are in your answer to follow.

Farmers in rural communities are facing severe pressures on a number of fronts in this province. The Conservative philosophy appears to be that rural Canada is not viable and that the purpose of this government is only to serve the corporate interests of urban centres.

I would like the Minister of Transportation to tell this House what response he was making to the Grain Transportation Agency discussion paper on further cuts to rail branch lines. Will he table his response in the Chamber today?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I am prepared to table the letter that is sent to the Honourable Doug Lewis, which clarifies the views that we have taken on the issue.

I have to indicate also to the member that between the Minister of Agriculture and myself we have ongoing dialogue in terms of . . .

Rail Transportation Branch Line Surcharge

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): My question is for the same minister, Mr. Speaker.

Does this minister agree with the Western Grain Transportation papers suggested surcharges on what they call high-cost branch lines and, if he does not, why has he not spoken up previously in this House?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the position of this government and the previous administration is well known in terms of what our position is regarding the abandonment of rail lines, the method of payments.

In fact, I have to indicate tongue-in-cheek that we will follow the example set by the previous Minister of Highways and Transportation, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who followed along the same lines in terms of putting our position forward along with the other three western provinces in terms of view as to what happens in this regard.

* (1355)

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: What effort has this minister undertaken to see that rural Manitoba is aware of the threats posed by this latest study, considering the short deadline of April 15 imposed by the federal government for responses to this report?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, we have had ongoing dialogue with the transportation end of it as well as with the federal government. I think I have pretty well forwarded most of the information to the member. If there are any of the responses that I have not tabled or brought forward to his attention, I am prepared to do so. I will check that with him to make sure that I have all the information available for him.

Civil Servants Layoffs - Selkirk, Manitoba

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Selkirk is reeling from the layoffs of its largest employer, Manitoba Rolling Mills. In view of the seriousness of this latest shutdown, I would ask the Premier whether he can assure Selkirk that the provincial government will not lay off any more government workers at the Selkirk Human Resource Centre, the Selkirk Mental Health Centre, shift the Highways department out of Selkirk, actions which will only hurt or which only result in higher unemployment in Selkirk.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, when governments are faced with no increase in revenues year over year, zero percent increase, we have some very difficult challenges in order to try and make sense of the budgetary process and keep as many jobs as we can and keep the services protected in health care and education, vital family services and all of those areas.

Under those circumstances, we have had a very, very difficult time reviewing all the proposed Estimates of every department of government. There have been hundreds of hours put in by staff, by members of Treasury Board, by ministers and so on. It is a very difficult process.

We will, obviously, have to await the tabling of the budget, which was announced on Friday by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), before it will be known just what priority areas we have been able to maintain and how we have been able to protect the vital services of health care, education, family

services. I just invite the member for Selkirk to wait until that time so that he can ask his questions of the minister responsible and he can have an opportunity to dialogue about the priorities that we have chosen.

Manitoba Rolling Mills Labour Adjustment Strategy

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): My next question is to the Minister of Labour.

What action will his department take to assist workers laid off during the Rolling Mills shutdown?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, my understanding of the layoffs at Selkirk is that they are temporary layoffs. The company is searching for additional contract work. If this were to be a permanent shutdown, our Labour Adjustment Unit would be more than happy to work with the people there to do what is possible to find them new employment.

At the current time, my understanding from the media reports from the Rolling Mills in Selkirk is that they are currently looking for additional contracts and hope to get their full complement back to work as soon as possible.

Interest Rate Relief

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): My final question is for the Premier.

What action will this government take to get the federal government to drop the high interest rates and high dollar, both of which are crippling the Selkirk Rolling Mills and businesses throughout this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the interest rates, which this government has berated the federal government about for more than two years, have dropped over three percentage points in the past short while, I believe about six months. The federal budget that was tabled last month in Parliament indicated a projection that interest rates would go even lower.

We all believe that that is the key to economic recovery. I know that there is not any economic expert anywhere in Canada who does not say that that is the way to go. We will consistently keep our position with the federal government to say interest rates have to continue to come down so that we can get a recovery from the national recession which we are in.

School Closures Guidelines

Mr. Bob Rose (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

An Honourable Member: Make it tough.

Mr. Rose: Very tough.

In view of this government's commitment to education and its commitment to plan to meet the opportunities and challenges through the major initiatives such as the review of school boundaries, will the minister encourage boards to follow the guidelines for school closures?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, guidelines for school closures were established under the previous administration. They were done so that school divisions could plan for school closures rather than surprising communities perhaps with the closure of a school. What it does is, it allows the communities to become involved through the establishment of committees to study what the impact might be of school closure on both the community and students.

Indeed, the department endorses the guidelines for school closures, and we expect that school divisions will comply with the guidelines for closures of schools.

* (1400)

Distance Education Government Commitment

Mr. Bob Rose (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech, among the other thrusts that were directed toward the improvements in the education system, there was reference to promotion of distance education.

Can the Minister of Education comment on the commitment of this government to the Distance Education Program, its possible impact on delivery of public school education on rural areas?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, with the depopulation of rural communities, Distance Education is becoming a very important way of distributing education programs throughout Manitoba.

In the last two years, the Department of Education and Training has embarked on a fairly aggressive approach in terms of delivering education through the Distance Education model. To date, we have

installed over a hundred satellite dishes in schools where schools can receive their signals through the satellite information network and, indeed, new programs are constantly being written. This year, two new programs in mathematics will be coming on stream through distance education.

Education System Funding

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is not the guidelines for school closure that are at issue, it is whether in fact people are going to be able to circumvent the guidelines by transferring students.

My question is, however, to the Premier. The government is fighting the recession on the backs of students -(interjection)- the question is on education.

They are fighting the recession on the backs of students. We have watched this government sit by while our universities are announcing percentage increases, talking about percentage increases, at 20 percent. At the same time, they cut benefits to seniors through 55-Plus deindexing and through personal care homes.

Can the Minister of Education tell this House why education and why senior citizens—and if the Premier wants to answer, that is fine—have become the basis for cuts in this province, instead of -(interjection)- no, we have not changed the thrust.

Why are the students of this province expected to bear the brunt of the cutbacks of this government?

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): There is confusion here, because the Leader of the Liberal Party has directed the question firstly to the Premier in her first utterance, then to the Minister of Education and then to everybody. So we are a little confused as to who she wants to answer the question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, if there is any confusion, it is on the government House leader's behalf. If you look at Beauchesne's, you will find under Rule 418 that: "The Speaker has stated, 'Hon. members may not realize it but questions are actually put to the Government. The Government decides who will answer.'"—the questions.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On the point of order, the Liberal House leader is quite correct, and I think the government could forgive us in the opposition if at times we do search out various different people trying to get an answer, because it is difficult enough to get an answer no matter who we direct it to.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable government House leader did not have a point of order. Questions are directed to the government.

* * *

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the opposition House leaders both of course are not really stating the fact of the matter. The fact of the matter is they get answers, but they do not like the answers. Even Beauchesne and every Speaker has ruled that they do not have to necessarily like the answers, but they do indeed have to accept them.

The fact of the matter is that this government is faced with revenue increases that will be flat this year, zero percent increase. This government is faced with a continued freeze on per capita EPF payments to the provinces, freezing of transfer payments that began with the Trudeau Liberal administration that the Leader of the Liberal Party ardently and passionately supports. Those EPF payment freezes this year will cost Manitoba \$67 million in 1991-92.

Under those circumstances, an increase of 3.3 percent to the universities is not unreasonable in most people's eyes. If she would only like to compare what is happening in other provinces in this country, including Liberal provinces in this country, where student fees are increasing even greater than they are projected to increase in Manitoba, where we have done our level best to try and pass along increases that go well beyond our ability to pay, then she will have some idea of how other provinces are passing along substantial increases in fees, as did the Ontario Liberals in the previous two years to their students.

Universities Accessibility

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, not all revenues are flat, because the Department of Health is going to be receiving 9.7 percent on the backs of the elderly

who are sick and living in nursing homes. The universities are going to be receiving great increases in tuition fees.

I would like the Minister of Education to tell the House today what studies he has done to indicate that accessibility to university will no longer be restricted to just the wealthy, because at increases of 20 percent, no jobs because of the recession, CareerStart grants being cut back, the only ones who are going to be able to afford to go to post-secondary educational institutions in this province are the rich.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Leader of the third party does not have all her facts straight, and I would like to correct her for the record. First of all, let us remember that Manitoba has one of the richest student aid programs in all of Canada. It is not second. It is No. 1, by indeed a considerable amount.

The allowance for students on a weekly basis in Manitoba is \$317 per week. The next province to us is Ontario at \$270 per week. That is a substantial difference between Manitoba and Ontario. Also, Manitoba as a province has the third lowest tuition fees of all the provinces in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, if you take those factors into consideration alone, coupled with the fact that when our revenues are flat we were still able to afford 3.3 percent to the universities, I have to tell you that I think we have been as generous as we possibly can and, indeed, education at the post-secondary level in Manitoba is not what the Leader of the third party would make it to be.

Student Assistance

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Well, along with those statistics, Mr. Speaker, why does he not also include that in terms of wage increases and average take-home pay, Manitoba last year was 10 out of 10? The reality is that our young people do not have the dollars to go to universities with and, as far as the student aid program is concerned, this Minister knows full well that the students today are trying to make do on 33 percent less than students were getting in 1984. You know that is a fact.

Can the Minister of Education tell this House what additional programs will be made available to students so that students with low incomes will be

able to access universities this year, in that most of them will not be able to get summer jobs?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the third party had been paying attention in the last year, she would have known that we have changed the criteria to our student bursary and our student loan package so that indeed students who are living, as an example, in rural areas and on farms will not have to count their parents net assets as part of their criteria for getting access to student loans.

Mr. Speaker, we have done everything possible to increase the accessibility for loans to students in this province. When you consider that the level is \$317 per week, as compared to the province next to us at \$270 per week, indeed in Manitoba we are supporting our students better than anywhere else in this country, and that is something we should all be proud of.

* (1410)

Kurdish Refugees Humanitarian Aid

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Kurds have taken an extreme step of embarking on a hunger strike on the steps of this Legislative Building to draw attention of this province to the plight of the more than a million Kurds who are refugees who are attempting to leave Iraq. Today both Britain and the United States began minimal aid to the Kurdish population.

My question for the Premier is: Is the Premier willing to join us, as we have written a letter to the Prime Minister calling on our federal government to come forward with its commitment for humanitarian aid to the Kurdish refugees, as well as to call on the United Nations for a comprehensive aid effort through the United Nations?

Hon. Gary Fillmon (Premier): It is difficult to understand the consistency of New Democrats, who did not want to have the war in Iraq, to aid the Kurds who were being massacred, who were being persecuted, who were being dealt with in very harsh terms, and did not want to come to their rescue whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, did not want to support the UN, did not want to support anybody who supported that.

Mr. Speaker, last week on the steps of the Legislature I spoke to some representatives of the Kurds and have had my staff looking into the matter

to see what the conditions are and to help me in the drafting of an appropriate communication with Ottawa.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, is the Premier willing to go out today and talk to the representatives, the refugees from the Kurdish population, and share with them his plans for direct communication with the Prime Minister and, through him, the United Nations in this effort?

