



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



Vol. XLVI No. 33 - 1:30 p.m., Monday, May 13, 1996

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 13, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Home Care Services

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Robert White, Gary Nickel, John Cline and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Gerri O'Leary, Reta Waddell and Treasure Waddell requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Denis E. McCarthy, Jason W. Shields and Debbi Walsh requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Heather Kelly, Hana Graja, Christine Byard and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Karen Verrier, Joan Kolach, Marilyn Gaudreau and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Home Care Services

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans). It

complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes? The Clerk will read.

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

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

* (1335)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of Committees): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to table The Discriminatory Business Practices Act Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 21—The Oil and Gas Production Tax and Oil and Gas Amendment Act

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), that leave

be given to introduce Bill 21, The Oil and Gas Production Tax and Oil and Gas Amendment Act; Loi concernant la taxe sur la production de pétrole et de gaz et modifiant la Loi sur le pétrole et le gaz naturel, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House.

Madam Speaker, at this time I would also like to table a copy of His Honour's message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 22—The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), that leave be given to introduce Bill 22, The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les caisses populaires et les credit unions.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education, that leave be given to introduce Bill 22, The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les caisses populaires et les credit unions, and that the same be now received and read a first time. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 23—The GRIP and Related Programs Termination and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), that leave be given to introduce Bill 23, The GRIP and Related Programs Termination and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi abolissant le régime RARB et de régimes connexes et apportant des modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 24—The Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), that leave be given to introduce Bill 24, The Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du crédit agricole), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 25—The Jury Amendment Act

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 25, The Jury Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jurés, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have this afternoon eighteen Grade 11 students from Joseph Wolinsky School under the direction of Linda Connor. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Sciences Centre Capital Projects

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is to the acting Premier or the Minister of Health.

This government has made a number of capital promises, usually just prior to the election, dealing with the health care, hospital spending and personal care home spending. Just before the election in 1990, they made promises on capital. Again, just prior to the election in '95, they made promises on capital and, of course, these promises evaporated into the thin air like a lot of other promises this government made.

I would like to ask the government, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), or acting Premier or Minister of Health, can the government indicate what the impacts are of the cancellation of the capital project at the Health Sciences Centre? What are the impacts on readmissions of adult patients and the quality and quantity of care for children's pediatric services?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): One of the costs associated with the capital program, Madam Speaker, is the interest part of it. We would like very much to get away from the requirement to spend so many taxpayers' dollars on interest charges and, hopefully, redesign a capital program that can be carried out in such a way that we live within our means. It is not easy, however, when this year we are looking at \$600 million worth of interest charges. If I had that \$600 million to use for capital construction costs in the health system, we certainly would not have the challenges that we have in front of us. We can thank honourable members opposite for that millstone around the necks of ourselves and future generations.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, of course, the Minister of Health made his promises in March of 1995 and, again, the government made their promises in July of 1990 with all information in front of them. I would like to table a memo written by the president of the Health Sciences Centre dealing with the deficiencies on capital spending and its impact on patient care based on the government's flip-flop or broken promise on capital spending at the Health Sciences Centre.

In this report, Madam Speaker, they say that this has had a negative impact on patient readmission issues and it seems to be contrary to the government's position on so-called reform. The report goes on to say that, according to the children's program team, to leave these areas without capital spending poses a significant risk to the quality and quantity of care available in the children's

program. Would the minister please advise Manitobans why he has left children without the quality and quantity of care, contrary to his election promise?

Mr. McCrae: It is interesting to listen to New Democrats one day condemn the Health Sciences Centre in favour of community hospitals and on another day to come and speak out in favour of a capital program at Health Sciences Centre. No one in the whole system, Madam Speaker, wants to leave any group in our population, above all including children, in any way disadvantaged because of the necessity to pay off so many millions of dollars in interest costs loaded onto our shoulders by the previous government in this province.

We are working with our partners in health. We recognize that there will be future needs and we are working very closely with the various proponents of the various projects to see if we can give a proper priority. One of the highest priority items in the capital budget is the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. We are working closely with the foundation to ensure that those who need cancer services now and in the future will have their needs met, and the same would go for the needs at the Children's Hospital.

* (1345)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the minister cannot have it both ways. He cannot make a promise prior to the election, without the financial information and the health information, and say now that was the wrong decision. Either you were telling us the truth before the election or you are not telling us the truth right now, which I suspect is the case.

This report is devastating to the government's broken promise on health care capital. It is devastating to the stewardship that is lacking from the Minister of Health and the total government about saying one thing before an election and another thing after.

I want to ask the minister, what is the impact of his broken promise on children's pediatric services, when I quote from the report that waiting lists of up to two years, currently 543 children, mean that some children who require assessment and treatment do not receive this until they become of school age and receive these services from schools? Early intervention affords the greatest benefit.

Why is this minister not giving our children early intervention and giving our children the benefit of a decent health care system?

Mr. McCrae: I suppose one might be led to think it might be nice if we could have it both ways. You know, nobody can, but the NDP thinks they can have it all ways. They can be all things to all people, and they have demonstrated over and over again that that is quite impossible.

Madam Speaker, the commitment to health care evidenced by the budgets of the Filmon government far outweigh any commitment ever demonstrated by honourable members opposite. The Doer-Pawley government of the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. McCrae: —80s showed very little commitment to the health of Manitobans as evidenced by the budgets that they brought in, but certainly the best evidence of their lack of concern for future generations and the future health needs of Manitobans is in the fact that they tripled the debt of this province in a short seven years and placed on the backs of Manitobans today and Manitobans in the future a huge burden of debt, which is money that we cannot spend today for capital improvements to the Health Sciences Centre or any other health facility in this province.

Home Care Program Privatization—Report Tabling Request

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I would like to quote from a parish bulletin that was delivered this Sunday. It says: In regard to the home care situation, this is not a question of competition versus monopoly. Unlike consumers, the individual patient will have no say in who delivers the service. They will receive care from a private monopoly instead of a public monopoly. The only people who stand to gain in this move to privatize are the owners of home care companies, not the patients, not the workers and not the provincial coffers. This move by government has forced the home care workers into a strike situation in order to

force the government to stop its privatization plan and protect the future.

Madam Speaker, nobody in Manitoba except the minister and his private company friends agree with this move. Will the minister today at least table the studies or any documentation to show why they are proceeding down this ridiculous path of privatization, and end the strike today?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Certainly nobody on this side of the House forced anybody to withdraw their services from our clients. We have gone over the history of the beginning of this dispute ad nauseam in this House. It is certainly not new. The honourable member has made it clear through his friends in the union movement that this has nothing to do with patients. The honourable member will use the comments of a priest, and he will use the comments of three busloads of Americans if he has to. The fact is the honourable member and his friends in the union movement have made it very clear that their dispute is an idealistic one; it has nothing to do with the clients of our system.

