



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

LIB - Liberal; ND - New Democrat; PC - Progressive Conservative

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIB
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	ND
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	ND
CARR, James	Crescentwood	LIB
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIB
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	ND
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	LIB
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	ND
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	ND
DOER, Gary	Concordia	ND
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIB
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	ND
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	ND
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	ND
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIB
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	ND
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	ND
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	LIB
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	ND
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	ND
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	ND
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	ND
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	ND
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	ND
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	ND
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	ND
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	ND

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 5, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

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

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 71—The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program Act

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that Bill 71, The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program Act, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

The honourable Administrator of the Government of Manitoba, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines, seconded by the honourable Minister of Government Services, that Bill 71, The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program Act; Loi sur le Programme d'encouragement à l'exploration minière, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

The honourable Administrator of the Government of Manitoba, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House.

The honourable minister has also tabled the message.

Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Doug Gourlay, the former member for Swan River.

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

Also with us this afternoon from Ecole Lavallée, we have forty-five Grade 5 students. They are under the direction of Yvette Dion and Sylvie Guérard. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Collective Bargaining Premier's Position

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, medicare is a sacred trust; GST is revenue neutral; we believe in free collective bargaining. What have they got in common? They are all statements made by Tories before elections and all promises broken by Tories after elections.

On November 6, 1990, the Premier said, and I quote, in this House: "The fact of the matter is . . . there is no club and there never will be from this Government. We will act in good faith at all times in the open free collective bargaining process with all of the employees with whom we have to negotiate."

October 16, "I will repeat that the free collective bargaining process ought to prevail . . ."

Again, on November 5, Mr. Speaker, free collective bargaining was reiterated and articulated by the Premier.

I would ask the Premier: Why has he broken his word to the people of Manitoba with those promises he made in this Chamber?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I wish that the member would quote me fully. That

October 16 Hansard that he refers to says, "I will repeat that the free collective bargaining process ought to prevail and that they ought to go forward and attempt to resolve that at the bargaining table."

Mr. Speaker, we were not dealing with union leaders who wanted to go to the bargaining table. We were dealing with union leaders who wanted to appeal to an independent third party arbiter who would give them something that they did not have to raise the funds for.

This government will not raise taxes. This government will not raise taxes to pay for this kind of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has to try and remember that he is no longer a union boss, that he now represents the public at large and that he cannot say to the public at large, you are going to have to pay for this settlement, I am going to raise your taxes.

He may say, Mr. Speaker, that is what happened when, of course, the NDP were in government throughout the '80s. They just raised taxes year upon year upon year. This government is committed to keep the taxes down. This government believes in the free collective bargaining process where matters of this nature are settled at the bargaining table.

Instead, we were faced with demands to go to final offer selection, demands to go to arbitration where some third party who did not have to raise the taxes or raise the money was imposing decisions that were not in the best interest of the people of this province. We have said, no, we will not accept that.

Mr. Doer: The Premier never answered the question of why he broke his word on November 6, Mr. Speaker. The Premier never answered the question of why he broke his word that is contained completely and clearly in Hansard in unequivocal language.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side believe in freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of democracy and the free collective bargaining process. We believe in a democratic process. Obviously the Premier does not stand by his word. That is obvious.

The next question is: Given the fact that the legislation that is in place now was passed by Duff Roblin in the late '60s to provide for an arbitration

process, given that process has only been used one time in the public service of Manitoba where the settlements were very reasonable by an arbitrator, why does he feel that the legislation he has brought in that gives his cabinet overriding powers of scope and overriding powers of time—why does he feel that is more consistent with his words of free collective bargaining than the words of Duff Roblin, when he had the integrity to bring in decent legislation in this House?

* (1340)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that we are talking about democratic rights when we have a union which refuses to even have its membership vote, a vote on an offer.

If he wants to talk about the position of former Premiers, Mr. Speaker, I ask him to go back to the 14th of January, 1976, when NDP Premier Ed Schreyer put all of the workers of this province under AIB legislation to control their wages without any debate in this Legislature, with one stroke of the pen in a cabinet meeting.

That is the commitment of NDP to democracy, not even public debate, but with one stroke of the pen in the cabinet office, he did it. That is the commitment of New Democrats to open government, to the democratic process. That is what New Democrats believe should be done when they think it is in their interest.

Mr. Doer: On February 7, 1990, the PC Manitoba Fund issued an appeal—of course, the Premier is the leader of this fund as Leader of the party—that without a clear majority, the next and more difficult phase of the PC program to restore a much needed pro-business environment cannot be implemented. Is this part of a hidden agenda that the Premier withheld from the people of Manitoba? Is this part of breaking his word to the people of Manitoba with this pro-business agenda, Mr. Speaker?

Why did the Premier break his word about his commitment to the principle of free collective bargaining? Does his word not mean anything in this Chamber at all?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, as I had said earlier, no word was broken. We were not dealing with free collective bargaining. We were dealing with people who did not want to bargain, who would not, in fact, deal with the bargaining process at the bargaining table, but said they were going to go to another

source that would give them more money than they could get through free collective bargaining.

If he wants to talk about principles, Mr. Speaker, I will tell him what I am in favour of, what we stand for and what we have maintained, and that is a commitment to a strong economy and to jobs for people.

That is precisely what we are doing, is to maintain a strong economy and to maintain as many jobs as possible versus the agenda of the union bosses whose mouthpiece is the Leader of the New Democratic Party, who say that they do not care how many jobs are destroyed. They are going to raise taxes or raise the rates in Autopac, as they did when they were in government, so that the seniors of this province, so that the students of this province will pay higher rates in Autopac, so that the seniors will pay higher rates in Hydro, in the Telephone System. That is their answer and that is not our answer. We are going to keep rates down—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

*(1345)

Minister of Finance Misinformation

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Yesterday the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) talked about how we are dealing with the big lie from this government—one big lie. Mr. Speaker, on a daily basis, that lie is getting bigger. The most recent example is from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) yesterday, who misled the House about wage increases in the Civil Service.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I ask for your counsel in this matter. The member has used the words "big lie." He has used the word "lie." He might be trying to play around with clever language, but I ask you to provide counsel to the House. I ask you to ask the member to withdraw those statements. Particularly as a House leader and somebody who should be upholding the rules of this House, it is improper for the member to use that type of language.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the honourable member for Thompson did not attribute the word "lie" to anybody in particular, but I would ask that the honourable member for Thompson to withdraw the remark of "misled the House."

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, our rules state that you cannot say that someone deliberately misled the House. I will withdraw any imputations of that, although I leave on the record the fact that the minister misled the House which is in order and is parliamentary.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable member for Thompson.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, he did so by saying yesterday in Question Period that increases in the Civil Service have averaged 63 percent. Is he referring to over the last 10 years, when in eight out of 10 years, civil servants have received less than the rate of inflation? Is he referring to labourers who received 36.4 percent, nursing assistants who received 36.6 percent? When will the Minister of Finance put true and accurate information on the record in terms of the real increases to civil servants and the real cost of living?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I stand by my numbers. I laid them before the House yesterday. I put forward the average Manitoba Government Employees' Association employee increase from 1982 to 1990, nine years inclusive, and that represented a 64 percent increase.

Also, Mr. Speaker, to reiterate for the record, during that period of time, my sources tell me that the consumer price index in the province increased by 43.1 percent. Furthermore, the composite industrial average weekly earnings for that same period of time, the combination of all the sectors including the public sector through that period of time, increased by 33.6 percent. If the member wants to disagree with my facts, that is his right to do so. I stand by my facts; I reject his.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister is wrong. The figures on the average wage increases are considerably lower than the amount that he has put forward in this House and lower than the increase in the CPI.

The Minister of Finance is wrong, but I want to ask the minister again, because once again his credibility is in question in terms of putting facts before the House: Why yesterday, in Question Period, did he say that arbitrators are not taking into account the ability-to-pay question when I have here a transcript, a copy, of Justice Freedman's decision

which awarded, or would have awarded, a 5 percent increase to lottery workers, which states specifically that ability to pay is always a factor in concluding a collective agreement and said he took that into account when awarding that decision, a decision this government is unilaterally overthrowing by Bill 70?

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

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, again let me begin by reciting—I will not recite the facts with respect to increases over the last nine years, but again, for the record, the numbers that I submit are correct, and the numbers the member for Thompson has are incorrect.

I made the statement with respect to ability to pay, and of course, as you know, we are probably totally out of order at this point in time even discussing this issue, seeing as I am bringing the bill forward in about three-quarters of an hour to provide the principals to the House. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, in that presentation I will engage in debate and a discussion around the ability-to-pay principle and what it means and how it has been interpreted. I ask the member to be present in the House at that time as I put forward my point of view as to what is meant by ability to pay.

I also could recite to the member another arbitrator's award, indeed—and I cited it yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in answering a question—at which time another arbitrator indicated the ability to pay was not an issue to be brought forward, not a criterion to be considered during the consideration of award or development of award. That is what the government had to take into account.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to table information that shows the Minister of Finance is wrong.

* (1350)

Collective Bargaining Minister's Position

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I also have a last question, and it is in regard to the complete breach of faith of this government in terms of final offer selection. The Minister of Finance, the government House leader, reached an agreement in this House to maintain it until the end of March. There are a number of people who have been in the process who have now had their awards overturned. The

legislation clearly includes a reference to the fact that selectors take into account the ability to pay.

Why is this government House leader totally tearing up his agreement? Why is he going back on his word as government House leader to all members of this House and the public of Manitoba from only a few months ago?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am not going back on my word, and furthermore, I will again reiterate exactly the same response I provided yesterday—I provided it in the hallway after Question Period—and which I also provided to the member in this last question.

Mr. Speaker, the government watched very carefully even before the taunting of the members opposite, when the awards were announced, in asking us how we were dealing with it and how it was that we could allow or force a zero percent on the MGEA when indeed these awards were coming through and the member opposite—maybe not him, but many of his colleagues were taunting members here as to how they were going to handle that difference.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you the government took very seriously and watched very closely those awards and read in great depth the decisions around those awards, and it became clear that the ability-to-pay provision in principle was not being taken into account. Consequently, the choices, as I said yesterday, were basically two or three: One, increase taxes; two, reduce services; or three, ask everybody to share by way of the bringing in of this bill, and that was the solution we chose.

Bill 70 Crown Corporations

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in August of last year, we watched the Premier of the province of Manitoba paddling his canoe down a river. Everything was fine. Well, Captain Canoe has struck and the piece of legislation which is presently before this House is Draconian in the extreme.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Premier to explain to this House why he stated that in 1988 the NDP lost the government because of, quote: their determination to control all of the decisions within their Crown corporations.

How does the policy of this government differ from the policy of the previous government in that this

piece of legislation will, in fact, impose decisions upon Crown corporations?

* (1355)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thought that the Leader of the Liberal Party was going to be getting up to extract her foot from her mouth from yesterday, but I see she just put the other foot in to keep it company today.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Draconian action, I invite her to review what is being done today in provinces that are under Liberal provincial governments.

Firstly, let us take into account what is happening in the province of Newfoundland. Yesterday, she said this legislation was far worse than other legislation because, firstly, jobs were cut and then the legislation was brought in. Let us talk about Newfoundland where 2,600 jobs, including over 300 nurses, were eliminated from the public service, and then a wage freeze was brought in, not just on the direct public service and Crown corporations, but the direct public service and Crown corporations and municipal governments and school boards—the entire public sector.

That is Draconian legislation, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask her to apologize to the public for misleading them by virtue of what she said in her off-the-cuff manner yesterday.

The second thing is that we, as a government, have indeed maintained a hands-off position with the Crown corporations, and indeed all of their decisions are under the control of their boards. In this area, for the sake of consistency—as has been recommended by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) in his comments during the Estimates debate in this House, where he said for the sake of consistency that any action should apply equally to the Crown corps because they set precedents for this government—we have been consistent in those areas in which the sole shareholder is the public of Manitoba and the sole responsible authority is this government—

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

Mrs. Carstairs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All the clapping on that side of the House will not justify to the public of Manitoba why the Premier says one thing and does the complete opposite.

Exclusions

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the legislation that has been tabled will indeed give this government the authority to roll back settlements for teachers, to roll back settlements for university professors, to roll back settlements for doctors if they so choose by regulation, not by legislation, but by an Order-in-Council in their secret cabinet meetings.

Can the Premier tell this House—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mrs. Carstairs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier today state his intentions with regard to these groups of individuals, since he has given himself in this legislation the authority to act over them?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, very clearly what we are doing is having the authority to protect the public interest. My intention is to take that responsibility seriously and protect the public interest. We have said very clearly -(interjection)- Well, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is suggesting that we roll back the nurses. We will not—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the Premier has lied. I did not say they were going to roll back. The Premier has lied in this Chamber.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster will withdraw that remark.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, out of courtesy for the Chamber, I will withdraw the comments—

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable member for Inkster.

Mr. Lamoureux: But I did not say—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Unqualified.

* * *

* (1400)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the member for Inkster has challenged whether or not nurses are included

in this, and we have said, no, they are not included in this.

An Honourable Member: What about your notwithstanding clause in the legislation?

Mr. Fillmon: Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite want to propose that nurses be included, let them do so. This government has said that the nurses bargained in good faith. The nurses went through a very difficult circumstance, and therefore the nurses have been excluded from this act.

We have negotiated in good faith, Mr. Speaker, and it is only those unions that do not want to negotiate, that instead want to turn it over to a third party arbitrator who has no responsibility to the public—that is what is unacceptable.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister, to finish his response.

Mr. Fillmon: Mr. Speaker, I wish the member for Thompson would get himself under control, because he is the one who, in talking about arbitration, said in this House on Wednesday, January 17, 1990, quote: "It is fundamentally different from arbitration which stifles, which freezes the bargaining process . . ." He said that arbitration stifled and froze the bargaining process, and that is exactly why we had to take the action.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson has already had an opportunity to put his questions.

Closure

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Conservative government does not believe in the free collective bargaining process. It is clear they are not willing to keep a single one of their campaign promises with regard to the public and specifically those who work for the public in the province of Manitoba.

Will the government tell us today, since they obviously do not have the support of either of the opposition parties on this legislation, if they are now going to go back on another statement the Premier made just last week and invoke closure on this particular piece of legislation?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I again invite the member to examine what I did say. I said

closure is to be rarely used, only after there is lengthy debate. -(interjection)- That is right. I could not think of doing it on a political whim, as the New Democrats did last week.

I want to assure this member that she will have the opportunity to show where the Liberal Party stands, to bring in amendments, to show us what she would do with this.

If she wants to bring in more areas of public service as Pierre Trudeau did when he brought everybody into the legislation, if she wants to bring the private sector in, let her do it. If she thinks that Pierre Trudeau's approach is more open, more honest and more fair to bring everybody under this legislation, let her tell us that.

She is a great Trudeau supporter, Mr. Speaker. If she wants to do what Clyde Wells did, let her tell us that and bring that kind of legislative change in here. We will find out where the Liberals stand. Instead of having the luxury of being everywhere and saying anything that comes into her mind, let us find out whether she has any principles.

Shoal Lake Exploratory Mining Regulations

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, with the announcement of the environment regulations, we are optimistic about this government's intention to protect Shoal Lake. After closer review, it becomes obvious that the regulations are not going to protect Winnipeg's water supply from mining. There is going to be continued cottage development and pesticide use in the Shoal Lake watershed. The resolution is also not in keeping with the city resolution that was brought in.

My question for the Minister of Environment is: Why was exploratory mining and extraction not included in the developments prohibited in Area 2 in the regulations?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty obvious that restricting any development within one kilometre of the shoreline of this body of water will restrict any kind of activity that could have a harmful impact upon the water source for this city.

Beyond that, into Area 2 which is still within the basin of Shoal Lake, it seems to me that there is every opportunity to regulate and restrict any kind of operation because it specifically states that no

operation will be allowed to go forward that would use hazardous goods.

Falcon Lake Environmental Protection

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if he is planning or aware of any mining plan for the Falcon Lake area, and why mining on the Falcon Lake area was not listed as the activities banned in the regulations?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, we specifically structured this regulation to refer to the Shoal Lake basin, anywhere where the water flows into that lake. We can very easily restrict any activity that will have unnecessary or detrimental effects upon this water body.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, Falcon Lake flows directly into Shoal Lake. That means pollution from Falcon Lake is flowing directly into Shoal Lake.

Environment Act Regulation Changes

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): For the same minister, why were the designations of the sensitive areas changed for these regulations from the regulations that were proposed earlier?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, a result of some rather extensive public consultation and a desire on our part to put forward regulation and a regulatory regime that we believe sets an example for the province of Ontario, so the member opposite can talk to her colleagues and encourage them to co-operate with us on this venture.

Palliser Furniture Ltd. Emission Levels

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the residents of Transcona held a peaceful demonstration outside of the Palliser Furniture manufacturing plant on Pandora East. This demonstration was to draw attention to the fact that this plant and the Minister of Environment have ignored the hazardous emissions from this plant that are seriously affecting the health and the quality of life for families in Transcona.

My question is for the Minister of Environment. Will the Minister of Environment explain to the people of Transcona why his department is not

taking action to ensure that the emissions from this environmentally polluting company cease immediately?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am as troubled as the member opposite is about the concerns that the people living in the area of this plant have raised.

I want to point out to him and to the people of the province that we have spent six weeks closely monitoring the operations of that plant. We had an on-site operation sampling air, sampling discharges, but we were unable to detect any chemical emissions that would have caused any concerns to the residents of the area.

We continue to be very concerned about the accusations that are being raised, but the fact is that the plant has put in place a wet scrubber to remove any potential particulate emissions from the air. Even as we speak, there is a member of my department on site checking out the concerns that have been raised. If anything at all can be shown to be in violation of the act, we will take that action.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, our intention is not to force the jobs to the United States as the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) has suggested in this Chamber here a few moments ago.

Mr. Speaker, since over 100 residents of Transcona attended this protest demonstration, will the Minister of Environment tell the House when specifically we can expect the results of his department's recent testing, and when the residents can expect action from his government to start to enforce the environmental laws of this province?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, to do what the member is requesting, of course, and move to fine or shut down Palliser Furniture, one should have some proof. The very extensive testing that has gone on has not produced evidence that there is formaldehyde available in the air.