Mr. Fillmon: On Friday morning, I believe it was, there was one of the representatives standing in front of the Legislature with whom I spoke and had discussions and said that I did intend to look into the matter and have communication drafted to Ottawa. I have done that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): I am wondering if I might have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. Johns have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? Agreed.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I would like to today express the condolences of this House to the family of Barry Kubin whose untimely death this past Thursday shocked and saddened all of us. As past president of the Canadian Hemophilia Society Manitoba Chapter, Barry had worked tirelessly on behalf of hemophiliacs and had been in touch with many of us on a very regular basis in search for justice for hemophiliacs in Manitoba. So on behalf of all members in this House, I want to acknowledge Barry Kubin's contribution to the quality of life in Manitoba and extend sincere sympathies to all members of his family.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Wolseley have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Agreed.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Miss Grace Ivey on the honour she received this week in the renaming of the Knappen House Youth Hostel as Ivey House International.

Grace Ivey was founder of the youth hosteling movement in Manitoba. She opened the first hostel on Maryland over a decade ago, and for more than

40,000 young people from over 50 countries who have used this youth hostel and shared in this international community, this is the memory that they will take back of Manitoba. So it is a fitting step, Mr. Speaker, that this honour has been bestowed on Grace Ivey, and we add our congratulations to those of hundreds of others.

On behalf of my community and my party, I would like to welcome Ivey House as part of Wolseley and to thank Grace Ivey for her part in sharing Manitoba with the world.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, firstly, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will sit Thursday morning, April 11, 10 a.m., Room 254, to consider the 1990 Annual Report of the Manitoba Energy Authority.

There may be a further announcement later on, Mr. Speaker, with respect to that same committee sitting in the evening possibly to consider the Hazardous Waste Corporation. I will come back to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would like you to call the bills in the following order: Bills 3, 33, 5, 6, 8 and 12.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable government House leader.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 3—The Coat of Arms, Emblems and The Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), that Bill 3, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and The Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba) be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 3, The Coats of Arms, Emblems and The Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act.

This bill sets in motion the necessary steps to adopt the *Picea glauca*, commonly known as the white spruce, as the arboreal emblem of Manitoba.

The white spruce, Mr. Speaker, is native to Manitoba and grows naturally throughout most of the province. It has been planted in other areas for its functional value in wind-break rows and its ornamental value on private and public grounds.

* (1420)

The white spruce is known to reach majestic proportions. There is one currently growing in the Duck Mountain provincial forest measuring nearly 135 feet tall. Its conical shape with slightly drooping branches, which extend to the ground, presents a distinctive appearance, whether by itself or within a forest stand.

It is a tree whose natural beauty is maintained year round, providing not only an esthetic value to the landscape but also an economic and functional one. The white spruce is one of the most important trees used in our pulpwood and lumber industry, an industry providing a source of employment for over 12,000 Manitobans.

Prior to commercial development, it was recognized as a natural resource by our early aboriginal inhabitants. Its supple, sinewy roots provided lacing for birch bark canoes and baskets. To this day, vast stands of white spruce provide the natural habitat for many species of wildlife and birds.

The selection of the white spruce to be designated as the provincial tree followed extensive consultation over a number of years with the forestry industry and special interest groups. These suggestions were taken to the public through municipalities, festivals and fairs province-wide to determine public interest and opinion. From this process, the provincial tree committee made their selection.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this House to join in support of Bill 3 to designate the white spruce as Manitoba's provincial tree. Thank you.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that this debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to

move that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider and report of bills referred, namely, Bill 33.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of the bills referred, namely, Bill 33, with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 33—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairman of Committees): The Committee of the Whole will come to order to consider Bill 33, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

I would remind the committee that we proceed clause by clause and that all amendments must be moved at the point where they will appear in the bill if passed.

Shall subclause 1 of Clause 2 be passed—pass.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Madam Chairperson, I know when we had left on Thursday there were some discussions in regard to setting of MLAs' salaries, and the Liberal Party had brought forward a motion which was ruled upon and voted upon. I am wondering if the Government House Leader (Mr. Manness) might have any opening remarks regarding MLAs' salaries.

Point of Order

Madam Chairman: Was the honourable member of Inkster rising on a point of order?

Mr. Lamoureux: It was a question to the minister.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): I do not know if this is the clause; I suppose it is. It comes as close as possible to the import of the bill that addresses MLAs' salaries.

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is correct. Last week I undertook to discuss within the government caucus as to whether or not an attempt should be made to formulate an amendment that would put into place a commission of certain people that might report independently, analyze and report independently of this House with respect to members' salaries.

Madam Chairman, that discussion certainly took on a lot of views within our caucus. For the most part, members of the government caucus saw wisdom in trying to have such a body instituted to make recommendations. However, I must report to the House the government is not of the view that that commission should be given legislative powers by way of an act.

What we would propose, Madam Chairman, in being open to this—and we have discussed this issue several times. I know there is a desire by all parties to try and have removed from either the Legislative Assembly and indeed LAMC the discussion of ultimately what wages and salaries of members should be.

Nevertheless, getting to the point, we are of the view that LAMC should give this matter further discussion; that indeed in principle, setting an outside group into place by way of policy of LAMC and asking them to make a report, first of all to analyze the salaries of members as compared to those elsewhere in Canada, as compared to other comparable occupations in society and what other factors an independent outside group might like to bring to that type of analysis—that that should occur, but we would like it to be done within the embodiment of LAMC rather than this Legislature.

* (1430)

Madam Chairman, we found unacceptable in the Liberal amendment—and must remember, in case people forget, what we were voting on last week, and this is not reflecting now at all on the decision. What we were reflecting on was the admissibility of the amendment, and of course we were not voting on the principle of the amendment as to whether or not we accepted it.

What we would have found unacceptable, had we got that far, was that an outside group, firstly, including the Chief Justice of the province who had not been asked as to whether or not he would want to be part of a such body, that an outside group would make a recommendation that was binding on this House.

I still believe that, in theory, we are elected to this House for certain purposes and that is to assume responsibility over the decisions we make, and if the government of the day is going to continue to direct more of these decisions to outside bodies, as independent as they may be, for reference and secondly ultimate recommendation, which by the

Liberal amendment would have been locked in as having to be accepted by this House, Madam Chairman, I say to you that is unacceptable in principle to the government.

Nevertheless, there was a lot in that amendment that was of redeeming value and something that we will want to pursue in LAMC and that is a commitment I make on the record.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I must say from the outset that I am somewhat disappointed. We have tried discussions and debates when we are in a minority government. We have had the discussion and debates and are now in a majority government and the issue who sets MLAs' salaries is still before us.

We have an opportunity at this time to at least bring forward some type of an amendment to the act potentially, and that would take the responsibility of setting the salaries out of politicians', out of our hands. I am convinced that if you check with the public on this issue as I am sure the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has, it is overwhelming that MLAs, politicians, should not be setting their own salaries.

The Minister of Finance said that our proposed amendments would have locked us in to whatever the recommendation might have been. If that is the primary reason for objecting to bringing forward an amendment, I would have suggested that the Minister of Finance would have been better off to suggest a subamendment, something to the effect that this independent body for example report within the 60 days and it goes to Privileges and Elections Committee for ratification.

Madam Chairman: Order, please; order, please. I have allowed an unusual degree of latitude on this issue, but I would remind the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that he has now entered debate on an amendment that was previously ruled out of order and that the committee is now debating the bill clause by clause. Thank you.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, on the same point of order, when we started these discussions, it was on opening remarks, opening statements and there was given a lot of flexibility in terms of bringing forward amendments and comments. What I am doing is addressing those comments that were brought forward during the

opening statements. We have not passed a line since then so that is in the context that I make those remarks and would suggest to you that in fact it is not out of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Chairperson, I realize the difficult situation you are in because we did depart from our normal process last time. The difficulty, I think, was in fact we perhaps moved into a number of amendments ahead of when we might normally do so and I appreciate the latitude. I do believe, however, there is a will of the committee to deal with this in a flexible manner, which suggests that perhaps comments on this or other areas related to the bill be dealt with now in the same way we normally do prior to getting into all amendments but recognizing the fact we did jump the gun.

I recognize the difficult situation you are in, but I think there is a will of the committee to deal with those comments now and then proceed with clause by clause afterwards.

Madam Chairman: Is it the will of the committee that we allow the debate? Could I suggest, then, that we do it as the discussion relates to the clause before us?

Mr. Ashton: What I would suggest is if we can perhaps deal with general comments now and proceed to clause-by-clause votes afterward. I think it would make it a lot easier to deal with.

* * *

Madam Chairman: Does the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) wish to make an opening statement?

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, I appreciate once again the difficult situation you were placed in by perhaps the overeagerness of members to debate certain sections of this bill last time. I do appreciate your advice that we have diverted from the normal procedures. In making these comments, I essentially want to deal with a number of issues and then move into clause-by-clause consideration.

First of all, I want to deal with the matter raised by the Liberal House leader (Mr. Lamoureux) and discussed by the government House leader (Mr. Manness). We had an opportunity, of course, to review the amendment which had been tabled and had been indicated was out of order.

I want to indicate that our particular concern with the matter dealt with the shall implement section. I do not think that we should, in any way, shape or form, have a mandatory process set in place that deals with MLA salaries. I say that in indicating that our caucus, on the other hand, also has some difficulties with us being involved in the process in any way, shape or form.

I personally do not feel that we should be in the unique position of setting our own salaries, but I recognize on the other hand that you cannot set in place a review that might result in recommended change in salaries that is not acceptable either in a budgetary sense or to the people of Manitoba. In that sense, you need that sort of check. I would just indicate that it certainly can be discussed by LAMC, but I think in dealing with salaries generally we have to be up front with the people of Manitoba, and we have to have a system, and this is certainly the view of our caucus, which provides fair remuneration but also does not deal with people setting their own salaries on a regular basis, putting people in that conflict-of-interest situation.

I appreciate that this may be discussed, but I hope that the intent of the Liberals will not be misread, or I hope I am not misreading in any way, shape or form, because I do not think what anyone is suggesting, certainly our caucus, is that there be any major increases. I do not think anybody wants to see a freeze in one year and a significant jump in other years. That would only lead to a great deal of cynicism in terms of the members of the general public. Of course, this amendment was ruled out of order as was another amendment that we had moved.

I realize this is a unique situation in the sense that normally I would not realize this, Madam Chairperson, but I am making this as a way of an opening comment in a sense that we also had indicated that if the government was serious about reducing expenditures with the Legislative Assembly Management Commission that it itself should have brought in an amendment that would have reduced the constituency allowance payable to cabinet ministers that reflects the fact that cabinet ministers have greater resources than individual MLAs to deal with constituents.

I calculated that ministers have upwards of \$100,000-plus in terms of salaries and in terms of constituency allowance funding. I am basing that on the assumption of two staff people per minister.

There may be some with more, there may be some with less. I recognize that, but take that as an average. I look at the salaries that are paid, and I look at the fact that the cabinet ministers receive the same constituency allowance as other members.