* (1350)

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, would you kindly ask the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) to table the document that he referred to?

Madam Speaker: The honourable government House leader does not have a point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: On the same point of order, I would be prepared to table this document and provide it to all government members so that they could see it.

Private Home Care Services Information Tabling Request

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Why has the minister refused in the Estimates to provide us with a list of all of the private companies providing home care in the province of Manitoba? Will he today table a list of all the private companies providing home care, how much

we are paying them and what the conditions of their work are? Will he do that today?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I do not think the honourable member has that right. We have been going through some pretty extensive review of the Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Health, and even with the time we have spent on it, I think there is so much area we could have or should have discussed. There does not seem to be enough time in the day for us to discuss the areas of interest in the health system.

I went through a whole list of all of the contracts that are part of the delivery of home care services. We referred to the Victorian Order of Nurses. We have referred to the fact that the Central Health company provides backup services, the fact that, thanks to the private companies, right now we are able to provide services to people because the MGEU has removed the services of the members of that organization to our clients. And the Victorian Order of Nurses on the home I.V. contract. I am not sure to what the honourable member is referring. I certainly have not refused, I do not think, to make—well, the honourable member will have to be more specific. He says I did, and I would like to know in what area I made that refusal.

Home Care Program Tender Proposal

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Since the minister refused in Estimates to provide us the list with all of the companies providing private home care, will the minister today provide us with something else he also refused in Estimates, and that is a list of what the tender proposals are so the public will have an idea of what the government plans to do in this ridiculous privatization scheme prior to the government launching this ridiculous plan? Will he provide us with all of the tender information so the public will know what the government is going to be wasting its money on?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable member may not know much about tendering but when you go to public tender, the documents are public and will be public when the tenders are put out.

With respect to other information, I will check my records but I do not know that I missed any out. I know that the Seven Oaks Hospital contracted with a company called We Care to provide services and the We Care people and the hospital had a very successful project there which demonstrated to the patients and to others, certainly medical people as well, that flexibility is what we need more of, not less of, in our home care system. Above all, we cannot let one group of people shut down the home care system. Nobody should have that kind of power.

* (1355)

Home Care Appeal Panel Appeals Summary

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, this minister refuses over and over again to answer legitimate questions. We have asked the Minister of Health to table any credible support that he has for his plan. One of his answers has been to cite the hearings of the home care appeal panel, suggesting that patients are appealing poor quality care. Will the minister tell the House the actual subject of the majority of appeals to his home care appeal panel? What did they really appeal, Mr. Minister?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The appeal panel was put in place in 1993-94 at a time when cleaning and laundry issues were very much the subject of public discussion, and the majority of the complaints at that time dealing with our appeal panel had to do with cleaning and laundry.

The honourable member asks about studies. Why is it New Democrats do not want to talk about the Price Waterhouse report? We understand—[interjection] Oh, they do not want to hear about that one. The New Democrats spent large numbers of taxpayers' dollars for this report that told them what was wrong with the way they were running the home care system. We are trying to fix that, and some of the things that are in this report demonstrate very clearly that the honourable member for Kildonan has the wrong policy. His policy is to go back to the system we had in the first place. Madam Speaker, we want a better system than that.

Mr. Sale: Will the minister table today a summary of all home care appeals in the past 12 months, showing the

reason for the appeal, the disposition of the appeal and the time elapsed between the appeal and its final disposition? Will he table that report?

Mr. McCrae: I know that in the first year of its operation there were about a thousand calls to the appeal panel. There were over 230 appeals and many, many more that were resolved without the necessity of anything formal being done. The fact that we, the Filmon government, put in place an appeal panel told the client and told the people who run our program that we are going to resolve issues, and the most favourable result of having an appeal panel is that everybody works harder to resolve problems before they have to come to any kind of formal disposition, but statistics relating to the appeal panel is something I can make available to honourable members.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister admit today that, contrary to what he has said in the House, most of the appeals, the majority of the appeals, are in regard not to the quality of service but to government's denial of service to clients who needed service? Clients are appealing their right to service, their need for service. They are not appealing quality, contrary to what this minister has said.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member is quite incorrect. I have not said, I think, anything contrary to what the findings of the appeal panel are, but to listen to the honourable member you would think people would be getting more service than they want and complaining to the appeal panel that they are getting too much service. What does the honourable member think an appeal panel should be there for? It is for people to complain that they are not getting enough service, not getting it often enough and not getting levels that they need. That is what an appeal panel is for. Does the honourable member think we are all stupid over here, Madam Speaker?

Home Care Program Labour Dispute

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, over the weekend I spoke to many people in rural Manitoba who are concerned about this plan by this government to privatize home care. Not one person in rural Manitoba said they agree with the government's plan. Everyone believes that this is just a beginning of an

end to our health care system and we will see much more privatization if the government gets away with this. People have lost confidence in this minister and, in fact, they would like to see this minister resign.

Will the Minister of Health recognize the opposition of the public to his plan to privatize and move to end the strike so those people who have been delivering home care can continue to do the job that they have been doing so well?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, if I had chosen to follow the advice of honourable members opposite, I never should have got the job in the first place. If all I was going to do is try to take our health system back 40 years, as suggested by honourable members opposite, I should never have accepted the appointment in the first place. The honourable member is very wrong to suggest that people in Manitoba do not support changes that will ensure the sustainability of our health care system. She is very wrong about that. She is very selective to whom she speaks when she looks for advice about how to run the system in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I have been working earnestly with my colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and others in our negotiations with the Manitoba Government Employees' Union. It is my fervent hope, and it was from the beginning, that there not even be a strike in the first place but there having been one, it is my fervent hope that we will see a conclusion to this disruption just as soon as is humanly possible.

* (1400)

Privatization—Rural Manitoba

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Just for the minister's information, I am not selective. I speak to many people.

Will the minister tell the people of rural Manitoba that, even though home care workers were sent a letter that home care in rural Manitoba was not going to be affected by this privatization scheme, that in fact is not true, and that in fact within a year we will see home care going under regional health boards and that is a step towards

privatization? Will he tell rural Manitobans the truth about health care?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Yes, Madam Speaker, it is rural Manitobans who had such a role in the creation of regional health authorities which was one of the key recommendations of the Northern and Rural Health Advisory Council which is rural people making recommendations about health delivery in rural and northern Manitoba, so of course we are listening to rural Manitobans.