I want to assure him that there has been a good deal of work that has been put into this operation by the Department of Environment with the co-operation of the people in the community and with the co-operation of Palliser Furniture themselves.

That information required some further extensive extrapolation on quantities to make sure that the air samples that were taken were properly monitored and extrapolated to parts per million and so on.

That information, I expect, will be available very shortly.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, the minister still did not answer the question and give me a definitive answer of when we can expect that report.

* (1410)

Environmental Laws Enforcement

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Since June 2 to 8, this week, is supposed to be the National Environmental Awareness Week, and the residents are supposed to contact their provincial environmental ministries with environmental concerns, when is this Minister of Environment going to take his responsibility seriously and take action to impose sanctions on environmental polluters?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, as National Environment Week, I am more than pleased, for example, to have been able to announce the Shoal Lake regulations, which the member opposite, I hope, will encourage his colleagues to the east of us to work with us on that matter.

If his idea of environmental awareness is to shut down companies without any evidence which can be gathered by careful monitoring and working with the people of the community, then I think he should stand up and say so.

Cartwright High School Closure - Conciliation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is the Minister of Education and Training.

For eight weeks, the children in Cartwright have not been attending school. For eight weeks, this minister has refused to take action. Last week, without any consultation with parents, without any consultation with the school division, he announced a conciliator. He told them that they should have a decision by Monday. That was the deadline for acceptance of the conciliator.

Can he tell the House today why the school division was granted a four-day extension and the parents were never informed of such an extension?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, indeed the decision that has been arrived at, at the Turtle Mountain

School Division, is the responsibility of the school board. However, because of the fact that there are students who are out of school at the present time and there appears to be some outstanding issues with regard to information, I have offered to both parties, the residents of Cartwright and the school division, a conciliations person who might bring the two bodies together to resolve some of their differences so that indeed students might get back to the classroom as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, we were informed that the parents of the Cartwright area were ready to accept the conciliations person. At that time, we contacted the school division, and because of activities within the school board and the community, all school board members could not attend the meeting. For that reason, an extension was requested until such time as the school board could bring its members together.

My understanding is that they will be meeting this evening and that they will be informing us as to their decision after their meeting.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, last night was the regularly scheduled meeting of the school division, and they did not have a quorum. They did not have a quorum because at least one trustee received a phone call suggesting that he not attend the meeting.

Can the minister tell us why such an extension was granted to a school board that is not meeting at regularly scheduled meetings at which parents can attend and express their point of view?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I am not responsible for running the affairs of the school board. If they did not have a quorum last evening, then I would suggest that is the responsibility of the school board to address, not mine. We were informed by the school board that they would be gathering as soon as possible to consider this matter. They asked for an extension and an extension was given to them until Wednesday.

Mr. Speaker, the conciliation officer who was offered to the school division and the community is a voluntary thing. If either one of the groups does not accept the conciliation person to resolve this matter, that is something that is within their own jurisdiction and their own ability to decide.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, but assurance that there is quality education going on in the province of Manitoba is the responsibility of the Minister of

Education and Training, a responsibility which he refuses to accept.

School Closures Guidelines

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Can the Minister of Education and Training tell us today when he is going to directly instruct the school division that the school closure is a school closure, and he wants the guidelines followed so he can get those kids back into school?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that the Leader of the third party would ignore The Public Schools Act, would ignore all the regulations that a school board should follow, the bylaws that are set down by the school board, and indeed would interfere in a matter that is completely outside of her jurisdiction. Perhaps that is because she has no responsibility and can stand up and make all kinds of statements that she does not need to take responsibility for.

Mr. Speaker, in this matter, it is clear that the decision is the responsibility of the school board. They have the responsibility to decide where the students will attend classes. They have made that decision; the community has not gone along with that decision. It is now up to the school board and the community to resolve their differences.

Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to assist them, we have offered the services of a conciliations officer that will be paid for by the department. It is up to them now to decide whether or not they see such a service as being a valuable one or not.

Seniors RentalStart Program Notice to Applicants

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Housing said, on May 15, that some technical resource groups are more active than others, and that is why Roy Lev applied for Seniors RentalStart funding on February 11. On May 16, the minister again blamed the technical resource groups.

We now know, from Housing Estimates yesterday, that there were 22 applications, of which only two were aware that money was available and that \$10 million was available.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Traditionally this House has not called, or allowed for questions dealing specifically with Estimates questions that have been during the point of their consideration.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, obviously there is a sensitive chord over in the opposition benches.

I just ask the members to follow the rules of the House, that is all.

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order. The honourable government House leader did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, it is too bad the member for Morris (Mr. Manness) did not stand up for Carman's Lions, and maybe they would have gotten the funding instead of Rotary Pines.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Burrows will put his question now, please.

Mr. Martindale: My question is: Why were the other 20 nonprofit sponsor groups not told that \$10 million was available in the Seniors RentalStart program in February 1991, when Roy Lev and Rotary Pines knew the money was there?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, what we have here again is the hypocrisy of the NDP. I would like to quote from Hansard on April 22, 1991, from the member for Burrows who said: "The third thing I would commend the government for is the elimination of the Seniors RentalStart program. . . . I commend the government for chopping that particular program."

That member ever since has been promoting the program, holding out that the NDP would somehow support Seniors RentalStart programs in this province. His words alone said, no, chop the program; we congratulate you for doing that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, this is a very special time of year for many of us as we attend graduations of our children, our friends or perhaps even previous students. It is a time of celebration and a time to recognize accomplishment.

I had the opportunity to attend a very special graduation in my constituency this last weekend. After four years of hard work 12 students graduated with a Bachelor of Education from the BUNTEP program in Camperville. They are: Vivian Beauchamp, Gloria Campbell, Annette Chartrand, Linda Chartrand, Zeldia Chartrand, Pauline Genaille, Faye Guiboche, Adele Lafreniere, Linda Klyne, Sheila Ledoux, Jo Anne Ledoux and Linda Pangman.

These graduates participated in the convocation at Brandon University on the 25th of May. On Saturday there was a community celebration which was very important to the people of Camperville, Pine Creek and Duck Bay. Also taking part in the ceremonies were five other people who will graduate this fall. They are Sherry Chartrand, Jo Anne McKay, Maureen Lavallee, Josephine Leclair and Tom Marcelais.

The community was extremely proud of two students, Faye Guiboche, who won the Gold Medal for Education from Brandon University and Adele Lafreniere, who won the Silver Medal. This is an extremely great accomplishment for the people of this community.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I wish to congratulate the graduates, and I encourage them to get involved in the community wherever they go for they are setting an example and are the role models for many aboriginal and Metis people.

As one of the community leaders mentioned at the graduation, Sophie Ledoux said, we are like a barrel of crabs that is pushed down every time we try to get out, but as each time one crab gets out, it is so much easier for the rest of us.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker, this graduation made me recognize the value of the program, for most of these graduates told me that they would not have been

able to get this degree had it not been for the program coming to their community. I was very fortunate to be at the celebration but other members who were invited were not able to be there. I ask them at this time to join me in congratulating these students on their great accomplishment.

* * *

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, Seven Oaks General Hospital is celebrating 10 years of caring and service to the people of Winnipeg.

In the early 1960s, following the relocation of the Children's Hospital and the closure of St. Joseph's Hospital, the citizens of north Winnipeg began making proposals to the government for a general hospital. In 1972, after years of discussion and negotiation, approval was received to begin construction of a 326-bed hospital to be called Seven Oaks Hospital. Those who started with a vision and a dream are to be commended for their years of generous contribution of time, their organizational skills and their dedication.

We in north Winnipeg and all of Winnipeg are proud of the achievements of the hospital and all those who through their hard work and dedication have done much for all. The hospital and its people have been the recipient of many awards, Mr. Speaker, but perhaps the best award is the admiration that the Seven Oaks Hospital has in the hearts and minds of all Winnipeggers and Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Could I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition party have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? Agreed.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, at lunch time today, along with the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey), who was representing the government, I attended the kickoff of Fight Abuse: End the Silence campaign for 1991.

This campaign which will now be taking its caravan across the province to a variety of locations encourages all those who have any knowledge of child abuse to end the silence by making that knowledge public. It is important for all of us to understand that there are still many, many children who are abused both sexually, physically and emotionally, who never have that abuse reported. We know that children have to frequently tell as many as seven to nine people before they are believed and before that abuse is ultimately reported.

All of us as politicians have an obligation, I think, to help promote this campaign. I join with all the members of the House, because I believe that each one of us will do so if we can. I make a suggestion, which I will be implementing for the next little bit, which is to simply type at the bottom of my letters, "Fight Child Abuse: End the Silence." Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call the bills in the following order: Second Readings, Bill 70; followed by Debate on Second Readings, Bill 38, Bill 6, Bill 44.

At this time, I would ask the members whether there is a willingness to waive private members' hour?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? No. Leave is denied.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 70—The Public Sector Compensation Management Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 70, The Public Sector Compensation Management Act; Loi sur la gestion des salaires du secteur public, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, on several occasions over the past six months, I have tried to provide this Legislature and the people of this province with an insight into the state of the province's finances and to point out the acute reality of the fiscal challenge facing Manitoba.

If there is one area that this government prides itself in since the election, it is that it has been consistent. It is a hallmark of this government as to the openness associated with what it is trying to do to put the province again onto a strong economic foundation. Again, on that point, I can tell you whether groups in society have been totally supportive of us or not. Of course, when you govern, you have to make decisions and from time to time you make decisions that are not favoured by groups and individuals in society.

To those whom I have spoken to, at least they have given us some credit with respect to trying to be consistent. Over the next two years, if this province is to successfully meet the challenge of true economic renewal, we all must pull together to share the burden through moderation and co-operation. That means all of us, Mr. Speaker. That means the members on the other side of the House representing their constituents and indeed everybody in this province, because we are in serious times.

As I have said in the past, before starting along the path of economic renewal, this government or indeed any government must put its own House into order. Economic renewal cannot be achieved if our own finances are out of control, I mean, Mr. Speaker, to go beyond that, if indeed our finances are put out of control by somebody who is not accountable whatsoever to the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba. That is an underlying theme of the presentation that I am to make this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, public sector salaries constitute the majority of all government expenditures. We needed to show leadership in this area if public confidence in our ability to manage was and is to be maintained.

Last December, I rose in this Legislature to lay before the members and the taxpayers of our province our government's position regarding funding for public sector wage settlements. Without including Crown corporations, this government designated a wage envelope exceeding \$2 billion to fund the salaries of people working for government. Within that was a smaller envelope to fund the increases of several tens of millions of dollars, to fund the increases, Mr. Speaker, and I ask members in the House to remember that point. In essence, we established a target of an average, and again I underline the word "average," 3 percent increase for

all those employees drawing salaries from the public purse.

Mr. Speaker, I did not say that everybody would achieve 3 percent, indeed as some writer did in one of the local papers today. I clearly said that there would be some groups in the public sector who would be expected to take less than 3 percent. Indeed I said that there would be some that would be expected to take zero. That was clearly laid out for all Manitobans December 14 last. We have been open and we have been consistent with respect to our message.

We stated that, in order to recognize the relative imbalances within the Manitoba public wage sector, some groups will receive greater increases while other groups will receive less. Mr. Speaker, we said only one group of publicly funded employees could expect a settlement in excess of all others, that being the nurses. We have delivered on that commitment. To hold true to that commitment, we have to exercise the option that we did, in part, to hold true to the commitment that we made to the nurses. We cannot let some third party, without accountability to the taxpayers of this province, bring in awards that would break faith, not only to the public statements we made on December 14, but particularly break faith with the commitment that we had made to the nurses of this province.

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker, that sets into place the setting as we, the government, came about to make our decision with respect to the introduction of Bill 70.

Mr. Speaker, there are no mores. I firmly believe that Manitoba is at a decision-making point in its economic history, where difficult choices have to be made. The government takes no delight and no satisfaction in bringing down Bill 70, but beyond all, we are a government. That means we were elected to govern. That means we were elected to make decisions and at times very difficult decisions. We have three choices. As I said yesterday in Question Period, we can raise taxes and hurt our chances, severely hurt our chances, for economic renewal, or we can find more money by jobs and services to people, or we can ask everyone to share the burden through these difficult times and put aside their wage demands for one year.

Mr. Speaker, the government today in conjunction with a major concern from Ontario, Royal Trust, were involved in a joint announcement that will

deliver 200 jobs to the province of Manitoba, specifically to the city of Winnipeg. That announcement today occurred because of only one reason—more than one reason, but mainly one.

That is, that company, that corporate body, the officials in that company saw that there was a government in place trying to hold at a constant level, vis-a-vis the other provinces in Canada, the taxation level. That was the main basis on which that announcement is made, no other. No other, Mr. Speaker, no other.

An Honourable Member: Where are they moving from?

Mr. Manness: And where are they coming from is the answer, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: Where are they coming from?

Mr. Manness: To this province because, firstly, they see a government that is trying to maintain the cost wage and wage ratio, trying to hold the productive basis down, the productive cost side down of their equation, Mr. Speaker, and they are looking favourably on this province. To let the deficit, i.e., taxation rates, run wild and frustrate that is totally out of keeping with what the people in this province want and indeed the philosophy of this government.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the minister is straying somewhat far from the principles of the bill. He is also being misleading, even contradicting his own press release.

I am wondering if the minister would entertain a question.

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

* * *

Mr. Manness: The choice is clear. It is not an option to raise taxes that will scare away jobs and not only that, hinder against those who are looking to come, Mr. Speaker, in investment, and hurt any chance for economic renewal. That is not an option. It is not an option to cut jobs and services that the people of Manitoba deserve.

The members now, since I have brought down the budget and they have become aware of the

Estimates, have berated us on a daily basis for reductions in some areas of programming. So, Mr. Speaker, those two options are unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the third option can only be the same one that I referred to on December 14 last, that all of us, indeed not only the members when the members supported the bill before this Legislature which froze their salaries, indeed all of us who take money from the public purse. Everyone of us has to share and over this period of time, over some period of time as defined in the act take zero, not as receiving zero, but taking a zero percent increase leaving still significant amount of remuneration for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, the choice is clear. We have asked everybody to set aside their demands for one year. With government revenues virtually stagnant, we ask the remaining public sector employees—now I am talking the remaining outside of the nurses—to share with the challenge of preserving jobs and services. Only by keeping the wage settlements down can we protect the maximum number of the services important to the people of this province.

In December, we met with Mr. Olfert and staff to discuss creative solutions to this problem. There were none, Mr. Speaker, forthcoming. What Mr. Olfert had to offer was this: build a coalition, go to Ottawa and ask for more. That was one of the solutions.

The second solution was to tax the corporations more. Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that the corporations will simply impose that onto the consumer. The consumer is you and I, and the consumer is every member of the MGEA. That will have the greatest negative impact on disposable income. That was another one of the creative solutions of the Manitoba Government Employees' Association.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I can remember that they asked us not to consider externalizing any activity of government, particularly the governance associated with the community colleges.

As I can recall, to the best of my ability, those were the three creative solutions offered by the MGEA at that point in time in December.

In January, we offered our civil servants—and our battle at this point, and I want to say this, is not with our civil servants. This government understands the commitment they make to the service of all Manitobans through the provision of services. Our

battle, if there is one, is with the union leadership of the employees.

Mr. Speaker, the civil servants in January, we asked our civil servants to take no wage increase in the first year and a two percent increase along with the opportunity to participate in a revenue-sharing formula in the second year. That offer was about choices. The MGEA had to choose between keeping their wage demands in line with limited tax dollars, or they could choose to opt for larger wage settlements which could ultimately result in fewer jobs. That was a choice. Just like we were faced with choices, the MGEA also was faced with a choice. They did not want to talk. They chose higher settlements.

On February 6, our Premier (Mr. Filmon) met with Mr. Olfert on a one-to-one basis to once again discuss creative solutions. Once again, there were none forthcoming. On February 13, the Premier, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and myself once again met with Mr. Olfert and his executive to explore creative solutions. The ideas were to ask the federal government for more money again or raise taxes.

Mr. Speaker, on May 9, the government revised its offer on the condition it be taken, and the offer at that time was to extend security of employment to the end of this fiscal year on the condition that the membership be provided with an opportunity to vote on that offer. The MGEA's response was to immediately reject it with no hope and with no vote to their membership.

Just last week, May 30, again our Premier and Mr. Olfert met once again on a one to one to explore any creative solutions that could lead to a negotiated settlement. Yet again, there was nothing forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am trying to make is that today we were again berated by members opposite for not allowing the collective bargaining model to go forward, free collective bargaining, to use the words of the members opposite. On five occasions, three of them where the Premier and the leader of the MGEA were in the same room, not negotiating through third parties, tried to work towards some resolution through the free bargaining system. The head of the MGEA said, no, we are going to lay our case at the table, at the feet of an arbitrator, and we believe we will do much better through that system.

Also over the period of the last three months, we have become growingly aware the province's ability to pay is not being taken into account by arbitrator selectors. So I suppose then, this discussion, the principle behind the bill and the reason we brought it in, the rationale, breaks down when you strip away all of the wording, comes down to basically two or three points.

Firstly, what about this ability to pay? What does it mean, and to what should the government give higher order? Does it give higher order to the arbitration model which already in itself is different as to free collective bargaining, or does it give a higher order to democracy which says this government is in place to govern? Indeed, Mr. Speaker, and I will quote in due course from the Leader of the Opposition when he said cabinet ultimately has to make decisions.

* (1440)

Where is the higher order? Is it arbitration of the day or is it the government trying to protect the best interests of the taxpayers because indeed the arbitrator of the day has said, and I can quote as I did yesterday, that ability to pay is not at issue.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, in my view that is what the issue is. In my view the days of an arbitrator providing an award, particularly in the case of the MGEA where the government did not even have a say as to whether or not we go to arbitration, the government representing the taxpayers of the province does not even have a say. The arbitrator coming down with an award, accountable to whom? Accountable to nobody.

The members opposite when they get up to debate on this have to say who protects the taxpayer. They have to address that question, because if they fail to address that question, then what they are saying is they do not care about jobs, they do not care about taxes, and ultimately they do not care about the economic renewal that is so necessary for this province.