* (1440)

I know the Finance minister has indicated, Madam Chairperson, that this was not brought in when the changes took place in 1986 or 1988. I would hope he would recognize, in fact I know he would probably recognize more than others, because I know he had some concerns in 1986 and 1988 that when we brought the changes no one had really encountered that situation before. It really was not a problem when constituency allowances really were nonexistent.

I remember when I was first elected, they were \$1,500 per member, nonreceiptable. That was changed to \$2,500 on a receiptable basis, was increased to \$10,000, which really allowed members for the first time to have an office, if not a staffed office and, of course, the recent shift to in some way, shape or form recognizing the need for an office and a staffperson. I am saying that because I know the minister himself at that time expressed his concerns.

The numbers I am using, incidentally, do not include such things as the cabinet office that the government has in Thompson. There was an Executive Council office there, has been since the '70s. One of the first things, however, the Conservatives, these frugally, fiscal conservative-minded Conservatives, did was they put in a full-time staffperson who, I understand, probably receives upwards of \$60,000 a year. -(interjection)- \$60,000. In Brandon -(interjection)- well, I appreciate, we will deal with that in Estimates if the minister can clarify what the exact salary is, but there is a full-time person who was not there.

I did not deal also in this context, nor did the member for Flin Flon, with the Brandon cabinet office, which was moved into renovated commercial space, which was staffed by an individual making \$54,000 a year. I believe. I know there would be some who might cynically suggest he was hired to run against the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). I am not suggesting that, Madam Chairperson. The fact that he did and the fact that the person who was employed in the Thompson office eventually did is, I am sure, just another one

of those coincidences that the Conservatives have experienced recently when it comes to what might appear to be somewhat different in a political patronage sense. I am not suggesting that. I leave the people of Manitoba to come to that conclusion.

What I want to say, Madam Chairperson, is that what is missing in this bill is exactly that type of recognition. There is no indication that cabinet ministers, with that \$100,000-plus of resources, are willing to take a lead, if you like, to really show some sort of sacrifice in this particular case. When I see the clauses in here which would reduce the ability of all MLAs to serve their constituents at a time when very much because of the policies of this government—I am getting more and more calls on a daily basis, people who are unemployed, people who are having difficulties in dealing with government.

I am not suggesting it is strictly because of the fact we have a Conservative government nationally and provincially but, once again, Madam Chairperson, I think it is one of those coincidences that the Tories always talk about. I will leave the people of Manitoba to deal with it, but we are faced with a situation where we have no ability to influence this bill. This is a government bill. It does not come out of consensus of Legislative Assembly Management Commission. I want to indicate for the record that, had it reflected certainly the views of other caucuses we believe—and I am sure the Liberal House Leader and the Liberal caucus can reflect this—there could have been more money saved.

But what we have essentially here is selective constraint, and I believe it is selective constraint that leaves intact the greater ability of the government to get its message out and deal with concerns, than with members of the opposition who do not have \$100,000-plus worth of resources, who do not have access to the cabinet offices in Thompson and Brandon, and God knows where else they are going to establish these Cadillac offices. Madam Chairperson, we do not have those resources and we do not see any sign in this bill that the government has really recognized what this whole exercise should really have been about.

We are, indeed, into tough circumstances in this province. We in the NDP caucus believe it has been created or certainly contributed to by this government, certainly been created by the federal Tories. We are faced with tough times because of Tory policies, and now we have a government bill

that is trying to suggest that somehow real across-the-board constraint is taking place that reflects that. I do not believe anyone reading this bill will really do that. I believe if anything, what the government has done is going to increase the cynicism related to politicians because a lot of people—I know in my constituency looking at the fact I have got a \$27,000 a year allowance to have an office and I have a half-time staff person, whereas the cabinet office has a recently added individual who is earning upwards of \$60,000.

The people at Brandon are not going to buy that. The people in Winnipeg who see that the government, outside of that, probably has 10 times the resources that individual MLAs do to get their message across, that is continuing to send out information, some might suggest propaganda, to members of the public. I think everyone knows the government has far more resources, 10 times the resources of opposition parties.

That is what is most concerning, and that is the bottom line Madam Chairperson: this bill has a number of serious omissions. I want to indicate though for the record the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) I know acknowledged this, that a number of the proposals in this were made in a spirit of co-operation by members of the opposition. These cuts were not all developed, these restrictions in terms of the budgets were not all developed by the government. A number of them resulted directly from opposition suggestions, so I do not want there to be any suggestion on the record that this is somehow strictly a government bill in terms of what is in the bill. I will say, however, it is strictly a government bill in the sense of what is not in the bill.

Essentially what is not in the bill to my mind is a reflection of the greater resources that government MLAs have over opposition members. We will raise that, we will continue to raise that. The government caucus, for example, has 12 staff people; we have nine. Government caucus has 10 backbenchers, there are more staff people than there are backbenchers in the government caucus and no indication the government is going to take any real leadership on that. I realize that would not appear necessarily in this statute, but I believe it certainly accompanies in terms of the principle of it.

We pointed also to the operating budgets. Once again the government caucus which has 10 backbenchers, has more resources than the 20 member NDP caucus in terms of an operating

budget. That is over and above what it has in terms of the government through its cabinet ministers. How fair is that? Then you add in the \$100,000 for each cabinet minister, not even looking at overall government expenditures, and I will argue with anyone that the government has 10 times the resources of the opposition to get its views across. If anyone ever says—and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says, well, they inherited that, he inherited that. First of all, the major increases that did take place in the constituency allowance took place by all-party agreement in 1988, and I stress the all-party agreement because I believe that it was a reflection on everyone's part of the change in society.

The bottom line, Madam Chairperson, is if times indeed have changed, it is up to the government, I believe, if it is going to have any credibility with this bill—not necessarily what is in it because not all of the sections of this bill are a problem. What I am saying is if they have any credibility they could have, they should have shown far more leadership in terms of dealing with their own resource base.

The bottom line I think is that this bill will lead to some reductions in terms of the LAMC budget, and certainly if we are faced with a choice between health care and education and other issues, we have no difficulty in contributing to that. I am not sure, given what has happened with the budget, that any of the money that is going to be saved out of this exercise is going to end up in Education, Health or any of the areas that we care about. We see that those budgets are being pared to the bone, are being slashed on a daily basis.

I am very disappointed in the government's lack of initiative on this. I want to indicate that we had drafted an amendment that would have cut back the cabinet ministers' resources in terms of constituency allowances, not cut them out entirely. They would have left the allowances in a higher position than they were in 1988 that would not have dealt with other areas that we cannot deal with, political staff, cabinet offices, communication staff, staff in the caucus offices, operation budgets in the caucus offices. We are facing the position that no matter what we do, first of all, it is likely to be ruled out of order because we are very restricted in our ability to deal with bills such as this. We cannot add expenditures and we cannot delete expenditures in areas not covered by the bill.

So we are faced with a difficult situation where we just cannot move motions that have any real opportunity of having any discussion. We have seen that already with two items being ruled out of order. I recognize that we challenged it but I must say, Madam Chairperson, I recognize the difficult decision you had to make on that. So we are in a position of really having to sit back here with a bill that was not the result of consensus, that we can do very little about in terms of moving amendments.

* (1450)

We say to the government that this bill is not a satisfactory bill in terms of its omissions. We leave it up to the government. It is in the government's court, and we have appealed through whatever mechanisms we have. We tried last week; we have tried through LAMC; we have argued the point with this government that they must show the leadership with their own resources. But they will not listen to us in LAMC and certainly they have indicated through the process that they were not willing to do so. If they will not listen to us in this committee, and I recognize it is as much the rules, but once again the government could have brought in any one of the amendments that we had proposed and moved any other amendments we might propose.

They can bring in anything in terms of amendments at this point in time. They could deal with those concerns, but if they are not going to listen to us then they will have to listen to the public. I think they will have to discuss with the public whether they think it is fair for them as a government in difficult times not to take the initiative, as has been suggested, in terms of starting with their own cabinet ministers' resources. I am not talking about cabinet ministers' salaries because that is another debate altogether. I am talking about political staffing resources reflecting the situation we are in.

With those comments, I can indicate we are prepared to go into clause by clause. I believe some of the sections that have been drafted deserve some further clarification. I point for example to the rules on capital allowances. We have indicated publicly we were I believe first to respond to the Auditor, indicating that absolutely had to be changed in terms of the capital disposition. We have no difficulty with that, but I want to indicate that this clause was put into the bill after we were initially shown copies of the draft bill. We have had no role in drafting it, and we would like to ensure that whatever system is brought up is a fair system, a

logical system, and is a reasonable system. That once again is the kind of difficulty I think one runs into when you have governments making unilateral decisions, especially in areas where there is agreement in principle.

There is no one who disagrees with this principle. We are on public record, our caucus, the Liberal caucus, and the Conservative caucus, and it is because we never had this situation before. There was never any difficulty with capital assets when constituency allowance was worth \$2,500. There were not any capital assets. You barely had money for postage out of your constituency office. Because of the changes in rules, this anomaly arose. It is an unacceptable anomaly. It has to be closed. It has to be dealt with. We have to follow the Auditor's Report.

Once again, these are the types of things that could have been dealt with far more effectively if this government had shown some real leadership and also some real commitment to consensus, because the reason we have consensus on LAMC bills is that this is the one area where, as opposition members, we have any influence—not control, but any influence.

The government makes decisions on all the other budgets; we then vote upon it in the Legislative Assembly, but this building is not a branch of the Executive Council of government. This is the Legislative Assembly, and this is why we have had the development of a far different system. What I find unfortunate in this particular case is that the government, by its actions on this bill, has proven the point, proven why there is need for such consensus on matters affecting the Legislative Assembly, why it has to be dealt with in co-operation and consultation with all three parties, because, Madam Chairperson, if they had followed that through, we would have found a far more complete bill, a far better bill in terms of its specific contents.

As I said, we have no choice at this point in time; it is a fait accompli. We have made our suggestions, we have urged the government to improve it. The rest is up to them. I would suggest, therefore, that there is really not much point in doing much more than proceeding with the clause by clause, and we will leave it up to the government to explain to the people of Manitoba why they should continue to have ten times the resources of other MLAs, why they should continue to have only a cosmetic change in the resources available to them,

when the reality is, this government is going to have significant resources, political resources in place that will not be touched by this bill or by any other decision of this government.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I wanted to pick up on the point of the MLAs' salaries and the setting of our salaries. Prior to being interrupted, what I was trying to point out was the fact that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has said that we cannot have the amendment that we have suggested primarily because the amendment would have locked us in. What I was trying to explain to the minister at the time is that we could institute a mechanism that would have allowed the independent committee to report with a recommendation. After the recommendation, you could have had the 60 days after the following election where the independent body reports to the Legislature, at which time a standing committee would be struck to review and recommend to the legislative Chamber, at which time we could have had a vote on the recommendation.

There are ways of getting out of what the Minister of Finance has said is his primary concern and his primary reason for not allowing an amendment of this nature forward. So I would suggest to the Minister of Finance with all sincerity that between now and third reading, he will have another opportunity to bring forward an amendment, that he do bring forward an amendment that for once and all would take the responsibility of setting MLAs' salaries out of the MLAs' responsibility and put it into the independent body, because we in the Liberal Party do not believe MLAs should be setting their own salary.