Ms. Wowchuk: Then if the minister is listening to rural Manitobans, will he name rural Manitobans who told him that home care should be privatized?—because he will not find any; they are against this privatization scheme.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member could not be more wrong, Madam Speaker. Manitobans everywhere want to see their tax dollars spent in an efficient way. They want their tax dollars to be used to bring about a proper result in the delivery of home care services in our province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. McCrae: Rural and northern Manitobans are no different from any other Manitoban. They do not want solutions that are old-fashioned, hidebound and do not work anymore.

Home Care Program Privatization—Employee Turnovers

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is too for the Minister of Health. We in the Liberal Party believe that the privatization for profit of home care services will in fact have a negative impact on the quality of services.

In 1992, in British Columbia, there was a study that was conducted in which it talked about the yearly turnover rates of home care workers. It showed a 50 percent turnover rate for workers in the private sector, a 37 percent for nonprofit sector and a 32 percent for the unionized sector.

My question to the minister is, will the minister not agree that under his system there will be a higher yearly turnover as a direct result of the privatization for profit of home care workers?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable member uses, when it comes to policy making, the well-known and not-so-well-respected crystal-ball method, Madam Speaker. We have some objectives to achieve and in achieving those objectives we have—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, to complete his response.

Mr. McCrae: In efforts to achieve those objectives, we have invited the private sector, the nonprofit sector, the profit sector, we have even invited the Manitoba Government Employees' Union to put forward a bid themselves to provide services. So if the honourable member's concern is to make sure that the Manitoba Government Employees' Union remains involved in some way, he might encourage them to take advantage of the offer that has been made.

In fact, we have gone further than that. The honourable member is in favour of an uneven playing field in these matters, Madam Speaker, and he has made that very clear. He wants special treatment for somebody who is not making any profits and he has made that very clear. He is an honest politician. He has said, we want an unlevel playing field in that particular marketplace, and we are providing assistance to the MGEU should they wish to access that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health.

Will he, at the very least, acknowledge that the privatization for profit will see a higher worker turnover on a yearly basis and that in turn is going to have a negative impact on the quality of home care services that are being provided for our No. 1 concern, being the client?

Mr. McCrae: I have warned the honourable member about this, but he chooses to ignore my warning. I mean,

he is getting very, very close to the NDP officials position, which is, go back to the system we had in the first place.

Madam Speaker, the system we had in the first place, while a very good system, is not good enough. It is not efficient enough; it is not responsive enough. How many times has Vera Chernecki said to me, your Home Care program is not responsive. Now, all of a sudden, oh, it is responsive, do not fix anything because it is not broken. The honourable member is wrong about that. All he has to do is read the tons and tons of studies that I have delivered to him. If he read those, he would know that there are some things that we can improve around here.

Privatization—Moratorium

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, will the minister at least acknowledge that there may be solutions that he has yet to have explored, and that a 12-month moratorium on this process is indeed in the best interests of the clients, the health care workers and individual Manitobans who have an interest in this particular issue? What, can the minister tell us, does this government have to lose by putting it off by one year? What does this government have to lose other than possibly—

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

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Well, it comes as a breath of fresh air to hear the honourable member for Inkster suggest that there are creative options that we can look at, and I do appreciate that. Just to say, go back to the system we had in the first place, which is official NDP policy, does not cut it. It does not cut it with honourable members on this side of the House and it certainly does not cut it with the clients of our home care system who have been telling us through the appeal panel for home care and through other mechanisms, certainly through mail to me and maybe to honourable members—although all of a sudden that mail has just disappeared; there are no problems in the home care system all of a sudden—but it is nice to hear the honourable member for Inkster say that there are opportunities for change and for improvements, and that

is exactly what we are embarked on. We will see improvements in our home care system.

* * *

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, in our final Question Period last week, I urged the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to act personally to help resolve the home care dispute before leaving the country for 10 days. Unfortunately, the Premier did not, and we are stuck where, on a day-in, day-out basis, we see just how much chaos we have in health care, particularly with this minister who here again in Question Period has refused to answer any questions about home care.

The people of Manitoba cannot wait, and if it takes adjourning this House to give this government the ability to get its shambles of a government in order, I would move, notwithstanding our rule, section 30—I move, seconded by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), that this House is now adjourned.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. A motion has been moved. The motion moved by the honourable member for Thompson is not in order according to our Rule 30.(2). A motion to adjourn the House shall not be made until the Orders of the Day have been entered upon.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

* (1410)

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

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

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please rise.

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

Yeas

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

Nays

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

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 31, Nays 21.

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair is accordingly sustained.

* (1510)

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Adjournment Motion

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. If the honourable member for Inkster's matter of privilege relates to a matter that has just taken place, I will hear it now; otherwise, there is ten minutes of Question Period remaining and we will deal with the grievance at the completion of Question Period.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, according to Beauchesne's Citation No. 33, it states that "the most

fundamental privilege of the House as a whole is to establish rules of procedure for itself and to enforce them." In our general rules on page 19, 30.(2), it states "A motion to adjourn the House shall not be made until the Orders of the Day have been entered upon."

Madam Speaker, on page 74 of our rule book it states: There are privileges of the House as well as of members individually. Wilful disobedience to orders and rules of Parliament in the exercise of its constitutional functions, insults and obstructions during debate are breaches of the privileges of the House.

Madam Speaker, I would refer to Beauchesne's Citation 1: "The principles of Canadian parliamentary law are: To protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority; to secure the transaction of public business in an orderly manner, to enable every Member to express opinions within limits necessary to preserve decorum and prevent an unnecessary waste of time"

I do believe that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), being the opposition House leader, is fully aware of the rules and fully aware of the vote and what actually was being proposed. It was just the other day when the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) asked the committee to have a recess. The minister, on several occasions, stood up and said, in the name of our clients—and I do not have the Hansard, did not have the opportunity to get some of the actual quotations but in essence it was a personal appeal from the Minister of Health to recess so that the government could attempt to get some sort of an essential services agreement.

We disagreed back then with the recess primarily because we did not feel that the government had any good intentions on going back to the bargaining table and providing some sort of an incentive. If at any point in time we as a Liberal caucus felt that the government was sincere and was going to—if we provided a recess or if we were to have an adjournment that the home care services strike would come to an end, we would be more than happy to facilitate that. We would be more than happy to do that. We do not believe that is going to be the case.