This is what the Leader of the NDP had to say, I believe it was in the session of '89, when at that time we introduced legislation dealing with judges' remuneration. The Premier at that time in debate, February 22, 1990—sorry, it was the session early '90 when we were talking, and I forget what bill this was on at that time but was dealing with judges' salaries. The Leader of the NDP at that time was strongly opposed. He said that this Legislature

should not deal with judge's salary, having come through an attempt by three people to come forward with a report.

He said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote page 5497 of Hansard: ". . . I believe that Cabinet should make that final decision."

Mr. Speaker, I do not claim to be a labour expert, but I do know that free collective bargaining is free collective bargaining. Free collective bargaining is not FOS, free collective bargaining is not arbitration, and free collective bargaining, in some respects, is not coming to the Legislature. Free collective bargaining is the employer and the employee across the table coming to some conclusion as to what is the best deal under the circumstances.

The ability to pay and the ability of the government and the taxpayers to pay can never, ever be forgotten, and the philosophy of this government is that it never, ever will be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, again I want to address the issue—the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and I had a disagreement today as to the facts around increases. I am not going to stand here in my place today and say that he will not be able to bring forward a listing or table of numbers, raw in form, which indeed will be able to make his point. I want to indicate that the basis of our 64 percent increase was built on looking at classifications through government and seeing what has happened in those classifications, not only on the base-rate wage, but taking into account also in some instances the benefits, looking at the total payroll.

Nobody can argue with me when I say that the average MGEA salaries, since 1982, have increased 64 percent. Just, one has to look at the total remuneration. I am mindful of the zero percent years, but when one takes into account the wage bill and the earnings and the benefits that go with it, which are taxable, when one looks at that, my statement is correct.

When the member wants to talk about the rate-over-rate, year-to-year comparison, he could probably make his argument and his point, but the reality is, when one wants to compare our civil servants in comparative terms compared to others, to the other provinces, we rank third, and you will never hear the Labour critic from the opposition party say so.

It is not our analysis. This is important, Mr. Speaker. I want to put this out on the record. The

government of Alberta co-ordinates a survey. This is an interprovincial data exchange of government, of eight benchmark government sector positions. All Canadian provinces respond. In other words, peer government is broken down into eight sectors. Manitoba ranks third with only the province of Ontario first and Quebec second.

Of the eight positions—and what are the positions, Mr. Speaker? I will tell you. The positions are these: corrections officer, child care counsellor, social worker, forester, institutional service worker, electrician, Clerk I and II, programmer analyst—those eight positions, representative of Civil Service everywhere across the country.

When you look at the wage rates in those eight categories across Canada, Manitoba ranks third. Our correction officers receive the fourth highest rate of pay; child care counsellors, the second highest; social workers, third highest; forester, second highest; institutional service worker, second highest; electrician, third highest; Clerk I and II, third highest; programmer analyst, fifth.

When you take a simple average of all those numbers, we come to third, yet, Mr. Speaker, when you want look at economic rank, the ability to bring in tax revenue, this province ranks seventh.

Nobody is going to refute those numbers, because it says very clearly that our servants who provide such important service to the citizens of our province, in a comparative sense, are well paid.

Mr. Speaker, I had to read carefully the Free Press editorial which called into question my naivete with respect to why it is we brought in the legislation and this whole area of ability to pay, and I keep coming back to it because to me it is so germane.

* (1450)

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I am having some difficulty hearing the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) because of some of the personal comments the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is making to members on this side. I would ask you to ask the Minister of Health and other members to perhaps pay attention to the Minister of Finance so that the rest of us, who are listening, can listen to his comments carefully.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the opposition House leader. Those members wishing to carry on

personal conversations can do so just outside the Chamber.

* * *

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I read seriously the editorial in the Free Press today, talking about this ability-to-pay concept and why it is that probably arbitrators in the past and maybe even today—certainly it has been our experience that they have over the past number of awards, even though the member quotes one award indeed where Justice Freedman certainly does mention it, and I acknowledge that.

I took seriously, I read seriously, the editorial, and I tried to compare that to the legislation in The Labour Relations Act, where a reference is made with respect to the ability to pay. I tried to put in my own mind how it is that the arbitration model—and I know it is long standing. I know it is held closely to the bosom of those who, of course, are very involved in the labour movement, but my experiences through arbitration is that we have lived through a period of 25 years now where governments have been borrowing, borrowing money. It is the root problem that we have today to deal with, so I guess to the casual observer who says then that takes a higher order than the government's problems, it appears that our legislation in some respect and the rationale behind it is naive.

Mr. Speaker, I reject that because I say, what is more important—what is more important? I am sorry I cannot get off this point. Is it some arbitrator who is unaccountable to the people, saying to the taxpayers of the province, you will pay more, whether it is today or tomorrow, you will pay it, or indeed the government's right and responsibility to make that judgment?

That decision and ultimately the decision whether or not to bring in this legislation impacts upon the taxpayer and, therefore, ultimately is at cross purposes, as I have said before, and I repeat this, with our posteconomic renewal. That is what this debate is all about. This debate is whether or not the government has the right, indeed the moral right—certainly it has the democratic right—but whether it has the moral right to step in at this particular point in time to extend, not to reduce salaries, but to extend contracts that are in place, a rate of pay that is in place, for the ultimate well-being of our province.

Mr. Speaker, when we drew up the bill two principles were important to us. We said, as I said yesterday in Question Period, we did not want to retroactively impose this on settlements that had already been agreed to, signed, and indeed where the flow of increased remuneration had started. We did not want to take back payments, increased salaries that had already started to flow.

We also said that the scope, in the designation of those groups that would fall under the full scope of this, that we would try to keep that down to a situation and to a focus that would fall mostly on those that are government-funded or government-owned institutions. In our view, the Crowns, because we are the shareholder for the people of the province of Manitoba, by necessity had to fall under the purview of this act.

Our logic went beyond whether or not the Crowns may have a profitable bottom line. What we said is, if there are groups out there—there are many people out there who do not have jobs. We are asking people also by way of this bill to take no increase. To us, indeed, if we allow rate increases reflecting salary increases to flow through the Public Utilities Board process as if an automatic rate of inflation increase were to flow through that process, that would be unfair to Manitobans. Consequently, we exercised our right as the shareholder of the Crowns, and we said that those groups of employees who are affected should come under the purview of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, we tried to keep the focus there. We chose not to broaden the focus to include school boards, municipalities and, indeed, universities. We also said that if those groups are not going to take into account the seriousness of the situation, and others in the public sector—and again let me state for the record, I am not talking at the private sector. This bill has no input whatsoever to the private sector. That was the manner in which we tried to focus the bill, and they are the two underlying principles. Again, not wanting to retroactively impose and, secondly, trying to define the scope.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, and I have heard his attacks, very carefully has to say which way he wants this legislation to go. Which amendments will he move? He says on one hand that arbitration models are the highest order. On the other hand he says, and I quote it, that cabinet should have final say. Which way does he want it? Which amendments will he move? Will he move to

extend the powers of the bill to include those which he deems are outside of it or to enshrine arbitration, which itself, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has said, stifles free collective bargaining?

Mr. Speaker, I only ask, particularly the media, particularly those political pundits who are going to be very actively watching the discourse that goes on on this very important bill, that they also impose or impress upon the NDP some degree of consistency, because free collective bargaining is not arbitration, and free collective bargaining is not cabinet edict either, and I acknowledge that. There are major differences between those views, and obviously the NDP are going to have to come up with a consistent position.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) says we have hit the Civil Service doubly hard. This bill is not an attack on the Civil Service. It may be an attack on their leadership for failing to understand or heed the government message over the past six months, the consistent government message, for failing to take our offer to their employees, for failing to share. I can assure you this is not an attack on our Civil Service. I do not know why, and somehow some speaker from the opposition is going to have to tell us why our offer was never ever taken to the membership.

The members talk about, they call us fascist. They keep throwing that word across the House, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: No, they did not say that.

An Honourable Member: This is fascist legislation.

Mr. Manness: Well, no, there is a member in the back there who called us fascist. There is no doubt about that. Mr. Speaker, I chose not to rise and put on the record, but, yes, it has been called fascist legislation.

The members then have to tell me why it is the union leadership would not take our offer to the membership, verbal. I would like an explanation of that somewhere in the course of the debate on this.

* (1500)

Mr. Speaker, the major details of the bill are important and I, of course, will not go into clause by clause, that would be out of order. The bill itself, and I will just address it in this fashion—I just wanted to point out in the definitions area that it does not include some officers, and the excluded officials are

there. I want to assure this House and put on the record that deputy ministers will not be given increases. Crowns will be asked to—their senior officers and indeed their senior management will be asked to include in their consideration of wages the spirit of this legislation. Political staff will be receiving no increase. MLAs and cabinet members will receive no increase.

Mr. Speaker, there is a clause that lays out in the bill—there is a reference made to June 3, 1991, that was yesterday. It includes, of course, in this particular reference, those Crown attorneys who had received a 5 percent increase, Legal Aid lawyers who had received a 5 percent increase, the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation, this legislation is well known, supersedes the Freedman award, those Crown corporations involved in FOS, all in process, CUPE under Health, MGEA arbitration and of course IOUE.

Mr. Speaker, some are going to argue that we should let FOS run its course and then impose zero percent. I say to you that FOS will be allowed to run its course in the private sector, but our revenues are such that we cannot allow arbitrated awards in the 5 percent area to come down. In all honesty, that was part of government's consideration behind the development of this bill, because a 5 percent award, had it come into being, would have meant a \$30 million increase to the bottom line of the government in one year. That would have rippled right through all of the public sector, and I say the impact on the government would have been in excess of \$100 million.

That is why somebody had to stand up for the taxpayers of the province. Members can say nonsense. They can call me any name they want, and that does not bother me. The reality is you cannot dispute the numbers. You cannot dispute the numbers of what a 5 percent settlement would have meant to the bottom line. Nobody in this House can dispute that.

Mr. Speaker, our employees of government have taken zero percent for eight months. We asked them to take zero percent for four more and that request was denied. And I asked the question, why? Why, and maybe the members opposite can answer the question. Who cares about the \$100 million impact not in one year but for every year ever after and the compounding effect of that?

Mr. Speaker, we are extending agreements by one year. What we are saying is there is going to be a window and every one that comes open during that period of one year somewhere will be caught in that window. If for some reason, some group escapes that window, we will hold for ourselves the power in cabinet to extend, not extend forever but extend, by way of regulation, to the end of 1992. We are hoping that is not necessary. Just like we are hoping it is not necessary that we have to, after a decision is reached with respect to fee schedule doctors, that we will not have to use any powers of this act.

Mr. Speaker, as you know the ability to pay principle which was so fundamental to the agreement that we reached with the MMA that that is not taken into account. There are bills under this, there are powers within this bill to ensure that again another settlement, out of keeping with what everybody, most people in the private sector are doing through these difficult times, what a significant number of public people have done. Also the commitment we made to the nurses and trying to be consistent through all of this, we will use the powers of this bill if necessary.

I agree with those who say that there are strong powers in this bill. I cannot deny it. It is because of that that I cannot deny that the government put a sunset into so that this legislation will fall by the wayside relatively quickly in terms of the reality of the finances of the province over this year and the next year.

The bill and again I made reference to the fee schedule provision and I made reference also to the sunset clause. I have made reference also to the powers cabinet has provided for itself within a particular section, but through it all one cannot forget what is happening in other provinces. As the Premier (Mr. Filmon) indicated, we are the sixth province to bring this in. We did not bring this in, the other provinces did not bring it in because there were any politics in it for them.

I do not believe that the Province of Newfoundland—in response to the question of the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs)—I do not believe Premier Clyde Wells brought in his legislation because he was going to garner favour with the Civil Service. There, of course, as the Premier said, layoff restraint announcement made on the Budget Address of March 7, up to 2,100 actual positions and 500 vacancies to be eliminated.

A one-year wage freeze for the entire public sector with the current year of collective agreement replaced—replaced, did you hear that word?—replaced by zero.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

In Nova Scotia, Mr. Acting Speaker, there were no votes in it for the Nova Scotia government to bring in a two-year public sector wage freeze announced in the Budget Address to be effective immediately. Pay equity suspended for two years. No tax increases. Two percent ceiling on social programs. Fee schedule physicians to be included in the freeze. What are the politics in the Province of Nova Scotia bringing in that legislation? Absolutely none.

An Honourable Member: The Tories.

Mr. Manness: What were the politics of Premier Schreyer, and I will quote it chapter and verse and if the members want I will show Premier Schreyer's signature, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I am glad somebody said that. I have a document in my possession dated the 25th day of February, 1976, signed by one Edward Schreyer. That was not forced upon the government of Manitoba. There is also one in Saskatchewan, I believe, from Premier Blakeney.

Mr. Acting Speaker, these times come. Governments have to be in their place to deal with them, because if they are not, the wage loss and the job loss that will occur tomorrow will magnify this several times. That is the reality, if you are not in position.

Let us talk about other governments, the Liberal government of Quebec. They announced on March 19, 1991, a wage freeze to cover the entire Quebec public sector, but there were two options associated with that. Mr. Acting Speaker, British Columbia, a compensation fairness act where all of the powers as to whether a settlement, one through arbitration, was fair or not were embodied in the body of one person. So we are not breaking new ground in this area.

Again I reiterate, there is no politics for the provincial government to bring in this particular—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Speaker, I just want to close by indicating that members of our party will certainly be rising to debate this issue over several times. I know there will be many points put on the record with respect to this particular bill.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Let me close by saying, and again by reiterating what I have said on several occasions, we had three choices. We either could increase taxes; we could either throw more people out of work—and, indeed, I am not talking about hundreds, Mr. Speaker, because I believe a 5 percent award would have translated into 1,000 or more—or we could ask everybody to share.

* (1510)

Mr. Speaker, this is a common-sense bill under the times. This bill is in short duration. This bill is asking our public servants to share. This bill, hopefully, is asking the labour leadership to be fair and open with their members and ask them to share. I know that the rank and file members today of the public sector are prepared to share. I know that, and I know that because common sense would dictate that when many of the neighbours have no jobs at all. I would then ask all members to understand the rationale as to why the bill was brought in at this time and to provide some support to it. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking, but I would like to ask, is this our custom on second reading to ask questions for clarification?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Thompson have leave to pose a question to the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) for clarification?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Thompson, I would like to advise the House that I have been advised that the honourable member for Thompson, in accordance with Rule 33.(2), is a designated speaker for the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), therefore has unlimited time on Bill 70.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I want to indicate from the beginning that I find it amazing this government would not extend the courtesy that has been the tradition of this House for members to ask questions on second reading for clarification. I had indicated to the minister that I had full intention of speaking on this bill and, indeed, I will speak.

An Honourable Member: Ask the question.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I will be allowed to revert to that position, I will ask questions because it is important that we have responses. I have about

three questions for clarification based on the bill, which is our tradition, and I have much more in the way of comments. If there is leave, I believe the government may have reconsidered.

I wanted to ask the minister, he referred to in terms of discussions on fees and in reading this section—and I do not wish to discuss the specific section, but the wording is very general. It talks about being able to deal with fees in a general sense made directly or indirectly by the government of Manitoba to persons not otherwise covered in the act. That could be a very sweeping provision. It could include virtually anyone who is funded directly or indirectly. It could include contractors who receive government contracts in the way I interpret this.

What is the intent of that section? Is it intended to be that sweeping or has the minister intended to have the fees on a more restricted basis?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the question will be answered this way: Certainly, we are not looking for sweeping powers within that particular clause or any other that talks about the application of this act to any collective agreement on any terms and conditions that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council considers appropriate. If one wants to read a section in isolation, one may want to come up with that interpretation, but that is not the way it is done and the member knows it.

The member knows that if he were to provide this to a court of law for interpretation, they would take into account not only the title of the bill, but also the general provisions in the act. Very clearly, this bill is applicable only to the public sector; furthermore, if that is not clear enough, I stand in my place to tell the member that this bill does not apply to the private sector; and furthermore, in those areas which maybe are hard to determine as to whether they are nonprofit or whether they are government and so on and so forth, we have the power through the budgetary process by way of granting to exercise pressures in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the member the designations of the area are as shown here. Those that are not included would not include those to whom he refers.

Mr. Ashton: A further question for clarification again on a similar note. I would point out to the minister that while this bill is entitled The Public Sector Compensation Management Act, there is no

specific definition of what public sector is, and further elements of the bill would extend the application of all or any part of this act to any collective agreement on any terms and conditions that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council considers appropriate.

Once again, is the intention of this to be as broad as the wording indicates or is the intention to be more narrowly prescribed in terms of the intent of the government, which is basically what we are debating on second reading?

Mr. Manness: These are wide powers. They grant us the right to designate, in addition to the three or four that we have indicated here. Conceivably, they could in due course be applied by our interpretation to municipalities. We have no intention, at this time, to involve ourselves as to the application as it is towards municipalities. It could in time, I suppose, apply to universities. Today, as I stand here, we have no intention to apply this to universities. In due time, I guess, it could be made applicable to the MMA fee schedule. As I stand here today that is not the intention.

Mr. Ashton: A final question for clarification once again. One of the features of this bill is that it applies not only to contracts that are under negotiations, but contracts where arbitration or final offer selection has been initiated, in some places where awards have been given.

As I read the bill, it basically says that any of the discussions in negotiations that have proceeded up to that point are null and void. There are a number of examples under final offer selection which are currently going to be voided by this bill, where agreement has been reached on everything except money. Is it the intent of this bill to prevent people from being able to, by mutual agreement, reach agreement on issues other than wages, including working conditions, for example, technological change? As I indicated, there are some that are in the process that are in that situation. Is that the intent? If not, what is the intent of the sections in this bill that deal with it?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if we are talking about the same particular specific clause or not, but we have tried here. It came to our understanding that in some situations, out of a whole list of items that had been negotiated, a conclusion had been reached, an agreement had been reached on many other than just wages. We

just did not want to, by this bill, lock in the concessions granted by employees toward maybe working to a higher wage component. What we have said is we would like to wipe the slate clean. This, basically, is protection for the employees—those negotiations.