I did touch upon in my opening remarks many of the things that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) had pointed across and, rather than going over them again, will go through the act line by line.

Madam Chairman: Shall subclause 1 of Clause 2 be passed?

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): Madam Chairman, I would just like to say a few words in opening. You know, once again, I get up rather reluctantly, but after one listens to the member for Thompson wax eloquently about how pious and how great they were and are, and how bad things are, I have to say a few words about the former members of the Legislature in this House.

The member for Thompson himself, he talks about constituency offices and all of these things. I remember driving up to Thompson when we were in opposition and looking for the office that the—what do they call it?

An Honourable Member: Northern regional office.

Mr. Connery: Regional office, yes. It was a regional office, and who was in that office? The member for Thompson had his office in there, eating high off the hog. His wife was there making use of it, and that was the sort of thing that they talk about. Now they wax eloquent when he himself was taking advantage of that when he should have had his own office. He talks about having offices; he had one in the regional office paid for by the government of Manitoba.

Madam Chairperson, it is also interesting in the mailing. I remember sitting here the session before, and the member for The Pas was sitting behind me. We were talking about the mailing costs that were going out and how high the NDP mailing costs were. They were just astronomical. I do not know. Compared to the Conservatives and the Liberals, there was no comparison. I remember the previous member for The Pas saying, oh, we know how you did it, because we did it through our minister's offices. That is how the NDP got away from it. They had very low mailing costs, but they did it through their minister's offices. -(interjection)-

The member says, how did they do it in Florida. Well, I was in Palm Springs this last week, and it was much nicer there. The weather was great. It was in the mid-90s most days, and—

Madam Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Connery: Madam Chairman, also the member for The Pas talks about the sort of things that the members from the NDP did, who used his cottage as a second residence to get the second residence money. I think that is—

Madam Chairman: Order, please. I would like to remind the committee that all debate—and there should be very limited debate in this situation; we are supposed to be reviewing the bill clause by clause—should be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion.

Mr. Connery: I would just ask for the same amount of time the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) had.

Madam Chairperson, when I came into this Legislature in 1986, I believe it was \$3,500 constituency allowances that we received.

An Honourable Member: It was not quite that.

* (1500)

Mr. Connery: Was it \$2,500? Did it go to \$3,500 and then \$10,000, or did it go to—it went right up to \$10,000. Madam Chairperson, I remember the big argument then was that the NDP were wanting it to go up to \$25,000. There was an awful battle at LAMC to control it at 10, but they wanted 25. That is as clear as can be, and you know, the member for Thompson shrugs his shoulders and says that is impossible, but it was. It went up to \$10,000 and now to \$25,000 plus the indexing, which brings it up to about \$28,000, so when the member for Thompson waxes eloquent about how ministers should cut back on theirs, they had all of those political staff plus they had a few others hidden around in pockets here and there. They had the largest communications group that was ever, ever had.

Madam Chairman, it was also the NDP—and I hope the current Speaker does not hear this—that added an extra staffperson to the Speaker's office then, which was Myrna Phillips, who was the Speaker before when they were in government—added another person into that office. She was not my favourite person, but—

Madam Chairperson, I do think there are a couple of things in the bill that I would like to see. We talk about our constituency allowances, and it says what the LAMC can do. I think sincerely that all of the expenditures that we as MLAs make under the LAMC is open to the public at any time, so that the public can then view what we are doing. It is public taxpayers' money. It is a lot of money. It is \$28,000, depending on what it comes down to now, times 57. I think the public at large has the right to see what we are spending their money on in the constituency. I think that is very key. I do not know if that would ever be entertained. It says LAMC can do it, and I think they should be doing that.

Madam Chairperson, I just wanted to put a few points on the record, that while the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) waxes eloquently about the integrity and so forth of what this Chamber should be, we need to look at the record of the NDP when they were in power, and it was not one that they would want opened up to the public.

I agree, Madam Chairperson, that all of the capital expenditures spent out of constituency allowance access money should remain with the LAMC or with the Legislature for future MLAs, so as one person retires or is defeated, the government should not have to reinvest. I know that was not the rule before, and some members who were defeated opted to keep that equipment. I do not think it is right. I think it happened from, not only one party, it happened from others, I believe; we do not know for sure. That should belong to the people of Manitoba and should stay within those constituencies. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Shall subclause 1 of Clause 2 be passed—pass; subclause 2 of Clause 2—pass.

Subclause 1 of Clause 3 be passed—pass; subclause 2 of Clause 3—pass; subclause 3 of Clause 3—pass. Shall subclause 4 of Clause 3 be passed?

Mr. Ashton: I just wanted to ask the Finance minister (Mr. Manness) to get a clearer idea of the intent of this, that is, this basically is to give LAMC the ability to do this. LAMC would develop rules regarding the disposition of staff or equipment and also the question of public disclosure.

Once again, those are two areas where there is agreement in principle. I do not think there is any disagreement, any members of this House; in fact, I was quite surprised to find that even our rules were not publicly available to members of the public, which strikes me as rather an odd development over the years. I am not blaming anyone. I think it just occurred that way.

The people of Manitoba should have full access to understand what the allowance is being spent on, the fact that it is indeed being spent on constituency activities, and obviously LAMC and members of the Legislature should be aware of that.

I just want to make sure that is the intent of this, because once again this was added afterwards by the Finance minister, and we have not had the opportunity to discuss it other than informally.

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairman, I guess even though some of us have been here for a relatively long time we still do not—at least we should not pretend to know all the rules, as our constituents would expect us to.

Certainly, as the member indicates, what is involved here in a form of a principle is that the Legislature, indeed the government as such, will take over the ownership of all items on the capital

side once a person ceases to be a member. As far as public disclosure, the part (f) under 59(2.3) certainly puts into place the discussion at LAMC as to how the rules that we use to govern our constituency allowances are to be certainly available in some greater fashion to the public. That is what is intended here.

The government is not saying that a set of disclosure rules has to be followed. They are saying LAMC, though, if it accepts, which it will have to, what this Legislature of this Chamber dictates as to what the principles are will have to find some method to provide that greater disclosure.

Madam Chairman: Shall subclause 4—

Mr. Ashton: Sorry, Madam Chairperson. I just want to indicate that we have some concerns about the way LAMC is operating and has operated in terms of dealing with a number of matters, in particular the fact that the government essentially has abandoned the former consensual arrangement. I want to indicate prior to this being referred to LAMC, and whatever our concerns might be in terms of other areas, that we certainly agree with the principle in both these areas. We find ourselves in a difficult position of having an item referred to LAMC where we no longer feel that the consensual basis under which LAMC has functioned since its establishment in the early 1980s is in place.

I would hope that the government House leader would also undertake discussions with the caucus on a formal basis. We are certainly willing to deal with these particular issues as soon as possible—

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson is clearly out of order. What you are now debating is the operating procedures for LAMC. What we are debating is subclause 4 of Clause 3. Your first question was entirely relevant.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, the section I am addressing my remarks to does deal with the Legislative Assembly Management Commission. I am only referring to that in that context.

Madam Chairman: I am aware of that, but it does not relate to the clause.

Mr. Ashton: I believe we had, Madam Chairperson—if I might be of assistance—some will to deal with these concerns. I was just stating on the record that we are willing to deal with these issues before any formal meeting of LAMC,

whenever that might take place and whatever context, because we have concerns about the way LAMC is operating.

We will deal—I am requesting the government House leader start discussions which will relate specifically to this clause as soon as possible, because we are anxious to deal with these two particular items.

Madam Chairman: Shall subclause 4 of Clause 3 be passed?

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I was in discussion with the Legislative Counsel at the time and Clause 3(2) had passed by. I am wondering if it would be possible to get leave to go back to that clause?

Madam Chairman: With the honourable member for Inkster's indulgence, I would like to complete the clause we are on at this point in time. We will then go back. I will ask the committee if there is the will for leave to revert back to subclause 2 of Clause 3.

Shall subclause 4 of Clause 3 be passed—(pass).

Does the honourable member for Inkster have leave to have the committee revert back to subclause 2 of Clause 3? Is it the will? Leave.

* (1510)

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I want first to thank members for allowing leave to go back to 3(2). As I had said, the reason why I requested the leave was because I was in discussion with Legislative Counsel in terms of an amendment that I had talked about during second reading. That amendment was in dealing with the access accounts.

We feel in the Liberal Party that there is more money that could have been saved through LAMC. We had made reference to that during LAMC discussions. We had asked LAMC to treat it seriously. Unfortunately, they did not respond to it.

I had thought yesterday that we would be moving a joint amendment, both the Liberals and the New Democrats, on this point, but unfortunately, in fact, we are not going to be moving that amendment and that is why, as I say, I had to quickly draft up an amendment.

I will move at this time, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema),

THAT subsection 3(2) be amended by adding the following after subsection 59(1.1):

Reduced Allowances

59(1.2) Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (1.1), the constituency and access allowance payable to the Leader of the official Opposition, Leader of the other opposition party, Speaker and each member of the Executive Council for the fiscal year commencing on April 1, 1991, and ending March 31, 1992, shall not exceed \$10,000.

(French version)

Il est proposé que le paragraphe 3(2) soit amendé par adjonction après le paragraphe 59(1.1) de ce qui suit:

Réduction des Indemnités

59(1.2) Malgré les paragraphes (1) et (1.1), le montant des indemnités de circonscription et des frais de représentation auxquels ont droit le chef de l'opposition officielle, le chef de l'autre parti d'opposition, le président et les membres du conseil exécutif ne peut excéder 10,000\$ au cours de l'exercice commençant le 1er avril 1991 et se terminant le 31 mars 1992.

My apologies for the mess in reading it.

Madam Chairman: I would like to ask the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) if this amendment could be deferred to a little later on in the clause-by-clause discussion as the amendment submitted has not been translated.

Is there leave of the committee to defer it?

An Honourable Member: Madam Chair, it has to be translated.

Madam Chairman: It must be translated before I can even consider the amendment.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Chair, I only ask that we too be given a copy of it. While you are ruling as to how admissible it is or whether it is admissible, I too would like an opportunity to review the amendment. So, yes, in answer to your question, we can defer this.

Madam Chairman: Is it the will of the committee to grant leave to defer this amendment until such time as it has been translated? Leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Chairman: Leave has been granted. Subclause 1 of Clause 4—pass; subclause 2 of Clause 4—pass; subclause 1 of Clause 5—pass; subclause 2 of Clause 5—pass.

Is it the will of the committee that we have a five-minute recess? Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

* * *

The House took recess at 3:15 p.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 3:37 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Order, please. Will the committee please come to order?

In consideration of the amendment with relation to constituency allowances, this amendment seeks to establish a new structural relationship between members, that is, a two-tier system which is beyond the scope of the bill. Therefore, the amendment is out of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, with regret, I challenge your order.

Madam Chairman: The question before the committee is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour, say yea. All those opposed, say nay. In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I would like a recorded vote, please.

* (1610)

Madam Chairman: Call in the members.

Order, please. The question before the committee is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

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

Yeas 28, Nays 24.