What we have seen over the last number of weeks is a lot of frustration. I too have experienced some of that frustration in questioning this government, as the New

Democratic Party has. We share in the frustration. The Minister of Health will say that he too experienced frustration. Ultimately, what we believe is that we can do a better service to our home care clients, the home care workers and those Manitobans who are watching this issue so very closely if in fact we continue the debate on the home care services, continue to attempt to frustrate the government into finding that it is moving in the wrong direction.

But to move a motion which the New Democrats know is completely out of order has, in essence, used up an hour of the legislative agenda. I know the government and the opposition were trying to get us as a Liberal caucus or informing us that they would like to have additional Estimates time. They are talking about taking away time from private members' hour, something that we have done in the past, in order to allow for more Estimates time so that we would be able to deal with more of the department. Why? Because we are running low on Estimates. We are going to be adjourning on June 6, according to our new rules, so we are running low on time. Time is very important. Time is very scarce inside this Chamber.

There was an attempt, and we can attempt to do it in the committee, in terms of trying to get a recess. There are many different ways in which we can move motions, but to do it in the way that we saw an hour ago, I and my Liberal colleagues do not believe that was the best use of the scarce time.

I would ultimately argue that right after Question Period we are going to be going into the Health Estimates. There is no doubt going to be votes that will occur with regard to the Minister of Health's salary, quite possibly. I do not want to indicate our intentions, at least at this time, Madam Speaker, but there is a more appropriate time, a time in which we will be able to continue on in terms of lobbying. Yes, we might still continue to get somewhat frustrated, and likewise the New Democrats, but let us not waste what scarce time—when the government House leader asks the Liberal Party or asks the Liberal members in terms of leave to allow us to have Estimates during Thursdays, how do I justify putting up very important private members' business when in fact we just sat through an hour which has chewed off two hours of the Estimates time?

So having said that, Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), that the Speaker take this motion under advisement and report back to the House.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, first of all, I must indicate that I think the Liberal member, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), was trying to justify the position they took in a vote that just took place, and that is not the subject of a matter of privilege. In fact, the motion itself is somewhat difficult to understand because he is asking that you take a motion under advisement and the motion is to take a motion under advisement. It really lacks some clarity. If the real intent of the matter of privilege was to raise why we did what we did today, I think it is very clear to all Manitobans that there is chaos with this government. We have a major crisis in health care and there is chaos with this government.

We have risen in Question Period day in, day out. We saw, again, we got no answers from the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), none. We asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon)—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that he should be speaking to the matter of privilege that was raised by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

The honourable member for Thompson, to address the matter of privilege.

* (1520)

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, indeed, we are very concerned about putting remarks on the record about this, because we took an extraordinary step today because we feel that this is a government in chaos. We asked on Thursday, before the Premier (Mr. Filmon) left for an international trip of 10 days, we asked the Premier to get involved to help resolve the home care situation. That did not happen. We asked repeatedly in Question Period today, time and time again, for the minister to answer questions to deal with it. If there is a crisis over there, a crisis of leadership, and if it takes adjourning the House for today to give them time to get that in order, we believe that is time well worth spending.

I have seen political issues come and go, but I have never seen a case where it has been more clear from the public. You know, it is not just the home care workers, not just home care clients, but virtually everybody in this province, except for the 31 members of the government benches, knows that the plan to privatize home care is wrong and should be withdrawn.

By the way, if it means, as someone who has a great deal of respect for the rules, that I ask notwithstanding as I did earlier that we adjourn the House, if it means having votes, we will do whatever we can in opposition, but there is only one group of people that is blocking a settlement of the home care dispute. It is the Premier—when he is here—and the remaining 31 government members. The message we have for the government, and perhaps the Liberal member confused that, the message we have on behalf of the people of Manitoba is, settle the home care dispute, stop the privatization.

Madam Speaker: A matter of privilege is a very serious matter and I am reviewing the motion put by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I would appreciate the co-operation of all honourable members in the House.

The motion in question, and I will read it, was moved by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), that the Speaker take this motion under advisement and report back to the House.

The motion that I have just reread into the record is out of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I just provided the Clerk another written motion. If I can have the piece of paper back, I will be more than happy to read that into the record.

Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member for The Maples, that this matter be taken into consideration by the Speaker and report back to the House.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I ruled the initial motion out of order, and the honourable member for Inkster wishes to pursue his matter of privilege and has

moved a new motion which reads: It has been moved by the honourable member for Inkster, seconded by the honourable member for The Maples, that this matter be taken into consideration by the Speaker and report back to the House.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Just on a point of order, the member moved a motion that you indicated was not in order. Is he now rising on a new matter of privilege to be able to move the subsequent motion?

Madam Speaker: My understanding is that it is a new motion on the same matter of privilege.

I will indeed take this motion under advisement and report back to the House.

Home Care Program Labour Dispute—Resolution

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, we have—on Question Period?

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, we are resuming Question Period and there is 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, if the government does not want to follow up on what we are offering, I would like to ask—since I did ask this question of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) before he left on his overseas trip whether he would get involved—whoever on that side of the House is going to be in charge of this critical situation for the remaining part of this week, what instructions the Premier gave to any one of them in terms of this matter, or do we have to wait now for the Premier to return from an overseas trip before we can get any resolution of this critical issue?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, I rise on two counts. One is to say that this government is fully in charge of the issue which is before us, and that is to make sure that the home care clients are fully looked after, the responsible position that this government has taken from Day One, unlike the members opposite. I get equally as upset with the member for Thompson who keeps breaking the rules of this House

and making reference to our Premier who is out of the country getting a very well-deserved award.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, our Premier is getting and receiving a special recognition of which the members of this House, I would think, would take under advisement—[interjection] That is right—and take some pride in the fact that we have a Manitoban being honoured in the manner in which he is being honoured. I take objection to the continued reference being made to the fact that the Premier is in some way not looking after his responsibilities. He is doing what is absolutely expected of him.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the member suggested I had broken the rules. I made reference before the Premier left. I made no reference to his immediate presence or absence today, and the award, by the way, for the Deputy Premier, is not part of the trip. There are other important aspects.

I asked what is going to happen and why this matter was not settled before the Premier did leave, Madam Speaker, and that I believe is not only in order, it is something in the public interest for the people of Manitoba to know.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson, on the point of order, I will take it under advisement. I will review the context in which it was said in Hansard and report back to the House.

* (1530)

Home Care Program Labour Dispute—Resolution

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, this government is causing a crisis in health care. This home care strike has disrupted the entire system for admitting people into personal care homes, nursing homes and hospital access.