It could be construed by some, seeing that we have introduced this bill, and seeing that there had been agreement on nonmonetary issues up to this point in time, that the employer can just say, well, okay, we have agreed on this in the past, but now I cannot offer you any more than zero because that is what the law is. We have said, uh-uh. That is not fair to the employee. In that case, the slate is wiped clean and then we can begin negotiating on all of the other conditions. So that is the sole purpose of that aspect.

Let me conclude, Mr. Speaker, again, with respect to the powers of the bill and say that the rationale is that, in general, we cannot anticipate anybody else at this time, but we are going to watch very closely other provincially funded organizations and act to protect the taxpayers and the integrity of our budget.

* (1520)

Mr. Ashton: There will, indeed, be more questions throughout debate on this bill. I will, at this point, proceed to make some comments on this bill, Mr. Speaker. I want to indicate that I have received the designation from our leader to exceed the 40 minute period. I do not anticipate speaking quite as long as the former member for Churchill did on final offer selection, but the way in which this government is dealing with this, this particular bill may change that, not just in terms of myself, but in terms of other members of this Legislature, because on a daily basis in this House, we are seeing in the words that were used yesterday by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), words that were used again today, we are seeing the big lie. We are seeing on a daily basis whereby we are seeing this government bring in, in this particular case, an item of legislation that is one of the most Draconian items of legislation ever introduced in this House.

In order to support that legislation, Mr. Speaker, they are using figures, they are using arguments that are not factual and are fallacious, and I will deal with that, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) anticipated, in my comments. I will deal with the unfactual information that this minister has brought forward. I will deal with that.

What this government is also doing on a daily basis is twisting, twisting what is happening. This is a government that is violating every tenet of free collective bargaining. This is a government that is violating every provision of our labour relations in terms of bargaining in good faith. We see it even again today. I will deal with every single one of those items and the rather pitiful attempts of the Minister of Finance to focus this as being a battle between the government and union bosses.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I have a message, Mr. Acting Speaker, for the government and they will find this out, that the 48,000 Manitobans who are affected, and the many more who may be affected under this bill, will speak directly to the minister and he will find that the so-called union bosses are democratically representing their members, and there are members today -(interjection)- Well, there are people in this Chamber today who say that they are wrong. I would like them to talk—I note members in the gallery currently represent workers from IBEW, Local 2034.

I have talked to representatives of unions and shop floor workers from across this province over the last number of days since this bill was introduced and their message is that the government has broken its word, the government cannot be trusted, and that what we are seeing from the government on this bill is nothing more than a thinly disguised attempt to live up to the Tory ideology which always seeks to attack working people, in this case the public servants of this province, to use them as a scapegoat for their own economic incompetence and, in particular, the economic incompetence of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) because that is what is at root.

I wish to deal with a number of other items, Mr. Acting Speaker, in dealing with this. I want to deal with some of the statements that have been put on the record by the Premier (Mr. Filmon). I want to deal with some of the statements that have been put on the record by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that are not only not factual, but misled the people of Manitoba and members of this House. I want to deal with what I consider, in looking back at the history of Manitoba, to be one of the saddest cases of abuse of government authority, of government fiat.

Yes, I will use the word "fascist" in terms of this legislation because, Mr. Acting Speaker, how can you not describe legislation such as this which by government fiat, which arbitrarily, retroactively brings in a wage freeze which freezes the wages of people who played by the rules for six, seven and eight months of bargaining in good faith, who have gone through a final offer selection, gone to arbitration, have received awards under final offer selection, and then have been told by this government, we have changed the rules, it is, heads I win, tails you lose—how could you not describe that as fascist legislation?

To the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) who talks about other provinces, we will indeed compare other provinces. We will compare the record of this government as 10th out of 10 in terms of economic indicators. You know, our minister likes to talk about Ontario. The conference board is predicting that they will be the first to lead Canada out of a recession. They are predicting that this government will be the last, Mr. Acting Speaker. We will talk about economics.

To the minister who likes to play this as being something that is being done by other provinces, and I watch with amusement when he uses the example of Newfoundland. I know he uses that to target the Liberals, and I know that the Liberals have done similar things to what this government is doing in other provinces including in Newfoundland. I say that if this government has its way, we will end up like Newfoundland, not just in terms of legislation, but in terms of their economic situation. They have traditionally had the weakest economy in Canada. This minister and this Premier (Mr. Filmon) are doing their best to put Manitoba right there with Newfoundland in terms of economic circumstances.

We will talk about the comparison, Mr. Acting Speaker. The bottom line -(interjection)- and to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), who is nowhere to be found on this issue, where was he when this fascist piece of legislation was introduced by this government? Where was the Minister of Labour? Why has he not spoken for Manitoba workers? What credibility will he have with Manitoba workers when he sits down at the table and tries to explain where he was when this bill was brought into the cabinet and brought into the Manitoba Legislature? The Minister of Labour has failed Manitoba workers. -(interjection)-

Mr. Acting Speaker, I apologize to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) if the volume offends him or if the message in any way offends him. I might say to the Minister of Natural Resources, I am probably going to be doing him a favour, because he is going to be hearing it, not from myself as Labour critic, not from other members of the opposition, but from many of those workers from across the province who feel absolutely and fundamentally betrayed by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon). We are not just talking about the normal cynicism that develops about politicians.

You know, when I hear from people I talk to, when I go door to door, complaints about politics and politicians; at one time I feel disappointed, that public service, that representing people in the Legislature or in the House of Commons should be taken in such a negative light. When I hear people talking about politicians saying one thing before an election and another thing afterward, when I hear people saying that politicians will say anything and do anything for political purposes, when I see them talking about politicians breaking their word, breaking their promises, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I look at this government, and I look what they are doing on a daily basis, and I look at what they have done in this bill; is there any wonder that there is such cynicism about politics and politicians?

I want to say to the people of Manitoba, and I want to say in this Legislature, Mr. Acting Speaker, to the government, that while they may play the politics of the hidden agenda, while they may say one thing before an election and after an election, while they may say something, while they may give their word as this government House leader did on final offer selection and then break that word by bringing in this insidious piece of legislation, that the New Democratic Party will not play that same sort of politics. We will never support a government that tries to attempt to turn working Manitobans, of any sort—whether they work for the public or the private sector, we will not let this Conservative government attack the working people of Manitoba and use them as a scapegoat for their own economic incompetence, Mr. Acting Speaker.

That is the bottom line. We heard it again today. We heard talk about the deficit. We heard pious words from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) saying that they are not attacking workers. They have nothing against the Civil Service, Mr. Acting

Speaker. Well, I do not accept that. That is not true. It is not the philosophy of the Conservative Party.

In every election I have either run in or worked in, I have run against or worked against Conservative candidates who have used one or more scapegoats. One of those scapegoats has always been the public service, and the minister knows that. That is the Conservative ideology and the philosophy to ratchet down the size of government. So let him not hide from that reality.

Even that Minister of Finance, I am sure, would not deny that in his own philosophical outlook in terms of politics, that is part of it, restricting the size of government. So let them not say that is not part of their policy. Let them not say it is not what they do when they are in politics, when they are in elected office.

What did Sterling Lyon do? What was the first thing that Sterling Lyon did in terms of the Civil Service? He laid off hundreds of civil servants saying to the public service of this province that they were somehow responsible for all the perceived ills that the Conservatives saw in society.

What has this government done? History has repeated itself. The first thing they did when they got a majority government was attack the public service of this province through layoffs and now this insidious, fascist legislation that freezes the wages of public servants after they have just eliminated over 950 positions, Mr. Acting Speaker.

They say they have nothing against public servants or the individual workers out there. They will lay them off. They will freeze their wages, and they will gladly go out there. I know they will do it because they have done it before, and they will try and use it for the utmost political advantage. Well, the New Democratic Party will never be a part of allowing them to use people as scapegoats, whether it is public servants or anyone else in this province.

* (1530)

The blame for what is happening in the province of Manitoba should lie with this government which believes that the best that a government can do is do nothing. We are seeing the results of that, Mr. Acting Speaker. We saw it under Sterling Lyon. We were 10th out of 10. We are seeing it now under this government. We are again 10th out of 10. That is the problem with their philosophy. They are always looking for somebody else to blame other

than themselves. They should go look in a mirror and then they will see who is responsible for the mess that Manitoba is in currently.

So I want to deal with the facts. I want to deal with the pious words. I want to deal with the background, Mr. Acting Speaker, with what is happening. I want to deal with the background of Bill 70 and just why this piece of legislation has to be, in my mind, one of the worst pieces of legislation in Manitoba history, the worst pieces of legislation.

I want to put it in context. I want to read into the record some of the words that the Premier spoke in regard to collective bargaining, Mr. Acting Speaker. I am going to put that into context, what an average Manitoban would have believed going into the 1990 election. I want to quote, October 26, 1989—this is before the election—at the MGEA convention.

The Premier said: If the union believes it is in its interest to put in anti-privatization or no-layoff clauses, that is part of the whole bargaining process. You believe in it, and we believe in it, and we will carry out our responsibilities under it. A direct quote of the Premier reprinted in the MGEA magazine.

I want to stress what he said. We believe in it, and we will carry out our responsibilities under it. I want to compare that in a few minutes to what has happened.

During the election, once again before the election, MGEA questionnaire and I quote: We are committed to repealing final offer selection. We believe this mechanism is inappropriate and can undermine the collective bargaining process. Any further significant changes to Manitoba labour laws or The Civil Service Act would only be undertaken after consultations with the public, business and labour.

I want to emphasize what it says. Any further significant changes to Manitoba labour laws or The Civil Service Act, that is what the Premier said to the MGEA in a signed document, the questionnaire. He went on further to state, and I quote: We believe that negotiated settlements should take into account all legitimate factors that are brought to the bargaining table by both sides. Some bargaining units are including as a request protection from the goods and services tax for their members. As management, we would seek to balance to requests of MGEA negotiators for the fiscal capacity of the province, protection being afforded other workers within the province.

Once again, a commitment to the give and take of the collective bargaining process, a direct quote. The Premier continued this after the election. October 16, 1990, on the casino strike, he said: ". . . the very first thing that I responded to them was, please return to the bargaining table, have your differences worked out through the free collective bargaining process. That is why the process exists. I support it, and I assume that you do. That was my initial response to them."

He went on further to say, and this is a direct quote again: "I will repeat that the free collective bargaining process ought to prevail and that they ought to go forward in an attempt to resolve that at the bargaining table. That is the process that we as a government support, and I would assume the New Democrats support that process. I cannot understand why they would want to do anything other, such as bargaining here on the floor of the Legislature and entering into a labour dispute."

That, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the end of the quote from October 16, 1990. Further, from Hansard, I quote: ". . . the very first thing that I responded to them was, please return to the bargaining table, have your differences worked out through the free collective bargaining process. That is why the process exists." October 16, 1990.

On November 5, 1990, once again from Hansard, the Premier said: "We have the same mechanism that every government has had. It is called the free collective bargaining system."

"We have determined steadfastly that we would let the Crown corporations be operated at arm's length on business principles that would be set by policy of the government, and the management decisions and ultimate determinations made, under the aegis of the boards of directors, by the management of the corporation."

It goes on further to say, and this is again a direct quote: "For all of those good and valid reasons, there is not an attempt on our part to influence decisions that are management decisions in a free collective bargaining process between management and its employees."

He went on further to say, and this again is a direct quote from the Premier: "Those Crown corporations obviously are encouraged to as much as possible to harmonize their own dealings so that they meet government or they meet government

objectives. At the same time, we do not go to the step of setting firm top-line guidelines."

That again is a direct quote from the Premier. He goes on further to say: "If we did, I would suggest that, to avoid the kind of event that the member is talking about, we would have to apply those guidelines to every public sector agency within the aegis of government and that would include teachers. There would be no sense in setting a limit for all Crown corporations and not applying that limit for settlement to teachers or to university professors and staff. We would have to go the full bore."

Another quote, Mr. Acting Speaker, an interesting quote, November 6, from Hansard. This is the Premier again. The Premier of this province said: "The fact of the matter is, there is no club and there never will be from this government. We will act in good faith at all times in the open free collective bargaining process with all the employees with whom we have to negotiate." What more do we need to see in the way of the words of what they said before the election and as recently as November?

Mr. Acting Speaker, now we are dealing with Bill 70. Bill 70 has shown that the words of the Premier on October 26, 1989, in August 1990, on October 16, 1990, on November 5, 1990, and November 6, 1990, were all not true. We have seen that the Premier was not telling the truth about the true policies of this government.

All this pious talk about collective bargaining and free collective bargaining meant absolutely nothing when it came to this Finance minister and this Premier and this government looking for a scapegoat, the public service of this province. It calls into credibility every statement made by that Premier and that Minister of Finance, because if we could not believe them in signed documents before the election, if we could not believe what they said to the MGEA convention, if we cannot believe what they say in this House; we can believe nothing that this government has to say on any issue affecting labour relations or the working people of this province—absolutely nothing.

They stand there piously again today and say that they are not attacking public sector workers. Their big battle is with union bosses, and they still talk about free collective bargaining. Let us deal with just how much this bill violates the words of the Premier, just how much it makes that Premier out to be someone who can no longer, in terms of the

province of Manitoba, have people believe anything that is supposedly a commitment on the part of this government—collective bargaining, free collective bargaining.

This bill and the attack on public sector unions launched by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) as part of the introduction of this bill violates every tenet of free collective bargaining, every tenet—one of the basic tenets, free collective bargaining. It has been a tenet since the mid-1930s, recognized in legislation in Canada since the 1940s, since the Rand decision, is the concept of bargaining in good faith.

I want to deal with that right off the bat. Has this government been bargaining in good faith? I want to provide evidence that, not only has it not been bargaining in good faith with the unions of this province, it has also not been bargaining in good faith with the opposition in this province and, by extension, the people that we represent. Bargaining in good faith? Let us take the example of the casino workers.

The casino workers were on strike last year. They walked the picket line, received a small wage increase. What did the Premier say to casino workers? He said, return to the bargaining table, which they did. What did the Premier say to the casino workers? Let us resolve our differences. I just quoted into the record, and I want to stress again what the Premier said. He said, work through the process. Let us not have this strike; let us work through the process we have established in Manitoba, which they did.

The government brought in a bill to repeal final offer selection. There was an agreement amongst all parties that there would be no repeal prior to March 31. The casino workers, represented by the Manitoba Government Employees' Association, used their right under the legislation of the Province of Manitoba to apply for final offer selection.

* (1540)

Let us look at what that involves, Mr. Acting Speaker, final offer selection involves a process whereby both parties have the opportunity to present what they feel is a fair settlement. Both sides did, and what happened? The selector is Martin H. Freedman, Q.C. The selector brought in a decision May 28, 1991. I want to spend a bit of time on this decision, because it shows just how dishonest the approach of the government on this

bill has been, when this minister talks about having any principles whatsoever behind the introduction of this bill.

I would encourage people to read through this because it shows just how clearly the government lost at the bargaining table, lost at the selector stage and is now coming in and arbitrarily changing the rules. The decision was quite clear about the basic issue. It stated there was only one issue in this final offer selection and that is wages. The employer offered no increase in wages, the union seeks a 5 percent increase in wages.

She should spend some time looking at the background of the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation, its position first as an employer at the temporary casino at the Winnipeg Convention Centre and in other areas of the provinces starting in 1984; how, in 1988, the union was certified as a bargaining agent for employees of the employer employed in the casino operation and effectively, as was pointed out by the employer, that as of the summer and fall of 1989, Manitoba Lotteries Foundation began to recruit for a full-time, year-round casino to be run out of the Hotel Fort Garry.

The majority of the approximate 130 positions at the new Crystal Casino being recruited from the existing pool of casual employees, and how the MGEA established a bargaining committee and collective bargaining with its new committee began on December 28, 1989, achieved the first collective agreement under legislation in Manitoba. In fact, the Crystal Casino opened December 29, 1989.

Although the first collective agreement was realized, it was subsequently a long well-publicized strike that resulted in a 35 percent hour lump sum settlement for the workers involved. That was the backdrop—first contract, a bitter strike. Instead of an alternative the next time around, the alternative being, Mr. Acting Speaker, final offer selection, which was part of the legislation introduced by the Province of Manitoba in the 1980s by the NDP government, legislation that was specifically not going to be repealed until 1991, in March, which the minister knew would include the casino workers. The Finance minister and the government House leader knew that they would be included and yet he agreed, by his word, by signed agreement, with the two opposition House leaders not to repeal final offer selection until March 31, which would include the casino workers.

I want to give the minister some idea of what the issues were involved, because I think he is being particularly unfair when he gets up with his pious statements and his underhanded attacks, supposed union bosses, when he ignores the situation facing workers, who he is catching now with this insidious piece of legislation.

There were some significant changes in the bargaining units because of the shift to the Fort Garry Hotel as asserted by the union. There were new classifications, new hours of work and new rates of pay which were arbitrarily imposed on employees. The bargaining unit was reduced to approximately 130 members, whereas there had been a poll of 250 to 300 workers. Mr. Acting Speaker, that is why there was a strike. That is why the bottom line is, we had a situation whereby this ended up, when the strike did not resolve all the issues, being sent to final offer selection.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, let us proceed further and look at the background of the people that this minister is now denying their rights under legislation to a decent, fair settlement. Let us deal with that. The selector looked at the situation in terms of the Crystal Casino and the classification issues. The selector then proceeded to look at the question in terms of wage increases, the 5 percent increase, pointed out the union cited increases in the cost of living and provided data in that respect to support its argument that the increase was justified.

In terms of the employer position he said, inserting that no increase was warranted, stressed a number of factors. Most significantly it stressed the overall economic condition in this province. It relied heavily on the ability-to-pay argument.

Well, the Finance minister yesterday said that selectors do not adequately take into account the ability-to-pay question. What did this selector do? I want the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to be listening intently on this, because I expect him to withdraw his comments, as made in Question Period yesterday, because they are categorically wrong in terms of anything that has anything to do with final offer selection and in particular in regard to this selector decision.