Madam Chairman: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

Shall the preamble be passed—pass; Title—pass. Bill be reported. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 33, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, and has directed me to report the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer), that the report of the Committee of the Whole be received.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT STAGE

Bill 33—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs),

THAT Bill No. 33 be amended by adding the following after section 3:

Section 60.1 added

3.1 The following is added after section 60:

Compensation committee established

60.1(1) Following each general election, the Legislative Assembly Management Commission shall establish a compensation committee to consider the indemnities and allowances payable to members, and to report and make recommendations to the Commission, within 60 days after the general election, on the indemnities and allowances that should be payable to the members.

Composition of the compensation committee

60.1(2) A compensation committee established under subsection (1) shall be appointed by the Legislative Assembly Management Commission and shall consist of

- (a) the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench or a designate of the Chief Justice;
- (b) the president of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce or a designate of the president; and
- (c) the president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour or a designate of the president.

Report to be tabled In Legislative Assembly

60.1(3) Within 30 days after a report is submitted under subsection (1), the presiding commissioner of the Legislative Assembly Management Commission shall table the report in the Legislative Assembly if it is in session or, if it is not in session, within 30 days of the beginning of the next session.

Referral of report to committee

60.1(4) A report that is tabled in the Legislative

Assembly under subsection (3) shall be referred, within 30 days of being tabled, to a standing committee of the Legislature to report within 60 days on the recommendations of the compensation committee.

Implementation of report

60.1(5) Where the Legislative Assembly receives and votes on the report of a standing committee that is received under subsection (4), the Legislative Assembly shall implement the report in accordance with the vote of the Legislative Assembly, and this Act is deemed to be amended as necessary to implement the report.

* (1620)

(French version)

Il est proposé que le projet de loi soit amendé par adjonction, après l'article 3, de ce qui suit:

Adjonction de l'article 60.1

3.1 Il est ajouté, après l'article 60, ce qui suit:

Constitution d'un comité chargé de la rémunération

60.1(1) Après chaque élection générale, la Commission de régie de l'Assemblée législative constitue un comité chargé de la rémunération dont le rôle consiste à examiner le montant des indemnités de circonscription et des frais de représentation auxquels ont droit les députés et à présenter un rapport ainsi qu'à faire des recommandations à la Commission, dans les 60 jours suivant l'élection générale, sur le montant qui devrait leur être versé.

Composition

60.1(2) Le comité visé au paragraphe (1) est composé des personnes suivantes:

- a) le juge en chef de la Cour du Banc de la Reine ou son délégué;
- b) le président de la Chambre de commerce du Manitoba ou son délégué.
- c) le président de la Fédération du travail du Manitoba ou son délégué.

Dépôt du rapport

60.1(3) Au plus tard 30 jours après la présentation du rapport, le commissaire président de la Commission de régie de l'Assemblée législative le dépose à l'Assemblée législative immédiatement ou, si elle ne siège pas, dans les 30 premiers jours de séance ultérieurs.

Renvol en comité

60.1(4) Un comité permanent de l'Assemblée

législative est saisi du rapport déposé en application du paragraphe (3) dans les 30 jours suivant son dépôt. Le comité permanent doit présenter un rapport sur les recommandations du Comité chargé de la rémunération dans les 60 jours.

Suite donnée au rapport

60.1(5) Lorsqu'elle reçoit le rapport du comité permanent et tient un vote à son sujet, l'Assemblée législative doit donner suite au rapport en conformité avec le résultat du vote. La présente loi est alors réputée être modifiée dans la mesure nécessaire pour qu'il soit donné suite au rapport.

* (1640)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The amendment, as proposed by the honourable member for Inkster, contravenes our Rule 53(1) and I quote: "Any vote, resolution, address or Bill introduced in the House for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue, or of any tax or impost to any purpose whatsoever, or to impose any new or additional charge upon the public revenue or upon the people, or to release or compound any sum of money due to the Crown, or to grant any property of the Crown, or to authorize any loan or any charge upon the credit of Her Majesty in right of the Province, shall be recommended to the House by a message from the Lieutenant-Governor before it is considered by the House." So this can only be considered by a message to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor. It also addresses sections of the act which were not addressed in the bill. Therefore, I must rule the honourable member's motion out of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, with respect, I challenge your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The ruling of the Chair has been challenged; therefore, the question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour, please say yea. All those opposed will please say nay. In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

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

Yeas

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Connery, Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Dewar (Selkirk), Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Evans

(Interlake), Filmon, Findlay, Friesen, Gilleshammer, Harper, Helwer, Hickes, Laurendeau, Maloway, Manness, Martindale, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Penner, Praznik, Reid, Reimer, Render, Rose, Santos, Stefanson, Storie, Sveinson, Vodrey, Wasylycia-Leis, Wowchuk.

Nays

Alcock, Carr, Carstairs, Cheema, Edwards, Gaudry, Lamoureux.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 45, Nays 7.

Mr. Speaker: The rule of the Chair has been sustained.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering now if you are calling the question with respect to concurrence.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 33, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, reported from the Committee of the Whole be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

THIRD READINGS

Bill 33—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, with leave of this House, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 33, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative) be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable government House leader have leave to introduce Bill 33 for third reading? Leave? Agreed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, just some final comments on third reading to reiterate what we have said earlier and make it very clear, in terms of the record, our views on this particular bill.

We indicated on second reading, when we were essentially discussing the principle, that we did not disagree with the principle of the bill although it was brought in in a way that we feel was not conducive to the proper functioning of this Legislature, and

also, I think, in the best interests of the people of Manitoba.

We believe that the government has set a bad precedent in terms of dealing with matters such as these, particularly given, as the government House leader had indicated, the general concurrence in all parties of the need to look at our own House. By that I include this Chamber, and I include the Legislative Assembly generally, the area obviously where we have some input, however limited, as members of the Legislature in terms of budgetary decisions.

I wanted to indicate we were disappointed that some of the specific amendments that we introduced were not in order. I recognized that earlier, even, for example, in the case of the type of amendment that the Liberal House leader introduced in terms of cutting constituency allowances for cabinet ministers to what we felt was a more realistic level, we recognized in advance that we were not going to be able to deal with those questions in order.

I want to indicate that more could have been done both in terms of the money that was involved and also in terms of showing some real reflection of what I think needs to be shown.

I want to indicate also, that was one of the concerns that we had in terms of the matter brought in by the Liberals, the amendment. I do not think in a year in which salaries are being frozen there should be really anything other than a recognition that we are in tough times. I do not think we should be looking at anything other than the current situation, and obviously all three parties have agreed to a freeze in salaries.

I do not think any of us would want to see put in place any automatic mechanism almost in the same breath that we are saying we are freezing salaries, but would it lead to recommendations that might increase those salaries at a future point in time? I say that because I recognize the attempt on the part of the Liberals to try and take it out of the hands of the Legislature. I think what we need, in a way, is almost—we should not be making those decisions as MLAs, but we also need some sort of a check because we do not want to set into place the type of mechanism we might have seen here.

What if this body had recommended a doubling of salaries? I do not think that would have been seen as being realistic or acceptable, not just to the

people of Manitoba but also in terms of the members of this Legislature.

It is a difficult dilemma. It is a paradox, I guess, in the sense that I do not think any of us want to be in the position of having to deal with such issues as sensitive as our own salaries, yet, as the Legislative Assembly make final decisions that do to some extent reflect that, that was the concern I think was expressed.

That is why, by the way, Mr. Speaker, we did feel that in terms of your ruling we did support the sustaining of it. We had tried to get a wide variety of amendments dealt with earlier. That was not the case. This bill was restricted to begin with by its very nature, by the nature of the parliamentary system.

I want to reiterate that, because I want to say to the government House leader that what he has set in place is not a good precedent, either for the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba or for the people of Manitoba, because if we are going to make decisions reflecting the budget of the Legislative Assembly, a bill introduced by the government is not the way to do it.

Any bill that is introduced by the government has a severe set of restrictions placed on it immediately in terms of its ability to reflect the views of other members of the Legislature. We cannot, Mr. Speaker, increase expenditures, but we also cannot reduce expenditures in other areas that are prescribed by the bill.

We have had a series of rulings on points of order that have proven the point we made at the beginning of the debate on this bill. This is no way to deal with the running of the Legislature—no way to deal with it. I want to indicate—reiterate for the record—that there was extensive discussion, and I believe there could have been a consensus of all members of this Chamber. That consensus might not have reflected everything each particular party would have chosen to do if it had had the choice, if it had had the ability to impose its own particular view of what the LAMC budget should have been—the Legislative Assembly budget.

* (1650)

Our view was not the view of the Liberals, which was not the view of the Conservatives. I want to indicate that I believe we were very close in terms of a consensus, and unfortunately the government chose instead to ignore the Legislative Assembly

Management Commission and bring in a bill which was subsequently changed from the copy that we had seen, so we end up with a bill, which we were told there was significant urgency for; that we were told the government wished to see passed as quickly as possible; a bill that we had no difficulties in passing various sections, but we were placed in a very difficult position. They are dealing with sections that I believe could have been better developed by discussions with the parties involved. A bill that could have been a much better bill—it could have been a much better bill—if the government had chosen to listen to the suggestions made by opposition members in the LAMC.

I want to indicate that the bill does include some of those suggestions. I am not trying to give credit or source any particular one of those suggestions. There are elements of this bill that would have formed part of a consensus out of LAMC. I know that the government House leader will be the first one to reflect on that, because he has mentioned that in his opening statements.

Mr. Speaker, we are ending up I think with a rather unfortunate exercise here in cosmetics in terms of public relations, in the sense that what could have been a very substantive bill in terms of sending a message to the people of Manitoba has been watered down by the government's refusal to consider anything that really deals with the very dichotomy of this place, the difference between the resources that Executive Council has and that other members of the Legislature.

I have been on various different sides. I have been a government backbencher. I have been in opposition, and I remember the kind of resources that we had. The bottom line is the government has far greater resources to deal with the concerns of the people of Manitoba. We are very concerned at a time when there are significant cuts—vicious cuts—being planned by this government with anything that would restrict our ability to communicate with the people of Manitoba, and yet leave in place, intact, the ability of the government to try and put its own particular spin on what is happening; its own particular propaganda out to the people of Manitoba—that is why this bill is a flawed bill.

We will support the bill as it is, but we do so in saying that there could have been other items in there that would have been fairer, that would have saved the taxpayers a great deal more money, and

also would have maintained what is important to the functioning of this Legislature.

You know, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stands in Question Period and says, give us your ideas. He says, give us your ideas. On this bill, we gave our ideas. We gave our ideas in LAMC. We have given them in this committee. The government has chosen to turn a deaf ear to those ideas, so let not it make any pretence of wanting to listen to us on any issue, in particular on broader issues such as economic issues, when even within the handling of the LAMC budget, the Legislative Assembly budget, this government refused to listen.

The government must realize, Mr. Speaker, this is not the way to proceed. It must listen to some of its own statements, when it was in opposition, talking about the important roles for members of the Legislature in terms of matters such as this, and when there is agreement on principles in terms of where to proceed, when there is agreement on some of the matters before the bill. The attempt by this government to make a cheap PR exercise out of what is really a serious matter—dealing with our Legislative agenda is serious, and I want to say that it should be a clear message to the people of Manitoba and all MLAs.