I want to ask on behalf of two women who have contacted me—one woman with MS is in her 30s and is in a nursing home against her will, and another woman in her 80s has no home care and is in her home and wishes to be in a nursing home. I want to ask on behalf of those

women and many others if this Minister of Health will not respect the dignity of home care clients and the dignity of home care workers and end the strike.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, how dare honourable members opposite rise in their places every day and make reference to the dignity of the clients of our home care system when they totally support the union in withdrawing services from the very same people they claim to be speaking for, people with multiple sclerosis, for example, people who are functionally dependent on home care services. Honourable members opposite though—total withdrawal of services from them. How dare they rise in their places.

Home Care Program Labour Dispute—Impact on Patients

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

I want to quote from a letter that we received concerning what he calls the home care fiasco. He further states that the inhumane treatment recently extended to the elderly, the sick, the disabled and certainly to the orderlies is heartless and cruel beyond belief.

Madam Speaker, what answer does the minister have for this senior who feels betrayed by this government?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Despicable though it may have seemed for the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), it is incomprehensible that the honourable member for St. James should rise to ask that question, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question: What is the minister going to say to this letter which was written to the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) which states: I have always supported the Filmon government, but now I am disappointed, embarrassed, ashamed and disgusted?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, we have been consistent since before this labour dispute began that we wanted the clients of our home care system, especially those requiring essential services, to get them even if there had to be a labour dispute. I understand that people's philosophies can be different, and the members opposite

along with the union bosses have made it very clear that this is a philosophical matter, nothing to do with clients. Now they come along at this stage claiming they are speaking for the clients.

Well, is this not something new, and what have they done about it? We talked during the question of privilege about my repeated requests for a recess. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) got it wrong. The reason for my wanting a recess was so that the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) could use his considerable powers of persuasion with the union bosses to help bring about some kind of essential services and arrangement for our clients. Today they refused to do that, and today they line up and rise and ask questions on behalf of those same clients. Shame on them.

Home Care Program Labour Dispute—Impact on Patients

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): My question is for the Minister of Health. An elderly home care client from Flin Flon told me last Saturday, and I quote: These are supposed to be my golden years, but this government is intent on mining them out.

When will the minister respond positively not only to this northern home care client but to the thousands of other clients who know that privatization of home care will have many, many negative consequences for the clients and their families?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The future of most health care delivery, according to the recommendation of the Northern and Rural Health Advisory Council as accepted and as we are now implementing, will be the responsibility of the regional health committees.

The honourable member rises on behalf of a home care client in Flin Flon. There is no contracting out going on in Flin Flon. There is no competition. There has been no change. So all the honourable member has to do is urge that his colleagues, his friends in the union movement, go to work and look after the clients who need them rather than bringing their complaint of the client to this Chamber. Where was he when we needed him? We needed him not to allow this strike to happen in the first place.

Home Care Program Labour Dispute—Impact on Patients

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, a letter dated May 6 from the president of the Kildonan council of seniors, I quote: Private citizens or corporations who provide home care do so with only one objective in view, that of selling a service for profit. We emphatically believe that making a profit from ill health or disabilities of Manitoba citizens is obscene.

I ask the honourable minister, please reply to this.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The greatest obscenity of the last four weeks has been the position of honourable members in the New Democratic Party who have consistently put the interests of their union-boss friends ahead of those of the clients of the home care system.

Home Care Program Labour Dispute—Impact on Patients

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): My question is for the Minister of Health. I want to quote from a letter from Joyce and Bill Ginter of Morris concerning home care. They state that under no circumstances should this service provide profits for a private agency. They also state that in their opinion home care should remain a publicly funded care agency which provides dependable quality service to Manitobans.

Will the minister do the right thing and listen to the users and the public, people like Joyce and Bill Ginter, on home care?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Quite contrary to the implication in the honourable member's question, home care services will continue to be publicly funded.

Home Care Program Privatization—Service Rates

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): My question is for the Minister of Health.

One of my constituents is in a wheelchair and requires three visits a day from home care workers. During the

home care strike she was informed by the Minister of Health that she could pay an agency \$25 for each visit, but if she found an attendant herself, an unemployed nurse, for example, she might only pay that person \$8.70.

Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Health whether that is still his policy and how he explains the \$16.30 difference.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. McCrae: Well, thank you, but I had not started, Madam Speaker. The honourable member has asked a question about comparative rates for service, and because there was a bit of activity, I did not catch the total drift of the question. Maybe she could repeat it for me.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, to repeat her question.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, my question deals with a constituent of mine who is in a wheelchair and requires three visits a day from home care workers. During the strike she was told by the Ministry of Health that she could hire an agency at \$25 a visit but that if she found a worker herself, an unemployed nurse, for example, she would only be allowed to pay them \$8.70.

My question for the minister is, is this still his policy and, if so, how does he account for the difference of \$16.30 for the same service?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, with regard to the specifics of the honourable member's question, I would be happy to review that situation so that I can make a response that will be appropriately responsive to the question being asked. Perhaps this would not have come up at all if there had been no strike. It was never our wish that there be one. In fact, we would have thought it more appropriate for a union to have an idea of what the government was putting on the table before they decided to have a strike vote. The decision about a strike was made before the government's position was even known.

At this late date, however, it would be my fervent hope that clear heads would prevail and that the parties would work out an agreement that would be appropriate, with the first priority being the needs of the clients for whom honourable members claim to be speaking today.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1540)

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On May 1, 1996, during Question Period a point of order was raised by the government House leader concerning words spoken by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I took the matter under advisement to peruse Hansard. The words in question were not spoken while the honourable member for Thompson had the floor, but while speaking to the government House leader's point of order, the member for Thompson did acknowledge having made comments about an individual.

Hansard shows that what was said by "An Honourable Member" was: "This person had inside knowledge." While speaking to the point of order, the honourable member for Thompson stated, "I suggested that someone who was the campaign manager for the Premier might have some inside knowledge about what is going on in that government." The government House leader raising the point of order characterized the comments as allegations that were totally inappropriate.

I believe what we have is two different perspectives on the same set of circumstances; one member believes one thing and another member believes another. Beauchesne Citation 494 states that there are occasions when the House may have to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident. I believe this is one of those times. There is no point of order.

Having ruled on the matter, I would like, however, to draw to the attention of the House, Citation 493.(4) of Beauchesne which cautions that great care should be taken by members while making statements about persons who are outside the House and unable to reply. I would encourage all honourable members to do this.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Honorary Peacekeeping Award—St. James Collegiate

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to inform the members about a very special group of young people from St. James Collegiate.