Selecting one of the final offers, the law stipulates that I may take into account—this is a direct quote, Mr. Acting Speaker, from the selector's decision—(a) The terms and conditions of existing or any previous collective agreement between the

parties; (b) The terms and conditions of employment, if any, negotiated through collective bargaining for employees performing the same or similar functions, the same or similar circumstances of the employees in the unit; (c) Changes in the cost of living as reflected in the consumer price index for the city of Winnipeg, published from time to time by Statistics Canada; (d) Where in the opinion of the selector the employer has provided sufficient information in respect thereof, the continuity and stability of employment for employees of the unit. I want to stress this. This is directly from the legislation in the Province of Manitoba that governs final offer selection, and I will hope that the Finance minister will have the courtesy to read this: (e) Where in the opinion of the selector the employer has provided sufficient information in respect thereof, the employer's ability to pay.

I want to repeat that section. It is right from the act. It was quoted by the selector: Where in the opinion of the selector the employer has provided sufficient information in respect thereof, the employer's ability to pay—make it clear, Mr. Acting Speaker, that was clearly part of it.

There are other sections that have to be taken into account, in the discretion of the selector, which will assist the selector in deciding whether a collective agreement between the parties, which is fair and reasonable in the circumstances, is more likely to result from the final offer of the union or the final offer of the employer. What can be more fair and balanced than that? What could have satisfied the concerns of the Finance minister better than this legislation, which talks directly about the ability to pay?

Mr. Acting Speaker, perhaps the Finance minister doubts that the selector, having quoted this section, would use it. I want to deal with that to show just how wrong the Minister of Finance was and just how wrong and unfair this piece of legislation is. He stated: Certain material were provided to me relating to the employer—this is the selector. Its most recently published annual report for the fiscal year ended 1990 indicates that it is a Crown agency of the provincial government answering to the Minister responsible for Lotteries (Mrs. Mitchelson).

The report states, its aim is to maximize long-term economic returns to the province while maintaining a high level of business integrity and social responsibility. It then goes on further to deal with the role of the Crystal Casino and says that since

March 1983, when it was created, until the time of the annual report, the employer generated some \$314 million to support numerous charitable and religious organizations—\$314 million, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The selector pointed out that the Crystal Casino is becoming an important feature of Winnipeg life. There were 114,000 guests that visited the casino. It says, in the 1989 fiscal year the net income generated by all operations of the employer approximated \$57 million; and in 1990, the same number approximated \$54 million. It pointed out the casino appeared to net about \$1.5 million in the three months ended March 31, and said that while there was not definitive information for the year ending March 31, 1991, the union estimated the casino netted about \$15 million.

* (1550)

The selector stated, and I hope the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) will read this decision, that this number was not challenged by the employer. In other words, there was clear evidence in the submissions of the ability to pay for the Crystal Casino. It further noted that when it was initially opened in 1989, the Minister responsible for Lotteries (Mrs. Mitchelson) who is here today, had estimated that earnings from the casino's initial flow year of operation would be about \$10 million.

In argument, the employer acknowledged that results had been achieved. In fact, they had been exceeded, and the government was quite willing to state that.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the minister is talking from his seat, but he should know that the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation is specifically attached in terms of discussions in this bill and that he made reference to selectors. This is the most recent selection decision. This is one of the groups that is finding now that it is being a victim of this particular bill.

This is from a Minister of Finance who says the ability to pay is not taken into account. He is wrong, and I want to continue to prove comprehensively and conclusively to this Finance minister that the basis on which he has made this move in this particular case is absolutely and fundamentally wrong. This minister was wrong, and this bill is based on erroneous assumptions about the process.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the selector dealt with the ability to pay, then dealt with the fact that the request

was for five percent across the board wage increase, indicating that the union presented evidence relating to increases in the cost of living.

There were statistics brought forward in terms of that indicating an increase in the cost of living for Winnipeg residents of 6.1 percent was the situation at the time mentioned. What was the union requesting, 6.1 percent? No, it requested 5 percent. In fact, the selector pointed out it was somewhat below the increase in the cost of living and then once again pointed out this information was not challenged by the employer. It could not be challenged, Mr. Acting Speaker, because it was correct.

The union went beyond that. It did not just deal with situations in terms of the overall figures, it presented information on other public sector awards as pointed out by the selector. They included settlements, awards where the employer is the Province of Manitoba—the Manitoba Health Organization, certain municipalities which receive indirect funding, employers such as Legal Aid lawyers, government-employed doctors, members of the Manitoba Nurses' Union, members of two locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, who I believe are employed with the Workers Compensation Board.

These wage settlements, awards range from a low of 4 percent—to have cost-of-living increases as the standard, I would just like to point out—to a high of effective increase of 9.2 percent. These were settlements that were negotiated that are within the jurisdiction of the Province of Manitoba that range between 4 percent and 9.2 percent, and the casino workers asked for 5 percent.

The selector pointed out there were some differences in terms of time periods involved but said they are, however, relevant and that he took them into account. The union also provided further information not just about Manitoba, but about the major public sector wage settlements, which he said—and this is the selector—tend to support its submission that a 5 percent wage increase would be well within the range of such settlements and, if anything, would be below the range, Mr. Acting Speaker. The selector took into account that fact.

There was discussion about other issues including tipping, and discussion on that particular area. He pointed to the obvious difficulty in terms of dealing with such an issue and the fact that his basic

decision had to deal with the wages involved. What did the selector decide? I will quote: My view is that the union has made out a case for some wage increase.

This was an independent selector who looked at all the facts—the ability to pay; who looked at all the facts such as settlements in Manitoba; who looked at all the facts such as settlements in Canada, and said, in my view the union has made out a case for some wage increase. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, this selector, with an objective view, dealt with the situation and came to that conclusion.

The decision discusses various other aspects, points it raised, and pointed out that the basic argument used by the employer was its ability, or alleged inability, to pay. The employer stated the funds generated from the casino support reform improvement in the health system of Manitoba, and went on further to discuss whether it was a legitimate argument used by the employer.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the selector also dealt with the public statements by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to the effect that a target of a 3 percent average wage increase for all those employees paid by government has been established. So the selector even took into account the statements by the Minister of Finance, and reflected that some would receive greater increases, while some groups would receive less than the 3 percent target figure. The selector took the time to read the statements made by the Minister of Finance, something it is unfortunate the Minister of Finance decided not to do when he was drafting this legislation, decided not to do when he made a statement yesterday that is completely and factually inaccurate.

Well, what did the selector say? In dealing with the statements by the Minister of Finance, ability to pay is always a factor in concluding a collective agreement. I want to repeat that to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Ability to pay is always a factor in concluding a collective agreement.

What did the minister say yesterday in the House? What did the minister say about decisions? The last words that have come in as a result of FOS, an arbitrator has said, and I end up his quote: I already accept completely the ability-to-pay argument, that there would be no point in arbitrating the matter.

This made it very clear that final offer selection, the selector—it is in the legislation. It is in the report.

Ability to pay is always a factor in concluding a collective agreement. The Minister of Finance did not state that yesterday in the House, did not state that again today and, until he corrects the record on that, we can only assume he has not done his homework, has not checked the facts.

This is one of the most recent, if not the most recent, decisions, May 28, 1991, and it states absolutely, fundamentally clear that this is the case: In the final offer selection process, the statute mandates consideration of ability to pay. Sufficient information has been provided in respect thereof. In this particular final offer selection, I am satisfied that I do have adequate information to consider the issue of ability to pay.

So the selector looked at the act. The selector said we have to look at this as a factor, and the selector said he took it into account. Mr. Acting Speaker, he went further to deal with his straightforward words, the direct words the Minister of Finance put forward, and dealt with economic situations and pointed out, in this case, that the Lotteries Foundation produces an extremely healthy profit. The earnings from the casino are substantial and they accrue to the benefit of the health care system. Wage increases paid are within that context, and even given that context, he said that the employer produces an extremely healthy profit.

* (1600)

It stated further: the selector concluded that this employer, the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation, is not unduly hampered by its own economic situation in paying a reasonable wage increase to its employees. Doing so will yield marginally less money for the province. The province may then have choices to make. In my judgment, however, this particular employer is not unduly hampered by an inability to pay reasonable, justifiable wage increases.

How many more sections of this report? How much more do we have to read from the selector's report before the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) understands what he has done? Let us take it to its logical conclusion. Let us take it, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Final offer selection was not to be repealed until March 31 by signed agreement by the government House leader. Final offer selection includes within it, very clearly, recognition of the ability to pay by the

employer. Martin H. Freedman on May 28, 1991, in probably the most recent selection decision, said that was taken into account.

What does Bill 70 do to the casino workers, Mr. Acting Speaker? What does Bill 70 do? Does it say that what has been reached through legislation in Manitoba, guaranteed on the signed signature of the Minister of Finance as House leader—and I signed that with the Minister of Finance and with the Liberal House leader in good faith.

I know the Liberal House leader can be objective on this, because the Liberal House leader and his party did not support the extension of final offer selection. He will be my witness that we had agreed as House leaders, had agreed by all-party agreement, as was signed by him, myself and the Minister of Finance, as government House leader, was basically the agreement was to not repeal final offer selection on March 31.

It was not just us who took the minister at his word, it was the casino workers. They used their right under legislation, and they received an award of 5 percent brought in by an objective selector, Martin H. Freedman, Q.C., who took into account the concerns of the Minister of Finance.

What does Bill 70 do? Bill 70 says to the casino workers—and this is what the government is saying—they are saying to casino workers, their word does not mean anything. They are saying to the casino workers that anything that was written on paper before about final offer selection was part of the big lie. They are saying to the casino workers, it does not matter. If you go through the process, if you are awarded a settlement that is considered fair by the selector, it does not matter, Mr. Acting Speaker, because this government will just say within days of the selector making the decision that that does not apply. That is what this bill does.

It says to the casino workers, as it does to other workers in Manitoba, heads I win, tails you lose. That is how fair this government is with the working people of Manitoba. It misleads them. It uses the big lie tactic with them, and then what it does, it takes away whatever rights they have remaining under legislation in Manitoba. That is why, Mr. Acting Speaker, this legislation is, indeed, and can only be described as, draconian. Indeed, it is fascist legislation, because this government has used its government fiat to take away the rights of

Manitobans. The right for what? The right to a fair settlement.

I asked people to look at what happened. The two parties went to an objective selector. The union's position, the employees' position, was accepted. The employer's position was rejected. What is this government doing now, Mr. Acting Speaker? This government is saying, it does not matter if the employees had a just case and followed every single regulation under the act, every single section under the act. It is saying that they can now turn around by government fiat retroactively, after the selector has made his decision, say that this position has to be accepted as the position of the employer.

They talk about fairness. What can be more biased against those people than a government who, after all is said and done, after Martin H. Freedman, Q.C., says that the employee position was fair, just and reasonable—in fact, it was going to result in a wage increase that was actually less than the cost of living, that was actually lower than the range across Canada and the range of other settlements. They have turned around with one bill, one bill that said that no longer applies.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to invite the Minister of Finance to talk to the casino workers. I want him to come down, and I will meet any time. I will debate him in any public forum. I will invite him to express his views to the casino workers, and I will ask anyone who wishes to attend to judge whether he is dealing only with the leadership of the union or with the people, the grassroots workers—because I can tell him I have talked to the casino workers going back to their original strike. I know the situation they are in. They are absolutely disgusted with a government that can be so dishonest as to bring in this kind of legislation after all those fine words, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Let him talk to them, a group of employees. I will get back to their position later. It is group No. 1. Let us deal with some other groups that have taken the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) at his word, this government at its word, to their peril.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let us deal with IBEW, Local 2034. What does the Minister of Finance say to Local 2034 and other locals of IBEW who are also in negotiations? Let us deal with Local 2034. I had the opportunity to meet with a number of representatives of the union this morning. Let us

look at just how this government has broken faith with this particular union. Once again, they took the minister at his word when he, through agreement, publicly recorded, signed and said that final offer selection would not apply past March 31 but would apply up until that point and also would apply to contracts that had expired up to that point, leading only now to the situation where we would have only shortly seen effectively final offer selection decisions for the units involved.

The decision they had to make, and discussions, and negotiations, to this minister who talks about faith and bargaining—let us look at the decision that this group of workers had to make. They had a couple of choices, Mr. Acting Speaker. One was not ever in doubt, and that was to bargain in good faith. The union did bargain in good faith. It has been bargaining since last fall. It spent six, seven, eight months bargaining. It has done so at considerable expense to its members, bringing in its membership from all across the province. It had a choice: to continue negotiations and, possibly, to look at strike action if those negotiations did not result in a settlement; or, under the legislation of Manitoba, to access final offer selection, which as the minister knows, provides an alternative to the strike mechanism.

Would the minister care to say to those workers—and I will invite him once again to talk to them, anywhere, anytime, to debate his position and his statements. Would he care to tell those workers if he considers their actions to be irresponsible? Have they been irresponsible, Mr. Acting Speaker, by accessing final offer selection, under legislation, as an alternative to the right to strike? Would this minister rather have seen them on the picket line than go to final offer selection? Would this First Minister, the Premier, rather have seen that, because that is the choice they made to go to final offer selection.

I want to put in context their position so that this minister will not attempt to mislead the House with figures suggesting that somehow that this particular group of workers are somehow overpaid or have been overpaid to start with. I took the time to go through statistics relating to wage increases for this particular local with Manitoba Hydro and compare that to the cost of living increases that have taken place in this province, the CPI.

I can tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that in going back to June 1980, and I will read this into the

record, because I think it is important for the minister to realize who else he is targeting with his legislation. I will compare the wage increases to the CPI for Winnipeg in that particular year.

* (1610)

June '81, it was an increase in wages of 10.5 percent; CPI increased 10.9 percent, a net reduction of 0.4 percent. We are dealing here with Jry. Lm. wage, Mr. Acting Speaker, and there is also electrical technician's wage, which I can deal with as well just to put you in a perspective about some of the situations.

There was a wage increase in 1982 of 12.6 percent compared to CPI of 9.7 percent, one of the only times in the last 10 years there has been, only two times, there has been an increase in wages; June of '83, there was a 5.3 percent increase, CPI was 7.6, a net reduction of 2.3 percent; May of '84 was 3.3 percent increase in wages, 2.7 percent increase in the CPI, for a net increase of 0.6 percent; October '85, 3.0 percent wage increase, 4.9 percent CPI, a net reduction of 1.9 percent; May of '86, 2.8 percent, where CPI was 3.9 percent, a net reduction in wages of 1.1 percent; May of '87, 4.3 percent, at 5.3 percent CPI, minus 1.0 percent; '88, 3 percent versus 3.3 percent, a reduction of .3 percent; '89, 3 percent versus 4.8 percent, a reduction of 1.8 percent; and in May of 1990, an increase of 4.8 percent, the exact same figure as the cost of living increase.

Mr. Acting Speaker, two years there were increases above the CPI. In eight years there was no increase or there was actually a reduction in salaries, and people in this particular bargaining unit, in that particular area in the bargaining unit, have not had an increase above the CPI for the last six years. That is the backdrop. These are people who are going to be denied access to the collective bargaining process.

The minister wants to look at Hydro's ability to pay, and I have some experience with the Hydro board, having sat on it for a number of years, and I can indicate that in 1990 the net income transferred to reserves was \$24,197,000 and marked a recovery over previous years of 26 and 18 percent losses transferred from the reserve. It reflects the trend in the mid-1980s when there were increases of upwards of \$30 million—\$30 million. The ability to pay cannot be denied by those members.

As I said, IBEW 2034 followed through in good faith on the process and drafted a submission to the selector that pointed out their particular concerns. Indeed, under the normal process, so would the employer, the Manitoba Hydro, when the IBEW Local 2034 went into some background of its bargaining, original bargaining situation. It is a union. It is a local that has represented outside workers of Manitoba Hydro since 1958 and also the newly amalgamated Crown corporation in 1962. It has a strong tradition in representing the interests of its members and states, once again—this is in the words of the union.

They have had a strong relationship through time with Manitoba Hydro that both parties, through agreement, taking particular pride in a co-operative problem-solving approach to the labour relations in a way that built on relative strengths rather than weaknesses. They admitted there were occasional strains. This is the union that stated it has remained strong throughout the entire history.

It is stated, quite interestingly, that most of the stress has been placed on relationships between them, not from the parties themselves, but because of outside forces beyond the control of either party. The relationship has been strike, lockout free throughout its history because of the positive attitudes of both parties over the years. That is the backdrop.

This is a union local, and this is a management group that has never had a strike or lockout in its entire history of collective bargaining. It is something that both sides have taken pride in and something that was particularly referenced by the union in its final offer selection presentation. It continued to stress how flexible and innovative the kinds of agreements that they had been able to reach, Mr. Acting Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. Let me remind all honourable members that the honourable member for Thompson does have the floor. I would suggest that you listen to the debate or else continue your discussions outside of the Chamber, please. Thank you.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. I can assure that members of the House will be made accountable for their actions, will have to listen. They can turn a deaf ear, a blind eye—well, they can be deaf and blind. They are certainly blissfully ignorant of what is happening out there. They will

hear from many of the people, the 48,000 people affected, including the people represented by IBEW, Local 2034, about just how unfair their actions are.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, the union entered negotiation with no doubt they could get a solid strike mandate—this is the statements of the IBEW Local—if some of those catch-up adjustments were not available. They stated that, instead, they were willing to look at all options—they, the leaders and the members—including final offer selection.

The membership, after some discussion—and I know that, in talking to the representatives of IBEW, they make no bones about the fact there were some people who would prefer to go the strike route. The membership supported the negotiating committee's recommendation to go into final offer selection to negotiate a contract for all issues and accept wages prior to that, prior to the expiry of the old agreement. Mr. Speaker, they made that decision. They discussed many issues. They were at the point that many of the issues were dealt with. The only question remaining was in terms of the final offer selection, the wage increase.

The union, in its presentation, as you would expect, spent a considerable period of time dealing with the situation their members were faced with, went into considerable background, looking at the situation of 1981 to '84 when there were operating deficits and CPIs close to double digit. There was only one wage settlement above CPI during that period, how they did indeed share the burden, went into discussions in the mid-1980s, up until 1990, as I said before, that proved in their particular case for six straight years they have had an increase in wages that is less than the CPI.