Despite the government's hijacking of this process, all MLAs will be supporting—and I am sure the Liberals will as well—what is going to be a pretty tough bill for any MLA to support, in the sense of having salary freezes, restrictions in constituency allowances.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, it is a bill, as I said, that could have been reached with complete consensus on all parties, because there is consensus on the major points, and we have communicated that to the government.

I would suggest to the government House leader (Mr. Manness) that in the future he should plan on trying to involve all members of the Legislature, and I would suggest to the government House leader that in the future, we will end up with better budgets involving the Legislative Assembly Management Commission and better bills such as this—a better Legislative Assembly Management Commission, because we all have ideas. We have tried to contribute all our ideas. The government has only listened in some cases, has turned a deaf ear in the other. That is unfortunate for this could have been a bill fully supported with the complete support of all

members of this House. We will support it, but we point once again to its serious omissions.

House Business

Mr. Manness: On a point of the House Business, I know the Liberal Party also wants to speak on third reading. I wonder if there might be a disposition to waive private members' hour so that we could provide debate on third reading, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that we not see the clock and then proceed into private members' hour after we have dealt with Bill 33. I believe we could give leave to do it that way.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? No. There is no agreement there.

Is it the will of the House that the Speaker not look at the clock until such time as Bill 33 for third reading has been debated and Royal Assent? Is that agreed upon?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: That is agreed. Okay.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I understand then I have a few minutes before private members' hour? We go until 5 p.m?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. For clarification, we have leave of the House to continue debating Bill 33 for third reading and at which time we will go into private members' hour after Royal Assent is granted right after third reading.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of second reading, I had touched upon a few things that I believe in particular about this bill. I want to reiterate a few of these things.

I want to start back to when we got together several months back in an LAMC meeting when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) came to LAMC and said to both opposition parties that in the spirit of co-operation, in good negotiations, we, on the government, want to show by leadership and to bring forward a cut of \$400,000 to the LAMC budget, an overall cut of \$400,000.

The response from the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party in LAMC was very warm and receptive. Opening remarks from both parties were somewhere in the area of, yes, that we too want to be responsible, that we want to contribute to the debate in a positive fashion, that we would look at resources that we have been given through our access through our caucus office.

Mr. Speaker, we went into the discussions with the idea of negotiating on a consensus. What we have before us is not a bill that was achieved through consensus, even though the bill itself, we in the Liberal Party support and will vote in favour of this bill, as I said, in second reading.

There are several things that could have been done that would have made this bill a much better bill than we have right now before us. I pointed out that the government's initial intent was to save \$400,000. We could have saved over \$1 million through this department, Mr. Speaker, and I even pointed out where we could have saved the additional \$449 million. We have seen that. I stand corrected—\$449,000. -(interjection)- A small error. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says that is actually quite a large error, but at least I admit \$49 million is a lot of money.

Mr. Speaker, I had pointed out the fact that the 18 ministers, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the Leader of the Liberal Party and, in fact, the Speaker's Office have resources that backbenchers of the Conservative caucus and opposition members do not have in that they have executive assistants and they have special assistants.

Mr. Speaker, as backbenchers and members of the opposition, a good portion of our access account is used in the hiring of someone so that we can have someone answering our telephones at the constituency office, doing constituency work for us. If we want to serve our constituents appropriately, we need to have someone. It is not an option for us in terms of how we can allocate the money out as it is for a minister because the minister, the leaders of all three political parties and yourself have the resources of staff years.

I know some of the government ministers say no, no, no, we never use our executive assistants; no, no, no, we never use our special assistants to do political work. Ever since I have been elected, the Leader of our party has appointed me onto LAMC. I have been in the LAMC discussions, and I have

heard time after time how EAs and special assistants are, in fact, used for a lot of constituency work.

* (1700)

During those discussions, Mr. Speaker, at no time did I hear members of the Conservative Party say that, in fact, that is not the case. In fact, I heard former ministers from the New Democratic administration say, in fact, that was the case; that, in fact, their EAs and special assistants are used for constituency work.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe it is irresponsible for us to say that the \$15,000 could have been taken off the ministers, and not only the ministers, as I pointed out. The Leader of the Liberal Party was willing to take the \$15,000. I am not sure, I would hope that the Leader of the New Democratic Party would have been willing to take it. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you yourself would be in favour of such a move, and that would have saved \$315,000.

I do not believe that would have affected the good work that many of the ministers do in their constituency office. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that it would have been putting us more on an equal footing when it comes to serving our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the caucus staffing. The Conservative caucus of 11 have 12 research staff years designated. That is more than one person for every member. There is no reason why the backbenchers cannot be served by 8 members. The caucus of 20 and the New Democratic Party is served by that number. There is no reason why the government 11 backbenchers cannot be served by that same number. That would have saved an additional \$100,000.

We can go on to the caucus budget. When we look at the caucus budget, once again we see that after four members, every member from each caucus is entitled to \$3,000 that goes toward the caucus budget. Mr. Speaker, you yourself have said on several occasions that you do not use your caucus office. Many of the ministers, I am sure, if not on the record at least off the record would say that, in fact, they do not require the services of the Conservative caucus because in their own departments they have receptionists, they have clerical workers, and again they have their EAs and special assistants. So they do not need the same services out of the caucus office as the two

opposition parties require. They do not need to have 12 people working for 11 backbenchers. That in itself, in terms of salary, would save an additional \$100,000.

If you take into account those three points alone, Mr. Speaker, you will find that it is a saving of over \$460,000. You combine that with what was suggested out of LAMC of \$550,000, we, in fact, could have saved the taxpayers of this province over \$1 million in this area if the government was being sincere when it said that we want to co-operate, we want to negotiate in good faith and bring down the budget.

It was never the intention of this government to negotiate in good faith. They knew what they wanted. They wanted to limit the two opposition parties in whatever way they could, and that is why, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) said that we just want to save \$400,000, he quickly realized that was not going to be enough to affect the two opposition caucuses. So he had to raise it. He raised it to \$550,000. It is not to criticize the \$550,000 that is being cut. Yes, we can make do with the cuts that have been imposed upon us. In fact, there is a consensus on our part; we agree with those cuts. The unfortunate thing is that the government has not chosen at this time to look at the resources that they have.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), in his wisdom, has said that what we will do is we will set up a committee that will look at the resources the government has, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, and that committee will report back to the legislative establishment committee. The argument was that we do not have enough time to introduce or to bring amendments forward to legislation, that whole question has to be discussed and debated thoroughly, and it should be reported back to LAMC.

Mr. Speaker, that was an excuse that was used by the Minister of Finance, the government House leader (Mr. Manness), in order to keep what they treasure off the table. If this government was being honest with LAMC, they would have left open everything. They would have put all of the cards on the table at the first and second subsequent LAMC meetings. Rather, they talked about negotiating in good faith time after time, and then when it came down to printing the legislation, we were not asked, we were told, this is what is going to happen, whether you like it or not.

The Conservative caucus and their negotiator, being the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), did not give in on one point. He knew at the onset what he wanted, and he got what he wanted when he brought forward this legislation which left out the Conservative caucus. Mr. Speaker, we talk about -(interjection)- the Minister of Finance and the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) say, no, that is not right. Let us take a look at the caucus budgets. Let us take a look at the caucus funds. The Conservatives say we are going to take 3 percent straight across the board, 3 percent including salaries, including operations. What that has done is it has forced the Liberal caucus to have a 13 percent cut on our operation budget. What has it done for the Conservative caucus? They have not lost \$1 to the Conservative caucus office.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says I am going to vote against the bill. No, this is a good bill, the problem is it does not address all of the issues that could have been addressed. We tried to address those issues through amendments, and we saw that we tried to bring forward equitable, fair legislation, fair amendments, the treatment that is given by this Conservative government, or in particular, a few individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that all of the Conservative members of the Legislative Assembly would be of the same opinion that the Minister of Finance was because you know what the Conservative caucus gave up. They said we will hire a vacant staff year which will cover up for our \$40,000, which will cover up for our 3 percent increase or decrease. How is that going to affect the Conservative caucus? How is that going to affect the NDP and the Liberal caucus as a comparison?

That is why we had suggested that what they should be doing is looking at the \$3,000 of the operation on all three caucuses. We would have saved more money, and it would have been fair. It would have been equitable to all three parties inside this Chamber, but they decided not to be fair, they decided not to be equitable. They knew what they wanted in advance, or at least, in particular, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province knew what they wanted in advance. They feel that this is an issue that the opposition can never win in terms of public relations, in terms of the public, that the public is in fact on their side. Mr. Speaker, to some degree, they are

correct, this is not an issue that we can oppose, this is an issue in fact that we support because we know it is the right thing to do, but it is unfortunate that the government has not done the right thing.

* (1710)

The Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, to some degree, have done the right thing on Bill 33. Both parties have supported it, both parties wanted it, at least initially—I am not too sure given what has happened today—the legislation to be fair. I am very disappointed on two aspects, two amendments that we brought forward. First was the MLAs' salary freeze. Mr. Speaker, under no circumstances whatsoever should MLAs, should politicians, be setting their own salaries, it is morally not proper. It has been an issue that has been debated in LAMC, there has been consensus on the concept that MLAs should not be supporting their own salaries, there has been consensus both in LAMC, out of LAMC. You have conversations one on one with different individuals and everyone says MLAs should not be setting their own salary.

Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity here today, in fact on Thursday, to amend the legislation so that in fact MLAs would not be setting their own salaries. On Thursday the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) himself said the concept is right. What we would like to do is bring it back to our caucus, discuss it and we will consider bringing forward an amendment and would even use myself as a seconder.

An Honourable Member: And that was done.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Finance says that in fact that was done, but when the Minister of Finance stood up today and talked about the MLAs' salaries, what did the Minister of Finance say? Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance said that they cannot support the amendment primarily because the Legislatures in the future would be forced to adopt what this independent committee suggests, or brings forward, after an election.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance had a choice, he could have brought in a subamendment in fact if that was his concern, but he himself will likely say that you could not have brought in a subamendment, or he did not envision on how that could have been done. That is why we felt that it was important to bring to the Chamber, on the report stage, an amendment that addressed the concern of the Minister of Finance. With that amendment

that we brought forward on report stage, it would have allowed the Legislature to have the final say. What would have happened is this independent committee would report back to the Legislature, it would then be sent to a standing committee, from the standing committee it would come forward a recommendation to the Legislature, at which time all of us would have been able to vote on it. That alleviated the concern of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). It could have been done, and it is very disappointing that the government has chosen to believe that the setting of MLAs' salaries is best left in the hands of the politicians, because that is in fact what he has said.

The New Democratic Party, who I have heard time after time after time say that MLAs' salaries should not be set by MLAs, who have used that argument time after time in LAMC, who have argued—the former member for Churchill, Mr. Cowan, talked endlessly about the need to establish an independent commission. Endlessly I heard his arguments, and today they vote against it. I think if they bring forward this amendment that we suggested and show it to the former member for Churchill, I believe that the member for Churchill would be disappointed.

The Member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) says that we were voting on the ruling. How did they vote on the rulings previously? Mr. Speaker they flip-flopped on their own voting patterns. At one time you vote for the ruling; the next time you vote against the ruling. That is not going to be effective.

Mr. Ashton: Which seat are you in, Kevin? Kevin, are you in the right seat?