As the members know, many Canadians dedicate a good deal of their lives to the effort of helping people from countries that are not as fortunate as ours. Through these peacekeeping missions, Canada has earned a positive reputation and the gratitude of people the world over. Yet, too often these Canadians do not always receive the type of recognition in their homeland as they do abroad. That is why the efforts of a group of Senior 1 French students from the St. James Collegiate is so notable.

Under the initiative of their teacher, Ms. Triolo, these students began a letter-writing campaign to our Canadian peacekeepers in Bosnia. These letters kept our Canadian troops informed of the news from Canada and Manitoba, as well as providing the moral encouragement needed under the trying circumstances in which they served.

Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of attending a ceremony that recognized the contribution that these young Canadians have made to the peacekeeping effort. Under the order of Major-General Clive Addy, Commander of the Land Forces Western Area, Ms. Triolo and her students were presented with the Honorary Peacekeeping Award.

It is important that our young people understand and appreciate the sacrifices that our Canadian peacekeepers have made and continue to make for the benefit of our country and those around the world. While it often seems that we cannot make a difference to the effort when we are so far away, this group of young people have shown that a difference can indeed be made. These students have set an example, not just for the young people of our province, but indeed for all Manitobans.

I applaud the initiative of Ms. Triolo and her class, and I continue to encourage and support all Canadians who are serving abroad. Their efforts are truly appreciated. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Day Prix Awards Louis Riel Statue

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to invite all members of the House to join with me, and indeed with all Manitobans, in recognizing Manitoba Day which was celebrated yesterday, Sunday, May 12, a nice synchronicity, I think, that on the same day we celebrated our province's birthday and Mother's Day. They are our public and personal heritages.

Yesterday was Manitoba's official 126th birthday, an occasion which gives us pause to reflect on the richness and diversity of our heritage, culturally, ethnically, linguistically, spiritually. As well, Manitoba Day affords us the chance to meditate on the present and imagine the future.

Last week, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer) presented the Prix Awards which honours individuals and groups for their contributions to heritage and recreation. On behalf of my caucus, I congratulate the recipients.

Yesterday the Metis people unveiled a statue of Louis Riel honouring this father of Confederation and this father of Manitoba. Members on this side of the House join with the community in celebrating Louis Riel.

At this time, at this crossroads in our nation's history, we desperately need commitment and leadership. If our country is to survive as a nation, the courage, morality, tenacity and creativity which distinguish creative leadership are essential. Let us remember that we are both Manitobans and Canadians and that we wish to keep it this way.

Madam Speaker, it needs to be said that Manitoba Day, May 12, is a created tradition, a European-Canadian tradition. This tradition recognizes 126 years of history, but aboriginal people can celebrate some 12,000 years of history in Manitoba. So let us be encompassing and farsighted, even curious. Let us honour the Manitoba history of aboriginal people by making personal commitments to learn about this history, for to know is to understand.

Finally, let us remember that the Manitoba flag now waves over a staggering diversity of peoples, that the fabric of our province is woven from many different strands, aboriginal, European, Asian, Caribbean, to name a few. As we live with one another and exchange ideas, culture, language, customs, as we intermarry and share a common humanity, we are developing a new spirit of understanding and multiculturalism.

We see this especially in our schools—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. As much as I regret, I have to do this. I believe I have been very lenient. The honourable member has been speaking for in excess of two minutes.

Reach for the Top—Kelvin High School

Mr. Mike Radcliffe (River Heights): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to draw the attention of this House to a significant achievement by Kelvin High School's Reach for the Top team. The Kelvin team, represented by Paul Hesse, Ben Singer, Billie Coish and Josh Drury, finished second in the provincial Reach for the Top championships held recently. As a result of their efforts, these students will be participating at the national Reach for the Top championship in Toronto later this month, along with the first-place team from Pinawa Secondary School.

At the national tournament, both teams will be representing our province against the best Reach for the Top teams from the nation. I would ask all honourable members to join me in congratulating these assiduous young people on their success in the provincial Reach for the Top tournament and in wishing them all the best as they represent Manitoba in exemplary fashion at the national tournament in Toronto later this month. Thank you.

Employment Standards for Youth

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I want to raise the issue of the enforcement of employment standards for youth today. It has been drawn to my attention by a number of young people that although we do not have child labour as many other countries do, we still have a number of young people in our province who are being taken advantage of in the workplace. In Manitoba, we

have a requirement of a work permit for young people under the age of 16 who are working. We do not have a very good system of enforcing that employers require the work permit, and we do not really know how many young people are working who are underage.

We also know that many young people are working more than 20 hours per week while being full-time students, and they are pressured to work more hours than they would like to and that this is affecting their academic studies. Young people are still being taken advantage of because they do not know that they are entitled to overtime pay, to vacation pay, entitled to a ride home when they work past 12 a.m. They do not know that they are entitled to having an emergency work plan for when they are working alone.

They are often told to work extra hours, and they are intimidated by the threat of being fired and told that there are many other people that would gladly have their jobs if they do not wish to comply with their employers' demands. Young people are often told that their probation period is greater than 30 days, is actually 90 days, and this makes them vulnerable of being fired without notice. They are not aware of where to turn in these situations, or they are not aware that they have the right to complain. Harassment and discrimination also face many young people in the workforce, and we know that 90 percent of women at some time in their life will be sexually harassed in their workplace.

In response to this, I have prepared a pamphlet, *Your Rights, Your Job*, which I will make available to Manitoba young people to try and address these problems.

* (1550)

Canada Pension Plan

Mr. David Newman (Riel): Madam Speaker, I stand to speak on the future of Canada's social insurance plan, founded in 1966. This social insurance plan provides retirement disability survivor and death benefit and has been financed by a dedicated payroll tax for 30 years. For 20 years, the payroll tax was 3.6 percent of earnings up to \$35,400, less a \$3,500 exemption. The plan was designed to be financed by a maximum tax of 5.5 percent in perpetuity.

Increased benefits, especially in the 1970s, investment policy, lack of accurate foresight, failure to act in a timely way to correct an apparent lack of sustainability and pending intergenerational inequity in the '80s and '90s so far has resulted in a challenging situation which must be addressed now. Transparent, timely, wise and effective action is overdue.

As of January 1996, we began paying a 5.6 percent payroll tax to support this plan. This is in excess of the projected maximum of 5.5 percent. Finance ministers in this country predict we must pay 14.2 percent by the year 2030 or soon begin a steady rate of over 10 percent with changes to the plan as well. We have a challenge, Madam Speaker. The increase means a payroll tax of at least 4.4 percent more now and year after year or a progressive increase of up to 8.8 percent or more by 2030. Will our sons, daughters and grandchildren want to pay these combined rates with their employers? Will the 81,000-plus sole proprietors in the province of Manitoba and employees and small businesses want to pay this tax?