I pointed out that Manitoba Hydro, dealing with the question of ability to pay, had an operating surplus for the last six years, acknowledged the economic situation in Manitoba, indeed throughout the country, and indicated in their view, their initial proposal was modest with only a small catch-up, and this was negotiable but, given a mandate of zero percent for one year and 2 percent for the second and no negotiations around it, they were forced to go to final offer selection. They did not prefer to go that route, Mr. Speaker. They would have preferred the traditional collective bargaining approach, but they saw that it was the only mechanism available

to put both parties into reasonable positions. They argued that zero and 2 percent was unreasonable.

To reverse the argument of the minister, who said that an increase above the zero percent would impact on the ratepayers, they used the argument, and it is an interesting argument, Mr. Speaker, that in fact by having a zero percent increase, the employees would be subsidizing the rates for the public of Manitoba, a point that the minister never once acknowledged in his comments. They would indeed be subsidizing the rates which are already amongst the lowest in Canada in terms of wages.

* (1620)

The minister talked about the main public service, about wages. He talked about public sector wages being third highest in Canada. He never once talked about the ratio of employees to the population, the per capita ratio being one of the lowest in Canada. He never factored that in, but also did not once deal with the situation in Crown corporations, where many of the employees in Crown corporations are receiving less. Linemen working for Manitoba Hydro can get \$5,000, \$6,000, \$7,000 a year less than those working for Winnipeg Hydro, than those working for a comparable utility. Never once did the minister deal with that. They agreed to a two-year agreement. The question was the wage increase. What did they ask? What were they offered? What was their final offer, Mr. Speaker? Effective May 23, 1991, a 4.5 percent increase; effective February 27, 1992, a 1 percent increase; effective May 21, 1992, a COLA increase. That is less than the cost of living increase. They put forward an offer that was less than the cost-of-living increase after taking wage settlements that were for six years less than the CPI increase in the city of Winnipeg.

The COLA formula, incidentally, would have dealt with the previous format, no significant changes, a very basic offer. They even went to some extent to calculate the annual average payroll which, in this particular case, is far less than the percentage of the Civil Service, where the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has suggested that salaries make up 80 percent, pointed out that the impact of this increase in itself will be far less significant than certainly increases in the Civil Service would be, and described the increase as a 5 percent increase, the fact that their offer was a 24-month nominal salary increase.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to use that background against the highest rhetoric of the Minister of Finance, his attacks on the union bosses because in this particular case the union bosses—he wants to use that term which I think is unfair, but he can use whatever terms he wants—in the case of IBEW, Local 2034, recommended to its membership that they go to final offer selection rather than strike action.

Is the minister saying that was irresponsible? It went to their membership and were supported by their membership. Is the minister saying they did not represent the interests of their members by going to final offer selection when they were supported by their membership? When they accessed final offer selection, developed a proposal that would have resulted in them receiving increases less than the cost of living, is the minister saying that was irresponsible? They went to final offer selection, dealt with the question of the ability to pay—which once again is fundamental to final offer selection, it is part of the legislation, has been specifically outlined as being a feature of any selector's award—dealt with that issue of ability to pay.

Mr. Speaker, were they unreasonable in any step throughout that process? Most fundamentally, were they unreasonable in expecting the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to live up to his word as outlined by a document that he signed in conjunction with the other house leaders, a document that was public knowledge, a document which I had discussed with members of the union only a few months ago and which they then had enquired of me as to whether I felt that that would in any way, shape or form mean they would not be able to access final offer selection. I said at the time that I believed the government cannot change its word, will not be able to change the repeal date on final offer selection.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? They did not even have the courtesy to do that. Through the back door, through Bill 70, they have gutted final offer selection, something they said they would not do by March 31, the big lie, the big lie and the Minister of Finance's signature on that piece of paper means absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, they sit here and they laugh. They laugh, they do not care. They make attacks on the union leadership; they make attacks on the membership, people who have been asking for nothing more than a fair salary. I want to ask if they

will make those same comments directly to the people involved. If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is so convinced that the union leadership does not represent its membership, let him go and meet with the membership of IBEW, let him meet with the membership of MGEA, let him meet with the membership of the International Union of Operating Engineers and we will see who they support, a government that cannot be trusted in its word and uses working people as scapegoats, or the people who are democratically elected to represent on a daily basis, who have dealt in fairness and in good faith with this government, a government that knows nothing, knows absolutely nothing about the meaning of the words, bargaining in good faith.

I want to deal with what has happened in IBEW. There is another union that is in the same situation, denied its right under legislation—denied its right under legislation. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would know this group because he has another minister who has destroyed whatever little credibility he had by putting on the record public statements that are completely and absolutely being held out as meaningless by the Minister of Finance.

When he said—this is for the International Union of Operating Engineers, and again the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) makes light of the subject—we will see if he has the courtesy to go and talk to the workers who walk the picket line and explain to them why his word meant nothing, why his word meant absolutely nothing to those workers when he said they would live up to their obligations under final offer selection. Why he has either not done anything in cabinet or has supported the coup by the Minister of Finance, because I wonder if that is not what has happened, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Finance who could not beat the Premier in a leadership campaign in 1983, perhaps did not have the support of certain people who have come to light recently in an immigration scandal. The Minister of Health who attempted to get rid of the Premier, when the Premier, only a number of years ago at the Conservative convention—

An Honourable Member: I want the truth, Steve.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the minister talks about telling the truth. I would say to him he is the first one to listen to his own words of hypocrisy because he is not telling the truth to the people of Manitoba. He is not telling the truth to hospital workers, and he has

not told the truth on this particular issue. He has not told the truth.

Mr. Speaker, there is something of a coup that has taken place because these ministers—and I wonder if the minister now has not become the power behind the throne here. I still have difficulty believing that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) after making so many direct quotes, after signing his name, can now have the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) turn around and show the Premier either to be someone whose word means nothing or a Premier who is nothing more than a figurehead in terms of the government of this province. A powerless figurehead who says one thing and then is contradicted by his Minister of Finance or changes his mind on a whim. Either way it is no indication of any particular kind of leadership by this Premier or this Minister of Finance, because in a day when people are asking for integrity from politicians, we are saying from these so-called leaders in this province how little their word means and how all the cynicism about politicians is true in terms of that—is true in terms of that.

Mr. Speaker, I see the former October group having a reunion. Perhaps they are deciding no longer to be the power behind the throne. I have noticed the Premier has not always been—I cannot say he has not been here—let us put it this way, the Premier has not been directly responding to some of the controversial issues. I wonder if they have him bundled up in a room somewhere, sometimes when controversial issues have come up, because the image handlers do not want to be associated with the kind of right-wing policies brought in by that group.

Either way, Mr. Speaker, whether it is the Premier or whether it is the Minister of Finance, these Tories are bringing in the kind of right-wing agenda that leads to fascist legislation like Bill 70—facist legislation like Bill 70. Well, I can tell you, the International—

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the honourable member for Thompson to withdraw that remark from the record.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I did not make any reference to individual members being fascist which I understand is prohibited on Beauchesne. I was talking about the legislation which, in my opinion, is the fascist legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have asked the honourable member for Thompson to withdraw the remarks "fascist" from the record.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I would ask, are you indicating that it is not in order to call legislation fascist because if that is the case I will not challenge your ruling. I thought my reading of Beauchesne to describe legislation as fascist was in order. If it is not however, I will withdraw the comment.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The Chair has asked the honourable member for Thompson to withdraw the word "fascist" from the record.

After consulting with the Deputy Clerk, we are going to review Hansard and find out if indeed the honourable member for Thompson did refer to it as a piece of fascist legislation, or if he was attributing the remarks to a specific member of the government.

Therefore, we will take this matter under advisement and the reason being because there is so much noise in the Chamber at this time we are having difficulty in hearing the remarks of the honourable member.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Therefore, the honourable member for Thompson does have the floor.

*(1630)

Mr. Ashton: I can indicate once again that if in any way, shape or form I have indicated any reference that will be taken by any individual member they were indeed fascist, I withdraw that or want to make clear that was not the intention of what I said.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about this piece of legislation. I am talking about the International Union of Operating Engineers who have been in a situation—a unique situation—where they were on strike for 60 days -(interjection)- Well, 55, says the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). It is interesting to see that he is quick to jump in on providing that particular figure but nowhere to be found in terms of asking for fairness for those health care workers.

After walking the picket line, they access final offer selection, as was their right. They are at the point where they have made representation to the selector, as has the employer. They are waiting. By tomorrow, they should have the selector's decision.

What can you say to the International Union of Operating Engineers and the people that they represent who walked the picket line for close to two months, who thought that they could trust the word of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), thought that they could believe in his word that they would have access to final offer selection, and the words of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) who said that they would live up to their obligations?

They now find, no matter what is awarded on Thursday by the selector, whether they win or lose, that this government will just change the rules with one sweep of a pen, and their two months on the picket line and their time before the selector will all go for naught because this government did not like the fact they might get a fair settlement through a fair and just process—final offer selection.

How can this minister have any credibility when he is doing that when, at the same time that they are saying that to the operating engineers, they are saying that those who had a signed agreement before, the doctors, in particular, with their significant increases in billings will still get those billings?

Let the government not play games here with the doctors or nurses or anyone else who has a signed agreement. I will say before anyone tries to use the same sort of tactics that were used by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) earlier today, that we in the New Democratic Party think the nurses should get every last cent that they negotiated, every last cent that they had to achieve by walking the picket lines because this government was not listening to them. They should receive every last cent, Mr. Speaker, that they were given as part of that collective agreement.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Would you have given them more, Steve?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) says, would we have given them more? I can tell you one thing, if it had been the New Democratic Party in office, they would not have had to walk the picket line, because we would have negotiated in good faith. They would not have had to walk the picket line.

Often this Finance minister (Mr. Manness) talks about, well, we have a signed agreement, that is one of the principles. What about the signature of the

Finance minister on a document that said final offer selection would be in place until March 31? If we are so concerned about agreements and signatures, what is he saying?

Is he saying they will respect some agreements but not others? Is he saying they will respect somebody else's signature but not his? Why will he not let bargaining units that are currently seeking justice and fair wages and working conditions before selectors, whether it be the IBW or the International Union of Operating Engineers? Will he not in the case of the casino workers represented by the Manitoba Government Employees' Association who have already received a selector recommending that they receive an increase that is not the cost of living but is lower, it still reflects the overall increase?

If he has any principles, Mr. Speaker, why will he not, at least, with this bill start by saying that anyone who is before the final offer selection process will not have the carpet pulled out from under them, will not have this government steal away whatever kind of settlements achieved through a fair process, an impartial process, an objective process?

Why will this government not say that if doctors, because they have signed an agreement, can keep their significant increases, that other workers, who have signed and applied for final offer selection and received offers, should not get the same?

Why will this minister not do the same for hospital workers? Why will he not do the same for Hydro and MTS workers? Why will he not do the same for casino workers that he is doing for doctors, or is this the Tory idea of fairness, increases of 7 percent for doctors and zero percent for casino workers and for linemen and telephone operators and clerks? Is that their idea of fairness? If it is, they better go and check. They better decide where they get definitions for the words "fairness" and "principles," because they have not shown any indication of understanding of them. -(interjection)-

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) speaks from her seat. I look forward to hearing her comments. I look forward to seeing her have the courtesy to go to a meeting with some of these people that the Minister of Finance has maligned today, to talk to some of the operators in her constituency—the telephone operators—or the Hydro workers or the casino workers, the people who are being made victims of Bill 70 in the

desperate attempt, and this is the real bottom line, of the Minister of Finance to deal with a couple of basic things.

Why are they doing this, I ask? Why indeed are they doing this? The first argument we hear is, it is the deficit—the deficit. We know why the deficit has increased in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. Because of the decline in the economy. There is no growth.

Now what the minister is looking for is a scapegoat. He will point to anyone else in this province except himself, because indeed he is the one who is supposedly responsible for developing an economic policy in this province, a policy that has completely and abysmally failed and resulted as being 10th out of 10 and the difficulties we have in the deficit. That is the first reason they have done this.

The second reason, Mr. Speaker, is their own incompetence in bargaining, their own clear and absolute incompetence. They went before the selector on the casino workers. They lost. They lost fair and square. They lost hands down. The decision went with the employees. The selector said that he looked at each and every one of the arguments of the employer and rejected them. That is what they are afraid of in terms of IBEW, that they will not get a fair settlement. That is what they are afraid of with the International Union of Operating Engineers. That is also what they are afraid of with the MGEA, the main bargaining unit, in terms of arbitration. They are afraid. They are afraid to go before any objective person, either a selector or arbiter, because they know they are going to lose. They know that no arbiter or selector is going to buy the hollow political rhetoric of the minister when his own incompetence in both the economic management and in terms of bargaining has shown that he and this government are at fault. That is the real agenda.

I have dealt with this, Mr. Speaker, in the context of those who applied for final offer selection and who are not civil servants directly but are public servants by the general definition of this bill, a bill that spreads a net so wide it can include virtually all workers in this province with any connection with any kind of public funding.

* (1640)

I have shown that the arguments of the Minister of Finance in terms of ability to pay, the arguments of the Minister of Finance in terms of the process do

not apply. The unions that I have talked about, the membership of those unions have followed the process. They have bargained in good faith. They have followed the legislation. He cannot attack the union leadership. He cannot attack the membership. They have done the responsible thing, so his arguments completely and utterly fail outside of the Civil Service.

Let us deal with the Civil Service. We have shown that this government cannot use the political rhetoric for telephone operators and people working for Manitoba Hydro and the casino workers, but let us work at the Civil Service, because indeed they are directly involved, and let us look at what this minister has tried to develop for an argument. Their argument runs something like this. He says any increase will come off the deficit. We have a problem with the deficit. He says that they went to the union and they, quote, bargained in good faith. He says they went to the union and said, put it to your membership. He says the union leadership did not act in good faith. Let us deal with those basic points to begin with.

Bargaining in good faith: This government has not bargained in good faith with the MGEA. The reason being—and to the members who chatter away in the back benches on this, I say to them that if you look at the principles of labour relations, one thing that is very clear in terms of bargaining in good faith is that you do not go in, like this government has said, here is nothing, take it or leave it. That is not bargaining in good faith. That is bargaining by ultimatum.

The other thing you do not do is demand that the union negotiating committee go to its membership for a vote every single time that the management wants it. That is built into labour legislation. It has been that way for 40 years, because the only area of labour legislation where the company can require a vote of the membership is with final offer selection—the only area.

So the minister who says he is not a labour expert proves his complete and absolute ignorance of some of the most fundamental tenets, most fundamental principles of labour legislation that have been accepted for 40 years by a wide cross of all parties. Bargaining in good faith—

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): It did not take a lot of proving.

Mr. Ashton: It did not take a lot of proving, as the Liberal Finance critic points out.

Mr. Speaker, let us discuss the position that he took to them. Zero percent, take it or leave it, and let us look at the response of the MGEA. What did the MGEA say? The bottom line is, they said, we want to access what has been in place in legislation for close to 30 years, brought in by Duff Roblin. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) will remember the government of Duff Roblin, being a part of it.

This arbitration that this Minister of Finance attacks today, brought in by Duff Roblin. For the minister who wants to get into a discussion of what arbitration represents and what it does not represent, should represent that in this particular case arbitration is another route. It is an alternative to strikes. Is he saying that the MGEA should have said, regardless of what happens, we will go out on strike? Is he saying they should not have accessed arbitration? Is he saying that he should be able to force them to have a vote on whatever tactic they want to use? Is he saying that the government should have the ability to blackmail its own employees, to do something that no private employer can do in terms of labour legislation?

If the minister is saying that, God forbid what other kinds of changes we are going to see with The Labour Relations Act from this government, because it will set us back 20 and 30 and 40 years in a way that is being outlined by this particular government.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne's 6th Edition, under Citation 490, explains that we should not be using unparliamentary language such as "blackmail," such as the honourable member has brought forward.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I think if the member would care to reread Beauchesne, page 147, Citation 490, he would find that it says: "Since 1958, it has been ruled parliamentary to use the following expressions:" In fact, blackmail is one of the expressions that has been ruled parliamentary, not unparliamentary.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Norbert did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is attempting to do what no private employer in this province can do. Indeed to blackmail, and I use that term and I would encourage the member to read some of the other terms that I could use to describe this government, or listed as having been parliamentary, and he may hear some of those other words as well. I would point out, that is the list of parliamentary words, not unparliamentary. That is blackmail when you go and you say, here is the offer. Take it or leave it. You put it to a vote or else, and if you do not put it to a vote we will legislate zero anyway.

Is that bargaining in good faith? Who is at fault, Mr. Speaker? I ask you to put yourself in the position of someone who is in a neutral position on this. Who would you blame for what has happened? The government that says, here is the offer, take it or leave it; or the negotiating committee that says, we are not going to take that? You are not going to take our offer. We will go to an arbitrator as has been our right under legislation for 30 years, and we are going to do that because it is an alternative to strikes. What is the more responsible position? To go out on strike or to seek an arbitrated settlement in the same way that final offer selection provides a selected decision? What is wrong with building on that base?

What is the free collective bargaining?—to use the term that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was throwing around with abandon before the election and just barely after. What kind of free collective bargaining can you have with a government that gives ultimatums, that blackmails its own employees, Mr. Speaker, and then launches vicious personal attacks on the leaders of those organizations who are democratically elected by their membership and represent their members? What kind of bargaining in good faith can you have with a government that will stoop to nothing to gain political advantage from bashing the working people of this province? What can you say about that particular situation?

So that destroys this whole argument that somehow the MGEA had not been bargaining in good faith. We know it is the government.

Let us deal with some of the other arguments, the deficit. Mr. Speaker, the deficit—when this government came into office, due to some of the increases in a number of areas, yes, increases in

some of the taxes have taken place, increases they completely accepted when they came into power as being necessary. In fact, they further increased before they rolled back partially some of the taxes. They inherited what in effect was a surplus. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has admitted it. They had a surplus. They were able to transfer money into their Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Why did they end up with that situation? Some of the revenue increases. Some of the revenue in the mining sectors, significant money coming in particular from Inco and other mines. They were in an excellent financial position.