Mr. Lamoureux: The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says which seat. That is because he does not understand the rules. That is his problem; it is not my problem. The NDP voted against, and in the remarks from the member for Thompson who stood up and he said—and this is what really gets me—that we could not support this amendment because it left the control in the independent committee. That we should have the final say. Mr. Speaker, did he not read the amendment? It gave us the final say. I do not think they even knew what they were voting on when they voted. At times, the New Democratic Party never ceases to amaze me.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Stick around, Kevin.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Natural Resources says, stick around. He is likely right. If I stick around, I will learn a few more things about the New Democratic Party. That is one of the amendments that we brought forward.

The second amendment that we brought forward dealt with what I have pointed out earlier in regard to the access funds, and that was an amendment in which we in the Liberal Party, and I say the Liberal Party because as of yesterday I was under the impression that the New Democratic Party supported us on it. In fact, I was going to be the seconder of the motion. The member for Thompson was going to be the mover of the motion.

An Honourable Member: What an unholy alliance!

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

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says, what an unholy alliance. That was a first for me, because it is not often I support something that the New Democratic Party says, but for some reason—I do not know if it is because the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) changed his mind because he did not want to lose \$15,000, but for some reason he abandoned their position. They did not bring forward the amendment, Mr. Acting Speaker. Why did they not?

Rather, Mr. Acting Speaker, what happened is we go into the committee, we start going through the lines, and as I am consulting with Legislative Counsel because I figure out that they might not introduce the amendment as we had previously agreed, that I better start writing up an amendment. I rush back to my seat and they have already passed it because they want to try and ram it through.

Mr. Acting Speaker, thanks to the Minister of Seniors (Mr. Ducharme), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the New Democrats—why, I am not sure—they granted me leave in order to go back to that clause, and I am grateful for that because had they not done that, I would have done it at the report stage. They tried to sneak it by.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this was an amendment that was well worth supporting, and not breaking with NDP tradition what do they do on the vote? They come back and they vote with us. I am not too sure if they know what is going on around here.

This bill deals with a lot more than those two items. It deals with delegating of the powers from, or giving

LAMC more powers in the form of the rules of LAMC. I do have some concerns—(interjection)—the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) says, obviously. I am hoping that the Minister of Highways will come back to LAMC. That might alleviate some of those concerns. We have had those discussions. —(interjection)—The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says, use a soft touch. He was a nice touch. He complimented LAMC and we miss ministers of his integrity on that particular committee, because had we had more ministers with that type of integrity or backbenchers, Mr. Acting Speaker, maybe we would have gotten a consensus.

The point I am trying to get across here is the fact that in LAMC we have now delegated more rules of the access accounts, of our benefits, and how does LAMC operate? It is supposed to operate on a consensus basis, Mr. Acting Speaker. How can we, in all seriousness, expect to go into the next LAMC meeting, sit down and negotiate in good faith when we know what has happened in the last six, seven months? Some have confidence in the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) or the government House leader. I think it is going to be a little while before at least this House leader, and I am sure the New Democratic House leader, has confidence again in LAMC because LAMC is supposed to operate on a consensus basis.

* (1720)

That is one of the sad aspects of this, Mr. Acting Speaker, that that consensus aspect has been lost. It has been lost primarily because there was negotiating that was done in bad faith. Whether the government wants to recognize it or not, both opposition parties are in sync on this item. Both parties feel that the government was not, in fact, negotiating in good faith.

Mr. Acting Speaker, that concerns me a lot because the powers that have been delegated out to LAMC are very serious issues, issues that can be best resolved on a consensus. I believe that the government could have achieved a consensus on Bill 33 had they wanted to be sincere, had they wanted to —(interjection)—the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) could be right—it is tough to say—could be right. Hopefully, maybe the member for Portage la Prairie will stand up and put a few of his remarks, because I know he has an issue, and I agree with him on several of them.

He had talked about the capital portion of our access which is a very serious issue. We should not, as MLAs, be able to keep the capital purchases that we acquire. That has been recognized. All three parties have discussed it. The member for Portage says it belongs to the people, and he is quite right. That is why even though we were not told about it, we were just discussing it in LAMC. We were told that it was coming to the Legislature, but we support that too, because, after the Provincial Auditor had brought it to everyone's attention, in an interview that I had, it was one of the first things that I said.

In terms of the MLA freeze, Mr. Acting Speaker, again the member for Portage la Prairie was the first independent to stand up and make the gesture that MLAs should not be receiving a pay increase. I can say that the Liberal Party was the first to say that the MLAs' pay should be frozen for the year. -(interjection)-

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says balderdash. It is true. It is true. The member for Portage la Prairie knows. He says that, in fact, that did happen. So there are issues, many issues that we could have achieved a consensus on. Had the government been straightforward with us from the beginning, and that means not coming in and saying let us cut \$400,000, that means coming and saying, let us cut where we can and do it in such a fashion that all three political parties in this Chamber are going to be affected. We did not see that.

As I have pointed out, my concerns are that in fact there will be some ramifications in future LAMC meetings as a direct result of the government House leader's failure to be able to get a consensus out of LAMC. A consensus, as I have pointed out, would not have been that difficult to get, because both opposition parties were very concerned, were wanting to take—as the government—the lead on being responsible and doing the responsible thing, by looking at the services that we have and demonstrating to Manitobans given a recession, that in fact we would address the issue appropriately.

On that note, Mr. Acting Speaker, as I have pointed out—the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) wants me to start over again. On that note, I do want to say that the Liberal Party does support Bill 33, as I have said from the onset. The unfortunate thing is we feel in the Liberal Party that the government could have gone a lot further, that

we could have saved over \$1 million out of this budget and if the government was really and truly wanting to lead by their actions, they could have done it.

An Honourable Member: Let us remove all our allowances and we will save—

Mr. Lamoureux: The government House leader (Mr. Manness) says, let us get rid of all of the allowances. Mr. Acting Speaker, I would suggest to him that is not treating everyone equally, but that was an argument that was used time after time by the government House leader, and I can say parties from all sides of the Chamber have said that necessarily would not be equal, from all sides of the Chamber. Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I look forward to Bill 33 passing.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Acting Speaker, I feel compelled, if not slightly inspired, to respond to some of the -(interjection)- Well, I cannot put that on the record that I have just heard from the House leader of the second opposition party (Mr. Lamoureux). But there are several fundamental principles in this bill that are important not to lose sight of.

First of all, I think the taxpayers in this province of Manitoba are saying, okay, we recognize that government's revenues are flat, we recognize that government has a funding problem and we, as citizens of this province, are willing to participate, maybe accept some tough decisions from government because a recession is plaguing North America and Canada and this province. We are asking—and we believe there is concurrence in the public service wage policy that we have set, brought general guidelines to, but the public have also given us a clear message that as MLAs, they expect that we lead in terms of our approach on how we set salaries for ourselves. That is what this bill was about, it was about leadership of a zero percent increase, a freeze in our MLA salaries. Cabinet salaries were frozen; they were not going to go up; they have not gone up in a decade.

So this was a bill designed to show Manitobans we are prepared. as 57 MLAs in this House, to lead and to show Manitobans we are serious and we are willing to participate ourselves. This bill did several things: froze our MLA salaries; it provided for a reduction in our constituency allowances of 10 percent, which is good and reasonable in these times; and it also provided a mechanism whereby

we can deal with the issue of equipment owned by MLAs to run constituency offices.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think what the taxpayers want to see coming out of this Chamber is some consistency, but if they witnessed what we have witnessed in here over several days, we will find a great deal of inconsistency with the two opposition parties, particularly the second opposition party. They have voted against the ruling of the Chair when it was not in their favour.

We participated Thursday of last week in one of the greatest movies I have ever seen, where seven MLAs from the Liberal Party moved and shuffled and shuffled in their chairs—the greatest movie in the House, seven Liberal MLAs trying to make a point, Mr. Acting Speaker, that they agreed with the ruling of the Chair on an amendment posed by the official opposition. Then after establishing some credibility by going through their movie act and not voting, and leaving the impression they were willing to uphold the ruling of the Chair, they then proposed an amendment some 10 minutes later. When it was ruled out of order by the Chair on the exact same grounds that they refused to vote on, to burn the Chairman of the committee, that was not good enough.

We are inconsistent. We are going to vote against the Chairman on that ruling because we do not like the ruling, not that we wanted to uphold consistently the principle that when the Chair or the Speaker makes a ruling, that ruling is made independently, because those people are independent officers of this House.

* (1730)

We have the Liberals flip-flopping, depending on whether they agree or disagree with what is being proposed as an amendment. That is not the consistency that the taxpayers of Manitoba have asked of us.

I tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, had you been here during the two and a half years and the three sessions of minority government, you would have found the Liberals consistently burning the Speaker. Had it been any other Chamber but this one in a minority government, the Speaker would have been forced to resign on how many occasions because the Liberals and occasionally the New Democrats would combine forces and burn the Speaker on a perfectly logical, legitimate ruling. Now that is not consistency. We thought that inconsistency, that

driving opportunism of the Liberal Party had left us after the last election but, no, it is still here.

I want to tell my honourable friend, the Liberal House leader (Mr. Lamoureux) that if he is so concerned, if he wants to make this financial contribution that his heart was pumping out for acceptance for by this House, he could call 14 defeated Liberal candidates and MLAs in the last election and put all of their office and computer equipment up for a garage sale and give the money back to government, if they want to help out. But, oh, no, we want to be inconsistent.

When it is us, we do not deal with it; when it is somebody else, we deal with it. That is the kind of inconsistent claptrap that brought the Liberal Party from 21 seats, and this person who wanted to be the first woman Premier in Canada down to number seven in the House, and that kind of inconsistency will keep you there. Just a slight amount of consistency is what the people want.

My honourable friends in the Liberals say, well, you know, it is not fair, Mr. Acting Speaker; we do not have as much staff in our caucus office as the other parties have. How soon we forget. When the Liberal Party prior to 1988 was represented by not seven, not 21, but one member in this House, what did the Legislative Assembly do for that one member? Provided staffing, support budget, all without having any rules that said we must do that, and that was quite a satisfactory arrangement then. Furthermore, when the Liberal Party turned into 21 in this House after 1988, they loved the staffing formula then because they had staff coming out their ears. They were coming to LAMC saying our staff is worth more. We need to give them big raises.

We established a formula at LAMC for staffing of caucuses based on the representation, the membership of each political party in their caucus. Now all of a sudden, that the people of Manitoba have decided that 21 Liberals ought to be reduced to seven Liberals, we hear the whining and sniffing that it is not enough. Give me a break, Mr. Acting Speaker, a little consistency. It was good when you were 21 because there was plenty. It is reduced when you are seven. Now it is not enough, say the Liberals. Is that not a fine example to the taxpayers of Manitoba? -(interjection)-

My honourable friend, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) said, just who said that? He just said that in his last remarks, how the staffing formula was

not good enough for the Liberal Party with seven members in the Legislature. That is exactly what you just said. -(interjection)- Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, if he was worth the effort, I would put him on the record for what he said in his unparliamentary statement, but the member for Inkster is not worth the effort.