Madam Speaker, an information paper for consultations on the Canada Pension Plan is available. Please, honourable members, study this, make your submissions to the ministers of Finance in this country. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a few matters of House business. When the House agreed last Thursday to change an Estimates procedure with respect to this coming Thursday, I neglected to suggest, I believe, there is a willingness of the House to cancel all activities on Friday of this week.

Madam Speaker: Is there willingness of the House not to sit on Friday?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, in order to accommodate the third committee sitting on Thursday, I will need leave

to introduce several motions adjusting the rules to compensate for the third committee. Do I have leave?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable government House leader have leave to adjust the rules to accommodate a third section of supply on Thursday?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Leave.

Mr. Ernst: I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings),

THAT when the Committee of Supply is sitting in three sections at this session, (a) to interpret the term "both sections (of the Committee of Supply)" in subrules 74.(12) and (13) and subrule 75.(1) to mean "all sections (of that committee)"; (b) to interpret the term "Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson of the Committee" in subrule 74.(16) to mean "the Chairperson of a section of the Committee"; and (c) to interpret the term "the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson of the Committee of Supply" in subrule 74.(17) to mean "the Chairperson of a section of the Committee of Supply".

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, I wonder if I might have leave to nominate a Chairperson for the third Committee of Supply.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable government House leader have leave to nominate a Chairperson for the third section of Committee of Supply?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Ernst: I move, Madam Speaker, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) be appointed the Chairperson of the third Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, I wonder if I might have leave to nominate a Chairperson for the third Committee of Supply.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable government House leader have leave to nominate a Chairperson for the third section of Committee of Supply?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Leave? Leave has been granted.

Mr. Ernst: I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) be appointed the Chairperson of the third Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, in order to accommodate that, I will have to make changes to the order of Estimates, but I have not yet had a chance to discuss that with the opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton), so we will have to do that at a later time.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, with the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) in the Chair for the Department of Education and Training; and the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Health.

* (1600)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of

Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. When the committee was last considering the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, it had been considering item 4.(h)(1) on page 39 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

16.4.(h) Apprenticeship and Workforce 2000 (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,458,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,317,400—pass.

4.(j) Stevenson Aviation Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$325,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$443,300—pass.

Resolution 16.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$38,970,600 for Education and Training, Training and Advanced Education, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

16.5. Support to Schools. 5.(a) Schools Finance (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$824,300.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Chairman, I understand there has to be a change of staff at the moment, so we are moving into another section. Does the minister want to take a couple of minutes to do that, or how do we want to proceed here?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Did you want to do a section while waiting for the staff to come?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, well, I can put some of the questions, but they may be detailed enough to need staff.

Mrs. McIntosh: Why do you not just start asking the questions, and then if I need further detail we can wait until the deputy arrives?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I would like to know from the minister some of the new sums that are going to private schools in Manitoba. In particular, could the minister tell us what is the amount of funding that is going to St. Mary's and St. Paul's this year?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the deputy for this level is on his way, and I do not know the school-by-school

breakdown. I am not sure that he will know when he gets here without paper, but we could probably obtain that if we do not have it here. I do not happen to have it with me at the moment.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, well, perhaps we can wait until he gets here. That is fine.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you very much. It is fairly easy to extrapolate in that we know the amount per pupil given; and, if you know the number of pupils in the school, it is usually easy to work it out. But I will wait till he gets here and see if that detail is already on the paper that he has.

Maybe, while we are waiting, the member had indicated or had asked the other day what connection I might have seen between the rights of denominational schools and the rights of linguistic groups at the time that Manitoba was formed. I had indicated I thought there were several parallels that could be drawn. I have some excerpts here I would like—there is one that I think is particularly good. It is to question the right—it is a quote that I am reading, Mr. Chairman, and I will get a copy of this for tabling. I do not have a copy right now. The quote is: To question the rights of Roman Catholics to a public-supported school system as well as questioning the official status of the French language in the province was tantamount to challenging the very basis of Confederation. Language and school rights had seemed to be entrenched in the Manitoba Act and had been accepted as the norm for years.

There is a long section. This book is called *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, and it has historical references linking the two, as I had indicated, in the terms of the way people felt about the issues. In terms of their perceptions of the importance of them, they were, according to this author, tied fairly tightly together. So I can have copies of that tabled for the member as one historical writer who backs up the position that I put forward. I know the member had questioned this as well in Question Period. I think this backs up the position that I was taking quite nicely. So, maybe, I could get some copies of this, and I will table it for the member.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, what the minister is doing is in fact saying there is a perception, and the quote argues that there is a perception. But she had also

maintained, I believe, in the House and in interviews with the press that, if they are reporting correctly, there was, in fact, a parallel in constitutional issues. That was my question to the minister. What is the connection in constitutional terms?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, what I had indicated was that there was, in the minds of the people who had followed these issues, a definite linkage, and that was made clear—and I think if the member reads my answer in Hansard from Question Period, for example, it will be crystal clear—that I am talking about a parallel, I am talking about an analogy, I am talking about the importance and significance of the issue in people's minds. I think it will be quite clear if she reads it, and, as I say, that particular writer supports my position that there is a parallel, there is a sense that the history of independent schools or denominational school and language rights are intertwined in the minds of historians and people, unlike other issues that have come up in education since. But, anyhow, the member had asked me what background I might have. I just simply put that forward as one writer who supports this view.

Ms. Friesen: Let us try and make this clear at this stage. Does the minister believe that there is a constitutional obligation on the part of Manitoba that exists that has been demonstrated for the public support of private schools?

Mrs. McIntosh: As I indicated to the member, Manitoba's entrance into Confederation had some understandings about independent schools or nondenominational and denominational schools, and those it was deemed had been violated by the government some 20 years later. That violation had been challenged by the more recent independent schools, specifically, the Roman Catholic schools, as violating their rights. To avoid the litigation that would have stemmed from such a case—with experts saying that the case was not one that we could guarantee winning—we settled for an out-of-court settlement which, of course, is exactly what the NDP had proposed in writing as the way to deal with it.

As the member knows, I had tabled in the House documentation from the NDP cabinet minister under Mr. Pawley saying that a political solution was the way to go. Subsequently, NDP minister is saying that it was important to move to an agreement that would see

funding provided by agreement to the independent schools from the government, and, of course, the original document which was signed by the government of Manitoba under Premier Schreyer indicated that all Manitobans had the right to the school of their choice other than a state school, and that education should be provided free to all in the kindergarten to Grade 8, and that the NDP would enact legislation, if necessary, to ensure that those rights for our people to make those schools of choice decisions for schools run by the state or not run by the state would be guaranteed.