There was no talk about fiscal difficulties before the election, Mr. Speaker. There was no talk about Draconian policies being brought in. They continued on, business as usual. To quote the Premier (Mr. Filmon), with his now infamous words, what you see is what you get.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what Manitobans thought they saw was a government that was moderate, that was committed to some sort of mixed approach economically. Then they got in with a majority. A Tory is a Tory is a Tory, a majority is a majority is a majority. Well, we know a Tory is a Tory is a Tory. After recent events, we are not sure how much of a majority this government really has and how long it will be able to maintain its majority. Either way, there was a substantial change as of September 11, and they had a majority.

What happened economically to this province? Well, the first thing the government did was scrap all this talk about how well we were. Then they started recognizing, belatedly, that we were heading into a recession. Then they barely recognized, if at all, that they were going into the recession first. They were 10th out of 10th in all economic indicators, and we were in serious trouble.

What did they do? Did they bring in an economic program to deal with it? Did they bring in job creation programs and initiatives? Did they bring in that type of approach that has been shown to work? No. They brought in the same approach of Sterling Lyon that failed so miserably between 1977 and 1981. What did they bring in instead? They brought in, instead, their new solution to all the economic ills of Manitoba and that is, blame the public service.

Bill 70 will not do one thing to put Manitobans to work. Not only that, the actions of this government

in eliminating close to 1,000 Civil Service positions—in a nefarious word they used the other day, they used the word “internal reform” to point to the hundreds of civil servants who had been laid off—not only are they not creating jobs, by picking on the civil servants of this province in the public service, Mr. Speaker, they are reducing jobs, they are cutting jobs.

* (1650)

You do not put people to work in communities throughout this province by laying off your own workers. You do not encourage a climate of business and economic growth when you are cutting back on your own employment. You do not get people to work by putting them on welfare, because that is the only growth industry in Manitoba. For them to get up here and somehow suggest that Bill 70 in any way, shape or form puts anybody to work, does anything else other than scapegoat 48,000 working Manitobans, is to defy credibility.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line with this government is that they will do anything to scapegoat the people of Manitoba. They will scapegoat anyone. It is the public servants today but who will it be next? Who will their political handlers, who will their pollsters say that they should pick on next, if it is not the public servants? Who else in society? -(interjection)-

Well, we have seen already some others. Welfare recipients, yes. Those on social assistance. Those who have the least because this government, while it has increased the overall budget for welfare, has cut the rates. We have seen others targeted. Students have had their bursaries cut, high school students, by this government. They are scapegoats, too. I will not talk about Northerners. We have had a lengthy discussion about how Northerners are being scapegoated by this government—\$50 user fees, cuts in job creation and training.

I have seen in the city—and it seems to be more than a coincidence that certain areas of the city are being penalized more than others—the core area, the north end of Winnipeg targeted by this government for cuts, targeted by members of this government who seem to have more concern about how people vote than any sense of fairness and justice in terms of allocation, Mr. Speaker.

So we have seen that civil servants and the public service generally are not the only scapegoats.

They will find others. I ask them this question: When will they stop this type of policy? When will they stop trying to pit one Manitoban against another? When will they stop this policy of divide and conquer? When will they stop blaming the scapegoats, the public servants, the social assistance recipients, the unemployed for the economic incompetence of Conservative policies, both federally and provincially, Mr. Speaker?

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I ask when they are going to do that, because that is the real principle behind this bill. This bill should really be entitled the latest scapegoat bill, the scapegoat of the week bill, because we are seeing it on a weekly basis from this government. You know, I am amazed when I see some of the responses from members opposite. There were some of the members, particularly the new members, I had some hope for, even some of the returning members who I have gotten to know over the years. I really thought there was some hope for some change in this kind of policy philosophy.

I would have been happy if they had lived up to their Premier's (Mr. Filmon) words, their election promises. All we have seen over the last number of months that their election promises are certainly environmentally friendly; they are biodegradable; they have an atmosphere life of about six months, and then they disappear to nothingness. It is about the only thing you can say. They have biodegradable election promises; but I do not think that is what people expected out of the Premier when he was paddling down his canoe and talking about the environment and happy days being here again.

If they just lived up to the words of their own Premier, if some of the new members—Mr. Acting Speaker, I remember when I was elected. I remember being on the back bench. One of the advantages you have is the opportunity to sit back and look a bit more objectively on the policies of government than when you are directly involved—

Mr. Driedger: You never did that.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) says I never did that. He should have been in the caucus discussions because he might have found that it was a bit different. I know the minister himself, when he was a backbencher, would have reflected for four years on the fact that you are in a very unique

position, and sometimes you are able to take more of a perspective. I know he, despite our disagreements, would have done that as, I am sure, if he reflects on it, he realizes I would have done in the caucus. Believe you me, I did reflect on some of the decisions that were made in the caucus, and that is part of the democratic process.

You know, the bottom line is I am asking the members across the way, some of the newer members, some of the members who have perhaps not become so wrapped up in the psychology of government, to really reflect on what they would rather be known for, what they ran for in the election.

I repeat here what the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said: We believe that negotiated settlements should take into account all legitimate factors that are brought to the bargaining table by both sides. Some bargaining units are including as a request protection from the goods and services tax. As management, we would seek the balance of requests of MGEA negotiators, with the fiscal capacity of the province, protection being afforded other workers within the province.

Would they not rather stand behind those words? Would they rather not stand behind the words of the Premier when he said: I will repeat that the free collective bargaining process ought to prevail, and that they ought to go forward and attempt to resolve that at the bargaining table? Would they not rather be associated with the words of the Premier when he said, the very thing that I responded to them—this was the casino workers—was, please return to the bargaining table, have your differences worked out through the free collective bargaining process? Would they rather not stand by the words of their Finance minister who said that yes, the commitment of the Conservatives during the election was to get rid of final offer selection, but they would not do it until March 31st? They would not proclaim that bill.

Would they not rather be associated with that? I think if they reflect on it, Mr. Acting Speaker, and reflect on those words and what they were elected on, they will see in an objective sense the road that they have embarked upon as a government is a very slippery one. The bottom line is this, today, is the bill that scapegoats public sector workers. What will it be next?

I indicated some of the groups that have already been impacted negatively by this government. Do they not honestly believe? Is there not one member

on the other side who does not believe in those words about collective bargaining? Is there no one member who believes that if your leader says something, it counts for something, or your Minister of Finance says something?

I look to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), who is known for his outspokenness, not always his political judgment. Will he not, as the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, stand in his place and oppose the policies that are being imposed upon him by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)?

I look to members on the Conservative side, even one or two on this bill, to stand by their words during the election. I know it is difficult when you are surrounded, particularly when you are newly elected, by members who have been in this House for a long period of time and have ingrained ideas, as indeed does the Minister of Finance and the Premier and others.

Would it not be preferable to have a fresher approach? Would it not be something, Mr. Acting Speaker, if on the vote on this bill that a number of Conservative members voted with their conscience, they voted by the words of their Premier (Mr. Filmon) and their Finance minister, they showed a commitment to collective bargaining, they showed a commitment to bargaining in good faith, they showed a commitment to fairness for working people?

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Would that not be an historic event? I look to those members, Mr. Speaker, to vote with their conscience. I know some of those members, and we have talked privately. I do not ever divulge private conversations in this House; I feel that is absolutely inappropriate. I think I would not be unfair if I would describe a number of members as having said that they feel they are members who will vote with their conscience.

What can be more voting with their conscience than to vote against this bill, as indeed we will when this bill comes for a vote, as we will indeed at committee, as we will indeed at third reading? I say to those members, if they are not persuaded now, I hope that when I continue my comments, when we next sit again, I hope that when other members of our House and other members of our caucus get to speak that we will be able to convince even one

member, even two members, across the way to vote with us with their conscience to kill Bill 70.

As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, I will continue my remarks next time in the hope that they will indeed vote with their conscience.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker: This matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson. The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 22—Domestic Violence

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), that

WHEREAS almost one million women in Canada are battered by their spouses or partners each year; and

WHEREAS battered women, afraid of reprisal or unable to support themselves and their children are beaten, on average, 30 times before going to the police; and

WHEREAS resources and services for women and their children in abusive situations have not developed at a pace, or in a way, that adequately meets the needs of these people; and

WHEREAS physical assault on any person is a serious crime, but psychological attacks can also destroy a woman, slowly, painfully and in lonely terror; and

WHEREAS a full range of adequately funded, community-based services are necessary for all women and children, including those with disabilities, those in northern and rural areas, and those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS the incidence of domestic violence can be expected to increase as economic tensions grow more severe; and

WHEREAS current levels of domestic violence and family brutality have reached the epidemic proportions of a national crisis.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Family Services consider immediately

implementing provisions guaranteeing core funding for all shelters and crisis services in Manitoba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly call for immediate national action on domestic violence; and

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

Motion presented.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak first on the WHEREASes which provide the background for the resolution and then to the RESOLVEDs, the reasons for our putting these RESOLVEDs on record and our hope that all parties in this Legislature will be able to support this resolution.

The statistics that are referred to in the first two WHEREASes are truly astounding and frightening. They include figures that are increasing at a rapid rate. The word "epidemic" is truly not overused in this context, I believe and our party believes. In 1988, 70 Canadian women were killed by their husbands. The Canadian Centre for Justice statistics, which produced those statistics for 1988, says that the total of 70 women in 1988 was the lowest in the past 10 years. The centre as well does not keep statistics on women killed by former boyfriends or ex-husbands. This is only women killed by the men who they are currently living with, but 40 percent of all murders in Canada are a direct result of domestic violence. Virtually all of those murders are committed by men against women.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women estimates that one in four Canadian women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime. While the figure in 1988 was 70 Canadian women were murdered by their partner, on average, 100 women each year are murdered by their male partner in their homes. At least one in 10 women is battered by her male partner. Women are seven times more likely to be assaulted by someone they know intimately than by a stranger.

These statistics, I suggest—and these are only a very brief summary of the horrendous statistics that we are dealing with today. Some have said that they are a result of the more violent society that we are a part of. I suggest that is at least partly the case. I think we all agree that our society appears to be becoming more and more of a society where problems are not discussed, talked out and

solutions reached through compromise. In many cases, violence is seen as the only solution to a problem.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

I also think that another major cause for the vast increase in reported cases of domestic violence is that people are becoming aware of the problem. We have seen that in all areas of sexual assault, which includes things such as harassment in the workplace, childhood sexual abuse, domestic violence, other forms of physical, emotional and verbal assault. They are all on the increase. I would suggest that a major portion of the reason for that is because we, as a society, while we may be coming, on one hand, more prone to violent solutions are, on the other hand, and I think positively so, beginning to understand the causes of some of this domestic violence. Also, women in particular are starting to understand, take control of their lives and understand that it is not their fault. They are not to blame for these actions, and they are coming forward in record numbers to press charges, to ask for assistance from society.

The research also shows that like poverty and like other social problems, domestic violence and sexual assault often occur in cycles. They often occur generation after generation after generation. There is research that supports the theory that wife abuse, domestic abuse, spousal assault is learned behaviour. One statistic bears that out; 75 percent of men who abuse their partners witnessed violence between their own parents as they were growing up. The people who work in the shelter system and who work with victims of domestic violence are reporting, now that we have had upwards of 20 years of some of these organizations being in existence, second and sometimes third generations of the same family coming to shelters, coming to seek assistance.

There is a large body of research and theory as to why this is the case, and I will not go into that at this time. It definitely is a situation that we are seeing a problem that is not only a problem with this generation, but it has been a problem in past generations. Unless we do something dramatic very shortly, it will continue to escalate and be a problem for future generations.

We have made some progress in our societal attitudes toward domestic violence and in our services to women and children who are victims of

domestic violence. We no longer accept, at least in the legal context, the rule of thumb, which was that a husband could beat his wife without fear of legal repercussion as long as the instrument he used was not thicker than his thumb. We no longer have those laws on the books, and we have progressed slightly from that period of time.

However, there still is an attitudinal base to the problem of domestic violence. That is that women still are considered by many men, and sometimes they themselves feel this, that they are second-class citizens, they are not valued and that they are the property of the men with whom they have relationships. This has been proved in research, particularly research done by talking about the background and the problems of individual women. I think we can agree that the problem is a very large problem that needs to be addressed.

However, currently in Manitoba, Canada and throughout the western world the resources are not adequate to address these problems. I certainly am not going to single out the province of Manitoba for that as any different than the rest of society in this regard. I am going to focus on Manitoba, because we are discussing a resolution that would have implications for the province.

* (1710)

Shortly after the province instituted its Abuse is a Crime public affairs announcement on television last year, shelters in the province stated that their usage was up as much as 50 percent, due in large part perhaps to the results of that advertising campaign. The number of shelters in the province of Manitoba is now at 11 and they do range throughout the province. So I think we can state that the regional distribution of the shelter system in the province certainly reflects at least a very beginning of an understanding that this is a problem that is confronted by families throughout the province of Manitoba.

There are, however, other resources available to women and families as well as abusers in the province, but they are far understaffed and underresourced to be able to with any adequacy address the issues that we are seeing.

In the last year more than 570 victims and batterers were turned away from the Evolve program. The Evolve program does excellent work not only with women victims of abuse, but also is one of the few programs that runs individual

counselling and group counselling sessions for batterers. They have done excellent work. However, the resources are not nearly adequate enough to be able to handle even the small percentage of men who are tried and found guilty of abuse and sentenced by the judge to seek counselling. In many instances, that counselling is absolutely not available.

The Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre which also helps women in need had 455 women turned away last year, and the Women's Post Treatment Centre which provides programming counselling and individual and group counselling for women who have had problems both of chemical addiction and sexual abuse, had to close their wait list for a period of time because the wait list was over a year long. We could talk about the programs, and every other program that attempts to help women and children and perpetrators of these problems are very underresourced.

We also mention in our WHEREASes that the incidents of domestic violence can be expected to increase as the economic situation becomes worse. This has also begun to be proven statistically. The stresses of unemployment, the stress of not being able to find work, financial concerns are not necessarily the only precipitating factor. There are many, many situations where families have enormous financial and emotional problems and where domestic violence is not seen as the answer. We are not suggesting that the economic climate is the only precursor to domestic violence, but where there are other indicators, such as past history, such as violent actions on the part of the male in the past, the economic situation can be a precipitating factor in this situation.

We all agree in this House that we are in the midst of an economic downturn. We are in the midst of a narrowing of job opportunities throughout the province and the country and North America. So we are, for a variety of reasons, seeing this as an even more important issue to be dealt with now. We also see this as a national crisis.

The resources are there. We know what to do to help people. We have the research and the skill level of people who have been involved in these programs. We just do not have enough of them. We need to provide more resources for families so that we can break the cycle of violence, so that we can allow families to get on with their lives, and so that we can hopefully provide treatment for the

perpetrators of this domestic violence so they do not continue to do this.

There is a national crisis; there is a provincial crisis. There are many areas that we could have addressed in this resolution to help deal with this crisis; however, we focused our attention on the shelters, which are the first line of defence for virtually all women who are attempting to leave abusive situations. The shelters in Manitoba, while they are located throughout the province, one of the main problems with the current shelter system is in its funding proportions.

The shelter directors and the New Democratic Party have been recommending for several years now that the government look at re-evaluating its funding formula for shelters and provide a basic core operating grant that will cover the operating expenses for the shelter for a year. This would mean that the shelters would not be dependent on per diem funding the way they are to an enormous extent. It would allow shelters to have a core operating staff. They would know the money that they were dealing with. The per diem money could be used for enriched programming and for work with children.

We are urging therefore that the government follow through on its original commitment, which was to discuss this issue, to follow through on it, to carry through on it now, and to provide, as the shelters and ourselves have asked for, core funding to cover operating expenses and for per diems to be additional funds to be used for enriched programming.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak on this resolution on domestic abuse this afternoon. I commend the member for Wellington for her interest in this issue. There are items that she has mentioned and ideas that she has mentioned that I can agree with. I believe that she does have a sincere interest in this issue and in all family service issues because the advice that she comes forth with from time to time often has some interesting and useful comments within it. I commend her on her interest in this.

Again, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the topic of domestic violence. As the minister responsible, I see on a daily basis the tremendous harm that is brought to bear on families

who are victims of domestic violence. We see it in a number of different areas of the department. There is a growing awareness of the significance of this issue, not only in Manitoba, but across the country.

* (1720)

Prior to becoming involved in government, through my work in the education system, I was often able to be made aware of and experience first-hand the difficulties that spouses and their children endure as a result of abuse and to see the negative effect that it had, not only on children, but on the family unit; and the manner in which it affected their lives, not only in the short term, but also in the long term.

While reviewing the efforts of past and present governments to address this serious problem of domestic violence, I was immediately struck by the tremendous commitment of the present government and the actions that we have taken since assuming office in 1988. There was an obvious need to match rhetoric that had been prevalent before with some very positive steps in terms of financial resources, so that we could make a reality of some of the very good suggestions that were coming forward from the community.

In that respect, over the last three budgets we have increased funding to our province-wide shelter system by over 80 percent, and this brings our financial commitment to the shelter system alone to \$2.8 million in the current fiscal period. We have seen a tremendous expansion of the facilities—the 10 facilities that are available now and the one that is under construction—the tremendous expansion in the number of facilities that are available across the province.

We are very proud to say that we support these 10 crisis shelters throughout the province, and that the new Parkland's crisis shelter is due to come on stream this summer. That will bring our total to 11 such shelters giving us a good geographical spread as far as these services are concerned.

The government also allots almost \$2 million additional for related programs to tackle the problem of domestic violence. Recognizing the great importance of access to service, we have also provided over \$400,000 in support of the operation of two crisis lines. Additional funds were provided for the important work of our four women's resource centres and 12 wife abuse committees. So truly

there has been an expansion of the services provided over the last couple of years, and we see now a province-wide system with the crisis lines and the shelters providing this service across Manitoba.

In 1990-91, government, recognizing the longer-term effects of domestic violence, launched funding for six rural second stage housing projects. Very clearly we stated our commitment to the follow-up therapy and the counselling services so necessary to assist our clients in their healing process. Government never has the luxury of resting on its previous laurels. Our policies and programs are in a continual and much needed process of evolution. As I have indicated, the evolution has been certainly a marked one in the last couple of years.