The member for Inkster says we should have reached consensus. Well, you know, we had two and a half years of consensus at LAMC and consensus had the definition of more. We went from \$2,500 prior to the 1988 election to \$25,000 for constituency allowances. Consensus was more, and I remind you who was driving the more—21 Liberals represented at LAMC. That is the problem today.

You know, all of us can talk about what we need in terms of maintaining our office, and my honourable friends in the Liberal Party today say, well you know, it is unfair that ministers have the same allowance to maintain a constituency office. They should not have it, or it should be vastly reduced. Yet on the one hand, they will try to maintain that they believe in fairness and equity. Do members of Treasury bench not have constituencies to represent? I want to tell you they have an awful lot less time to represent them than members of the opposition and members who are not in Treasury bench. -(interjection)-

Now, my honourable friend, the member for Inkster, says we do not know that for sure. You are doggone right he does not know it for sure, and he never will because the Liberal Party will never be in government in this province, and if they were I do not know whether he would be in Treasury bench.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the point I am making is that ask any former cabinet minister, even with the NDP, as to whether they had buckets of time to represent their constituency. Now, we can approach from the philosophy of what it takes to represent your constituency. My honourable friend, the member for Inkster, said we need money to pay staff to answer the telephone in our constituency office. The electronic revolution has given us telephone answering services which cost \$150 for a good unit, and you can have it sit in there plugged in, and you come home from this Legislature at the end of a day, you pick up the thing, you get your messages back and you phone the people. You do not need to have someone sitting there unless, of course, you want to have the office staffed all the time. It is a matter

of how you represent, but in your estimation, as demonstrated when you were 21 strong at LAMC, your consensus to go from \$2,500 to \$25,000, so you can maintain staffed constituency offices. -(interjection)-

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I stand corrected. It is only \$10,000 to \$25,000 that the Liberals drove us to. That is only a two and a half time increase. I am sorry. I apologize for the small error.

Now, consensus—interesting proposal. Mr. Speaker, what I want to point out to my honourable friends in the Liberal Party is that, now that they are reduced to seven and they have some of their staffing no longer there in the formula they agreed to when they were 21, they are unhappy. Well, you know, the people made the decision as to how many Liberals ought to return to this House, and the staffing is set by a formula we had in place prior to the 1990 election. There is nothing unfair about that, nothing arbitrary about that, nothing without consensus about that. The only thing that is troublesome about it is, it is not enough for the Liberal Party right now, because they want more. Well, that is not what we are about today. We are about a bill that is giving less, and that is what the taxpayers have demanded.

Now, you want to talk about the operation of LAMC. I simply want to say to you that, when this bill was brought in—in 1982 I believe?—somewhere in there—it was the creation of the then member for Springfield because he had nothing else to do. It was forewarned by people who knew what would happen with a Legislative Assembly Management Committee that this is the kind of excess that you might see and difficulty in agreement that you might see with that kind of a committee, because governments have to make the decision as to how much budget is being spent. That is why the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), because he could not get consensus from the Liberals and the NDP, had to bring in a bill. You realize that last Friday our salaries were to be automatically indexed, and to send the signal to the people of Manitoba, which they want, that bill had to pass. It will pass. It is good legislation, and it does not harm anybody in this Chamber, not one iota. It sets a little bit of a leadership example that people are demanding.

* (1740)

I want to tell you that LAMC has the opportunity of making decisions now. For instance, let us just ask ourselves and reflect very carefully as to whether a mailing budget approaching \$100,000 over budget by a small caucus in opposition is wise expenditure of taxpayer dollars, because that has happened under the auspices of LAMC. Remember that? -(interjection)- Well, my honourable friend, the Liberal, says, who did it? He knows who did it.

Mr. Speaker, what we have in this little debate by my honourable friend, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), is the example of a Liberal Party which has never been in government and does not know how to handle it. They are not consistent in upholding the rulings of the Chair. If they like the amendment, well, they will uphold the Chair or they will do their movie, where they all shift around, or they will vote against this ruling of the Chair—totally inconsistent. The problem is that the Liberals want this bill to give them more staff, et cetera, et cetera. That is not in the cards.

I have to save my last little criticism, because I have sat and listened to this debate for some days now, to my honourable friends in the official opposition, the New Democrats, because the New Democrats, when they approached this debate and some of their amendments today, they say—and I have to get it exactly right—do what I say, not what I do. The New Democrats in government made a business out of pillaging the taxpayers of Manitoba through staff resources, abuse of the minister's office in sending out political materials and every other transgression that you can consider possible within the confines of spend, spend, spend according to the NDP philosophy. Yet when they returned to opposition, all of a sudden they have their halos on and they say, well, you know, maybe we should adjust these costs here, there and everywhere for government but not for us.

I can accept that, Mr. Speaker, if they did it when they themselves were in government, but that is not what they did. That is not what they did at all, and that is the problem. Again, if I can say to honourable friends in this House, Manitobans are expecting some fiscal leadership, and they are not seeing it from the actions of either opposition party right now. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot feign that you do not like the lack of consensus on this bill when, in fact, you are saying to the taxpayers of Manitoba, I do not like taking less or having my

salary frozen. The message has to be clear and consistent, and we have been clear and consistent ever since we walked in here with this legislation.

We voted to uphold the Chairman and the Speaker in every single ruling they have made. My honourable friends, the Liberals, have been slightly inconsistent, so have my honourable friends the NDP. Sometimes they vote for, sometimes they vote against. Show a little consistency and show a little understanding of what the taxpayers are telling you out there and support this legislation unanimously. At least salvage that much public political credibility for both opposition parties, and at least support this legislation unanimously and show the taxpayers that, at least, we are willing to set an example within this Chamber.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): I was not going to speak on this particular bill, but considering that the Health Minister has put erroneous information on the record, I thought it was important that some factual information be put on the record.

Let us go back to 1986, because he is the one that addressed that. In 1986, when I was the lone Liberal in this House, I asked if I could have observer status at LAMC meetings because decisions were being made that affected all MLAs.

I was denied that observer status. I was not allowed to attend meetings of LAMC. I was then presented with a *fait accompli* by Gerry Mercier and by Jay Cowan who indicated to me that they wanted to increase the caucus staff for the NDP and for the Progressive Conservatives, and they wanted unanimous consent.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I was not particularly in favour of giving unanimous consent when there was no opportunity for any support staff for the Liberal member in the House whatsoever. As a result, they then suggested that maybe it was appropriate because I was the leader of a political party and because that political party had, in fact, run candidates in every single constituency, and that political party had 14 percent of the popular vote, then it would not be untoward for me to have a secretary. So they magnanimously gave me a secretary at that particular point in time, and that is the support staff that he refers to in his remarks, but I think it is important for the older members to understand exactly what this was.

Then, in the next meeting of LAMC, it was decided that they would cap the mailing budgets of all of the 57 members of the Legislature. Well, I did not disagree with a cap on the mailing budget, but let us put on the record exactly what the situation was.

What they wanted to do was cap the mailing at \$1,000 per member. Well, in that year, because letters which are generally sent to the Premier and were cc'd to the then Leader of the Opposition, who is now our Premier (Mr. Filmon), were also cc'd to me, as a result I had already spent in my first year, because the final accounting had been done, \$1,400 on mailing. They wanted to cut that back to \$1,000 and, yes, Mr. Speaker, I objected, because I was, at that point, not doing any mass mailings, not doing any direct mailings. I was simply answering letters which Manitobans had sent to me.

Well, then we move into 1988. In 1988, a meeting of LAMC was held and it was unanimously decided, despite the comments of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), that we would increase the support for all MLAs—not Liberal MLAs, not NDP MLAs, but all MLAs—and that is why the amendment to the act was unanimously approved. So it was given to everyone.

The only person who, quite frankly, spoke to that debate other than the three House leaders was the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). There were many in my caucus who wanted to speak, but we understood, among the House leaders, that we had an agreement that we would not speak. There were some things we would have very much liked to have put on the record, but we did not put it on the record because we thought the House leaders had an agreement that we would not do so.

Well, now let us look at what happened after. The NDP were given staffing according to the allowance which was set, the Tories were given staffing according to the allowance that was set, and the Liberals were given staffing according to the formula that was set, but lo and behold, I learned a little interesting fact. The interesting fact was that the Premier had decided their caucus did not need one of their staff people and so he loaned that staffperson to the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

When I wrote to the Premier about this particular lending of his staffperson, the Premier wrote me back, and I have the letter in my file, that it was an independent matter and he was certainly well within

his authority to pass staff members over to the NDP if that is what he determined in his best interest was worthwhile to do. So let not the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) stand in this House and talk about the inappropriate positions taken by the Liberal Party.

The staffing formula that was worked out was worked out, as I indicated, in a unanimous way. It was reached by a consensus and the Liberal Party has not once, not once, let the Minister of Health know, ever indicated, that we were dissatisfied with the staffing level.

* (1750)

What we have indicated that we were opposed to—and something that I had advocated from the very beginning—was that we should have a global budget which gives us flexibility with staffing, but with no additional monies. That is the way it operates in the House of Commons in Ottawa, and we think it makes sense where each individual caucus is given an amount of money and that individual caucus decides for themselves what the staffing levels will be, what the salaries of those staffing people will be, and what expenditures they will have. In that way there is flexibility, and although the Conservatives have always argued against that, they are in fact implementing it this year, because by not hiring a staffperson, which I think should be well within their purview as it should be within ours, they are in fact going to allot that salary to caucus expenditures. If we all had global budgets, that type of thing would not occur.

So the position of our caucus has been very clear. Let me correct one more misapprehension. The reason that we abstained on the vote the other day was not with respect to the Deputy Speaker's ruling. The reason we did not vote, very clearly, is because we did not know the ramifications of that particular amendment—and we still do not. Quite frankly, I do not know how many people are on pension in this province that that bill may have affected. I do not know whether it is simply Sterling Lyon and Duff Roblin and Gil Molgat. I do not know how many others, but I was not prepared quite frankly to support a piece of legislation that could affect human beings in a way in which I did not know the ramifications of. That is the reason we abstained from the legislation, and I will do it again if I think that justice is not being well served.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is third reading of Bill 33. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

House Business

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I understand the Lieutenant-Governor is here to provide Royal Assent to this bill. Is this out of order now? I would like to make some announcements of House business, but the Lieutenant-Governor is here, I will leave that—

I understand there is a will not to sit at eight o'clock tonight. Maybe you might petition the House to ascertain whether or not that is the case. Secondly, I would ask that we change the announcement as far as the location of the committee meeting of Public Utilities and Natural Resources dealing with Energy Authority, and that you move that to Room 255, not 254.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable House leader for that information.

The hour being a few minutes before six, and the Chair was asked not to see the clock, I believe I would have to ask the House now, is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? That is agreed.

Is it the will of the House to not sit this evening?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. We are awaiting the arrival of His Honour.

All rise. I am advised His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor is about to arrive to grant Royal Assent to the bill.

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Roy MacGillivray): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

His Honour George Johnson, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Mr. Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in the following words:

Mr. Speaker: May it please your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly at its present session passed a bill which, in the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour and to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent:

Bill 33—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth assent to this bill.

(His Honour was then pleased to retire.)

* * *

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings), that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to, and the House adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, April 8, 1991

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