This morning I attended a conference called Alternatives: Directions in the Nineties to End the Abuse of Women, and I shared with the delegates that my department is currently reviewing our funding model for our crisis shelter system. This was an issue that came up in Estimates last year, and both critics are here this afternoon. We talked about that funding model and very soon we hope to bring forward a proposal which will alter the funding model.

This morning at this conference were many service providers from across the province. I had the opportunity to talk to shelter directors from Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson and Selkirk.

There is a recognition there that government is working co-operatively with service providers to look at this funding model. The co-operative work between the shelter community and my department has resulted in a very sincere effort to resolve this problem. I found quite an openness with the directors who were there in support of the direction we are going, and while the funding model that is in place now did not serve all the shelters, it certainly served some of them very well.

This spirit of partnership truly reflects the outlook of the current government to work with our communities, to ensure that even during difficult economic times we are able to provide the very best of programs and services. The most important job of government is to set a good example. Government takes the lead in establishing the base to ensure that all Manitobans have the opportunity to live their lives in good health and peace. Repeatedly through our programs and directly

through our recent media campaign, government has made a crystal clear statement that abuse is a crime. As the Minister of Family Services, I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that the intentions of government today become the realities of life tomorrow.

I am going to propose an amendment to the resolution, and I know it is one that the mover of the resolution will have no problem supporting, because it does recognize the need for some ongoing discussions over the funding model, and basically it recognizes the reality of the situation here in Manitoba.

Before I move this amendment, I would again compliment the member for keeping this issue before the House and her interest in it. I would urge her to go even further. I know she has often complimented government for giving an increase in funding in this department at this very critical time. She referenced our economy and often is urging this department to spend additional funding in daycare and with the shelter system and some of the other areas of the department. I would urge her to go a step further and fill out those suggestions by indicating some of the areas, perhaps, within the department where we could maybe secure that funding from, so that we can, in fact, enhance some areas of the department that she has a true interest in.

In that light, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach),

THAT the resolution be amended by deleting all the words in the second WHEREAS clause after the word "women" and substituting the words: "often afraid of reprisal refrain from seeking police assistance on behalf of themselves and their children, and"; and

THAT the resolution be further amended by deleting the third, fifth and seventh WHEREAS clauses; and

THAT the resolution be further amended by deleting all the words after the words "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED" and substituting the following therefore:

THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, while recognizing the substantive commitment of the Filmon government to addressing the problem of domestic violence, supports the government in its

continual development of sound policies and programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly encourage the government to continue its work with the shelter community in reviewing the existing funding model.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have reviewed the amendment and the amendment is procedurally correct.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Madam Deputy Speaker, I think I would like to begin by, in a sense, thanking the minister for moving this amendment, because I think the one thing that it does is make explicit the complete hypocrisy of this government when it comes to sensitive social issues.

Instead of dealing with the substance of a very serious, and I think a very carefully considered resolution, about a very serious social problem in this community; the minister has chosen to put all of that aside to spend a little time congratulating himself and his government. I think it is shameful, frankly. I think it is a complete waste of this time that we try to spend bringing forward issues that are important to the opposition. I think it shows a complete lack of respect for anybody in this Chamber or outside.

* (1730)

I think it was about eight years ago now, in New Brunswick, that a number of people decided to look at youthful offenders who had committed acts of violence. They went in, and they interviewed them, and they spent some time looking at their background. They discovered that every one of them, every one of those teens who had committed a violent crime, had been brought up in a home where they had experienced one or more of four conditions. Either they had seen their mother or their sister being physically or sexually abused, or they had been physically or sexually abused themselves.

This is a profoundly important issue for this community, and it is one that I think we are only now—I mean, in a sense people get a little tired because they seem to see so much about it or hear so much about it, but it is interesting when I look at the number of years that I have worked in this community. Back in the early '70s I worked in a treatment centre with very disturbed children. Knowing what we know today, we would

immediately assume that the majority of the children who were in that centre had been physically or sexually abused. Now, what was interesting, despite the fact that we had sophisticated psychiatric and psychological assistance, despite the fact that we conferenced those kids every week, we never even discussed the issue of abuse. It never came into our psyche. We never thought about it and, as a result, we spent millions of dollars and hundreds of hours dealing with the wrong issue.

There is a psychiatrist in Canada by the name of Elliot Barker who worked very hard with adult criminals who were again accused of acts of violence. He believed that it was possible through working in a psychodynamic fashion with these people to effect some cures. After working very hard in all sorts of therapeutic communities for many years, he came to the conclusion that it was impossible to effect such a change, that at best what he could do was neutralize them; at best what he could do was render them harmless. He could never give them back that which they had lost, because what they had lost was their innocence in childhood. They had been sexually or physically abused.

We are only going to see the benefits of programs such as this another generation from now, or two or three. Only as we have begun to confront this and begun to recognize that this indeed happens, that it has a profoundly disturbing effect on the people that it occurs to and that we have a responsibility as a community to send a message that we do not support this, that we do not wish to see more of it, that, if anything, we will do everything in our power as a community to see it reduced, to see it prevented.

Because really what we are talking about is, what kind of community do we want? What kind of environment do we want to create for us to grow in, our children to be reared in, our sisters, our brothers, our friends, our families to embrace and to grow in? What kind of community do we want to say to the rest of Manitoba, the rest of Canada and the rest of the world that we believe is important for people to be raised in? That is what I find so profoundly disturbing about this government's attitude towards issues such as this.

What kind of community do we have? Well, in the last annual report of the department, which is now rather out of date, but it is the most recent hard statistic we have, we know that 43,000 calls were

made to crisis lines; 43,000 times somebody called in to say something about abuse. Now, I am certain that not every one of those calls was a new abused person calling, but I believe a very significant portion of them were.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the shelters that the minister speaks so fondly of, back in '89-90 there were 1,932 women accommodated, a 25 percent increase over two years earlier. There were 2,801 children in the care of those women, and we provided them 27,000 days of care, a 53 percent increase.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what the minister wants us to congratulate his government for is that we now spend five 100ths of 1 percent of our budget providing support to people who are physically or sexually abused, predominantly physically abused, in this community. I think rather than being proud of that, the minister should be ashamed of it. I think rather than being proud of the work that he has done to date, I think he should be standing up in this House and telling us how he is striving harder to see that fewer people are abused, that more abuse is uncovered, that more days of shelter care are provided, if that is the most appropriate response. I think this self-serving pat on the back is just not warranted at this time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are two things that come into play here. The first thing is, this resolution is very straightforward. It is puzzling to me that the minister has gone to such great lengths to trivialize this issue, because all the member is asking for—well, she is asking for three things. One is that a copy gets sent to Ottawa. I am sure if the resolution was to pass, nobody would have any concerns about that. The second is that we urge on ourselves on national programs, that we tell the rest of Canada to wake up to this, because I think Manitoba has shown some leadership in this issue.

The central theme in her resolution is, very simply, that we stabilize the funding that these organizations receive. That is something that the minister says he is prepared to do. Rather than engage in a rational debate about the best way to do that and how we approach it and how we might do that, he prefers to blow past that whole issue and go off on some fantasy about how wonderfully well they are doing on behalf of people who are at risk in this community.

The problem is that, at the current time, the funding is so haphazard and so ad hoc that the

shelters spend as much time staying alive as they do providing service. I brought to the government's attention an example just a while ago of, it is not a shelter for battered women, but it, in fact, is a support program, a residential support program for handicapped people in this case. The same problem exists. They do not know year over year what their funding is going to be. There is no predictability. They have no formula that allows them to receive an acceptable core amount with some sense of what their increases are going to be to meet costs of operating each year. What happens is that, in this particular case, this organization had no increase since 1984.

* (1740)

In the shelters, it is much the same case. The catchup the minister talks about was much the same sort of crisis management. Wait until the shelters fall so far behind, wait until they are unable to function, and then jump in like some sort of white knight to provide some emergency relief and save them until the next time they get into crisis. Surely that is not the way to manage.

What this government has demonstrated, what I believe the Canadian people are finally coming to understand, is that Conservatives do not know how to manage. They do not have the faintest idea of how to put a system in place that allows a core set of services to be delivered in an uninterrupted fashion, so that the people who we pay to represent us in providing services to vulnerable women are allowed to do that work and not go week after week wondering if they are going to be laid off tomorrow or whether or not their program is going to exist in another month or two. That is no way to build a quality system. That is no way to provide the kind of remediation that we say is so important to these people who are so much at risk. After all, is that not what we want to have happen?

In an ideal world, would it not be the case that anyone, man, woman or child, who was at risk need not fear because close at hand there would be some place they could go, someone they could reach out to, someone who would provide some assistance. Is that not the goal that we should be working toward?

You know, it is interesting, because it came out of the voice or through the mouth of George Bush, I suppose, written by Roger Ailles or Lee Atwater, the whole sense of a kinder, gentler nation has been

kind of corrupted. Is that not what we are after, a kinder, gentler community that has within it the elements that allow people to feel safe.

I believe that if we continue this struggle that in another generation we will see less violence. The relationship between later acts of violence by abused children as adults is irrefutable. The relationship between sexual abuse of young girls in particular and later problems with mental health has been well established, in fact, in this community. Is it not time we did something to intervene in that cycle in the hopes that in another decade, in the next generation, we will see less mental health problems, we will see less violence, we will see a kinder, gentler world.

I think this minister and this government would do more for this community if they would turn their attention to that rather than simply congratulating themselves for very little.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to rise and speak on the amendment as proposed by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

In this House, during private members' hour, we often put forward, as opposition parties, resolutions which are political in nature. We share different philosophical views of the world and of the problems that this province faces. This hour is set aside for those of us who are not in government or not proposing government bills to be able to rise and speak on issues of importance to ourselves and our caucuses. Many times those resolutions are overtly political and in some cases partisan. That is a legitimate part of the political process and one which we all, I think, agree can be very useful.

This resolution, Madam Deputy Speaker, was not put on the record, it was not brought forward here today with the indication in any sense at all of it being a partisan issue. It was not meant to make political points, it was not meant to denigrate the work of the government, it was meant solely as an understanding by all parties of the enormous problem that we as a community and a society are facing as a whole and with particular reference to the most vulnerable members of our society, women and children who are being physically, emotionally and psychologically abused by the men in their lives, by the men that they trust, and by the men with whom they have a commitment. Those men are, in

every sense of the word, abusing that basic trust and commitment.

We were simply asking with this resolution that all parties in this House agree to the enormity of the problem, that nowhere are resources adequately being given to fund this problem. We were not selecting this provincial government to castigate for its low level of funding. In my remarks I was very careful not to politicize or make any comments that could, I thought, be construed as overtly political or partisan in this regard. It is too important an issue, Madam Deputy Speaker, to be sullied in that manner.

Therefore, I am incredibly surprised, shocked, and dismayed by the actions on the part of the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the self-serving political amendment that he has put forward, not only for the resolve that he has put forward, but, in particular, I find it very interesting and strange that he has taken out some of the WHEREASes. I would like briefly to speak to those WHEREASes.

The second WHEREAS—it occurs to me that the WHEREASes that this government in this amendment has taken out are the WHEREASes that deal most specifically with the depth and breadth and enormity of this problem. I can only assume that because he has removed references to the fact that it is a national crisis; to the fact that women are unable to support themselves and their children often as a result of these abuses; that they are beaten on average 30 times before going to the police; that resources are not adequate on any level to meet this problem; that there is a national crisis; that the Assembly call for immediate federal action on this issue; that we need to have services provided throughout the province that understand the differences between rural, urban, northern, culturally accessible and relative services.

The only thing I can come up with as a reason for that, is that this government does not see it as a problem, that it is attempting to politicize the issue. It is being self-serving in this area, of all areas, which, I would have assumed, would be above partisan politics.

It is denigrating the issue, denigrating the importance of the issue, and it is calling into suspicion any future statements that this government may make on this issue dealing with domestic violence, family abuse, women and

children who are in crisis in this area. We did not talk about in the resolution, nor did I talk in my speaking originally to it, about the concerns that we have shared with the government in the past over its funding policies with regard to shelters and other services to women and children in need. We felt that it was inappropriate at this time with this resolution to do that.

We have an opportunity in the Estimates process, we have an opportunity in Question Period to address those concerns. We were simply bringing forward a resolution that we felt all parties could support because it was nonpartisan, it was nonpolitical, it was recognizing the enormity of the issue. It was recognizing that nobody in our society—all levels of government, all agencies—nobody is providing adequate resources for this problem. It was recognizing that it is a municipal, a rural, an urban, an aboriginal, a new Canadian, an upper class, a middle class, a lower class issue, that it crosses all spectra. It should not be political in any way, shape or form.

We were asking for all parties to acknowledge this issue and to say we will work together on it. In the RESOLVED that has been deleted by this amendment, we asked the Minister of Family Services to consider immediately implementing provisions guaranteeing core funding for the shelters in the province of Manitoba. This proposal that the minister says is being studied has been on the books, has been part of the government process since at least February 1988. Before the NDP government was defeated, staff were looking at the need to provide core block funding.

* (1750)

The Women's Agenda supported the initiation of block funding to shelters and crisis offices for comprehensive services. Program staff have recognized the need for reviewed funding models. There was a review process about to be implemented in February 1988 by the previous government that would have been completed in four to six months, that would have included consultations with users of the service, with service providers to come up with a new funding formula. The government, the previous government, understood that the funding formula, as it was implemented at that time, was not providing adequate resources needed to be reviewed. That was three and a half years ago.

This government has been in power for over three years. It has known about the funding inequities, the funding problems that shelters have been experiencing since that time. We were simply asking in this resolution for the government to consider an immediate implementation of core funding. We were not attempting to make political points. We were not attempting to do or recommend anything that every single shelter in the province of Manitoba has not asked repeatedly this government to work expeditiously on.

We were also suggesting that it is a national issue. It is an issue that crosses all boundaries and that we all need to work together on in order to break the cycle of violence, in order to provide the possibility of families being able to have a quality of life that is up to the standards that we all want for ourselves and should want for the rest of the people of our province and our country.

In that light, I cannot really believe that in this nonpolitical, nonpartisan resolution this government, this Minister of Family Services would stoop to the behaviour of his colleagues, in particular the Ministers of Health (Mr. Orchard) and Environment (Mr. Cummings) and Education (Mr. Derkach), who, in response to earlier private members' resolutions from this side of the House, have come forward with self-serving amendments that completely abrogate the intention of the resolution, which this amendment does as well.

It says nothing about the severity of the problem. It says nothing about the fact that governments have a responsibility. It pats itself on the back for work that it has done and does nothing to further enhance the dialogue and the discussion on this issue.

I would just like to conclude my remarks on the amendment by saying to the minister that by his ill-thought-out, ill-considered and totally unprofessional amendment, he has given a very strong and clear message to the shelter movement in this province, to the agencies and organizations that are attempting to fund and provide services for women and children and batterers in this province, for all social service agencies and workers in this province, that this government really, truly is not interested in a partnership. They are only interested in short-term, political, self-serving gains, and I find it reprehensible that they have taken this action in this regard.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would just like to have the opportunity to put a few comments on the record as well. This was a very, very important resolution, a resolution that we as a caucus had taken very seriously to solve a serious problem, and I am disappointed that the minister has chosen to make so light of what we consider a serious problem. He has indicated that he thought this was a serious problem.

There has been violence in families for many, many years, and people have not disclosed, they have been ashamed, they have had no place to go, and we finally began to make progress to provide services for people, to have places for women and children to go. There is much more to be done, but this minister for some reason has chosen to make light of a very serious matter and, I guess, make very light of the lobbying that has gone on by many groups. We know that along with violence the children's education suffers, that they cannot progress in society. It is an ongoing problem that goes on from one generation to another generation, and it must be broken.

We do have shelters in the rural area, but there are not enough of them. Volunteers are running these shelters and cannot carry the workload. The minister is well aware of the shelter, particularly in my constituency, where volunteers have come to him many times and said they need additional funding because they cannot just continue as volunteers anymore because their workload is becoming so heavy. He has given some commitment, and now to take a resolution like this and to strike out the section that deals with rural and northern areas is pure hypocrisy.

Domestic violence is connected to poverty, to unemployment and, as we look around this province, we see that there are rural communities that are—farming families that are suffering because of policies of both federal and provincial governments. We will see a much higher rate of unemployment throughout rural Manitoba. In fact, in many rural communities many of the jobs have been cut, and we are going to see higher and higher unemployment. As a result we are going to see much more violence, and women and children are going to have to have a place to go. This minister has shown through the amendments he has made to this motion that he does not believe there is a

problem, and he does not believe that he should be supporting this problem.

I just do not understand why he would not take a resolution like this seriously because, as the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has indicated, this was not a political resolution, this was something that all of us should have been able to deal with, if we are at all concerned about the women and children, or if we believe the statistics that are coming out. Perhaps the minister should have struck out the first WHEREAS, where it says that millions of women in Canada are being battered. He has taken out the part about the national survey. He obviously does not believe that it is a crisis out there.

There is much to be done to relieve the problem of domestic violence and, as I say, in the rural area and in the North—there are many remote communities in the North where there are no supports. We have heard some horrendous stories that have come out of those communities. I do not think that the minister should be making so lightly of these problems in both rural and northern Manitoba to strike that section of the resolution out.

I would perhaps encourage him to look very seriously at this and give his commitment to both the women and people of the North and rural, as well as the city, that he is serious and that he is committed to supplying more funding, and not use the excuse that we have seen so many other times of this government that there is no money.

It is surprising what you can find money for when you want to find money for it. If you believe in a cause, if you believe there is a problem, you will find a way to solve it; but to make so lightly of the problem, to strike sections out of a very serious resolution, leads me to believe that this minister does not believe there is a problem. I also am very disappointed that he would use the same channels as previous members have done to amend resolutions to be self-serving.

What he has done here has just given an indication that he has no real concern or real commitment to the women and children of this province who are suffering and need supports. As we face the serious problems of poverty, he should have taken it much more seriously. He should also take more seriously the volunteers who have lobbied him many times to ask for additional support to continue on with their work. Volunteers have come to him and said many times that they cannot keep the shelter going. In particular, many of the smaller shelters just are unable to carry on.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is next before the House, the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) will have 10 minutes remaining.

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Wednesday, June 5, 1991

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