So with all of those in mind, when I indicate that I believe that a parallel can be drawn between the language question, which has a specific constitutional guarantee, and the nondenominational/denominational school question, which has an understanding—not exactly the same but powerful in the minds of people—that those two are similar in a way that other school or education decisions have not been.

* (1610)

The member had asked me if I had anybody who could back that up, and that is why I submitted the little reading that I just did which draws exactly the same kind of analogy that I was indicating. I will just quote again that to question the rights of Roman Catholics regarding schooling, et cetera, as well as questioning the official status of the French language, was tantamount to challenging the very basis of Confederation, because language and school rights had seemed to be entrenched in The Manitoba Act and had been accepted as the norm for 20 years. That is almost word for word, the position that I have been taking on this, and that is the answer I give to her question just now. I just submit it to show that one writer who wrote *The Canadian Prairies: A History* does echo those thoughts that I have presented on several occasions.

The two situations, of course, are not identical but they are analogous, and they do have parallel feelings and perceptions. It was on that basis that the Roman Catholic schools felt they could proceed into the court system.

Ms. Friesen: What the minister has tabled is a paragraph giving the historical context and explanation for the challenge of the new Ontario settlers in 1890 to

the Manitoba schools issue. I want to repeat my question to the minister. Does the minister believe that there is a constitutional obligation on the part of Manitoba to fund independent schools?

Mrs. McIntosh: I have read the one paragraph, but, of course, there is much more than just the one paragraph in this book by Gerald Friesen, who has written the *Canadian Prairies: A History*. There are several pages, I believe, that have been copied. I have zeroed in on the one paragraph that indicates the specific response to the question that she had put to me. At any rate, I would indicate to her that it is the government's perception that it was wiser to come to an out-of-court settlement than to run the risk of the question she has just posed being decided by a higher authority, because there were some who felt that, in a situation like that, Manitoba would not end up freed from the obligation to fund independent schools. I guess all we can say is that we abide by our legal opinion and follow what we believe is the best course of action to settle things in a fair and balanced way that will not see a ruling handed down that could be, to the majority of Manitobans, a very expensive ruling indeed.

The deputy is here now, and he does have the figures that the member was requesting. For '95-96, she was asking about St. Mary's Academy. In fact, I can table the whole list if the member is interested. St. Mary's Academy received \$1,340,038.98; St. Paul's, \$1,313,278. Those are both schools, of course, with Roman Catholic origins. She may be interested to know that Ramah Hebrew School, for example, received \$762,193.50. The Oholei Tora School received \$41,799.50. The Mennonite Collegiate Institute received \$265,818. The Lakeside Christian Academy received \$70,756. Immanuel Christian academy received \$421,144.50; Immaculate Heart of Mary School, \$534,202.50; Holy Ghost School, \$574,805; Holy Cross School, \$799,508.50. The Christ the King School received \$402,198. Bethel Christian Academy, of course, is a nonfunded school. Carman Christian academy is a nonfunded school. Those schools received zero dollars. Christian Heritage academy in Winnipeg received zero dollars. The Early Childhood Education Centre received zero dollars. The Greenbank school received zero dollars. Faith Academy received \$557,105.50. The Killarney Christian academy received zero dollars. The Monsignor James McIssac School

received \$335,538. The Shady Lane School received zero dollars. The Shamrock School received zero dollars. The Steinbach Bible College received \$322,245. The Springs of Living Water Christian school received \$726,712. St. Alphonsus School received \$568,802.50. St. Boniface Diocesan School received \$616,679. St. Charles Academy, a Roman Catholic school, received \$482,014, and so on. There is St. Edward's, St. Emile's, St. Gerard, St. Ignatius, St. John Brebeuf. St. John's Cathedral Boys' School received nothing, and I believe it is closed now, is it? Is it still functioning? It got zero dollars.

Ms. Friesen: It has been closed for some time.

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes. It is one that is not on here. That is why it received no dollars. Actually, I think St. John's Cathedral Boys' School never did receive any dollars, because its teachers, at least in the early days, were not certified; and, as you know, no independent school can apply for funding unless they first hire Manitoba certified teachers, abide by the Manitoba curriculum and take our assessment exams, et cetera. If they do not do those things, they receive no dollars whatsoever from the province. I believe St. John's Cathedral Boys' School, when it first started up, was hiring chemists to teach chemistry and medical doctors to teach biology. They were using people in the occupations to teach the subject areas; they were not necessarily certified teachers.

* (1620)

St. John's-Ravenscourt received \$1,441,466.26. St. Joseph the Worker received \$405,291. St. Mary's Academy, I have given you already. St. Maurice School received \$897,206. St. Vladimir College, \$42,182. The Talmud Torah-II Peretz School, one of the Jewish schools, received \$279,916. The King's Christian school, \$336,161. The Laureate Academy, which is a specialized school for students who have specialized learning desires and needs, and it is taught by experts in that area, received \$378,879. The Torah Academy, another of our Jewish schools, received no dollars. The University of Winnipeg Collegiate, \$857,399.10. The Western Christian College, Westgate Mennonite school, the Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary, the Zion Christian Academy, et cetera, were all similarly funded according to their students to the tune of \$2,466 per student, or approximately 42 percent of what is spent on the public

schools in Manitoba, which are not permitted by law to have the Christian or Jewish or faith elements that these schools I have just read.

I have not read them all, but the majority of our schools, as the member knows, are religious based, 83 percent of them, and the others have things about them that are also not able to be offered in the public system by law. For example, we have St. Mary's Academy, the member asked about, which is an all-girls school, and St. Paul's is an all-boys school. So we are not permitted by law to designate schools and prohibit one gender from attending; but, if they go for independent status, they can, of course, do that, provided they are willing to pay more and receive less funding than the public schools do.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister tabling that document of the funding paid to private schools issue?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to table this. I only have the one copy, but maybe the Clerk could provide copies. It lists all of the independent schools and what school division they are in. The member might be interested in looking at her own or the school that visited us today, Joseph Wolinsky, which was in the riding of the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). In fact, most of these schools are in opposition-held ridings. We always think it is such a shame that the opposition does not support them receiving funding from the public.

Ms. Friesen: The numbers that the minister has just tabled, I want to make sure that these are for the '96-97 academic year.

Mrs. McIntosh: No, those are for the year that we are in, the '95-96 year. We will not know the figures for the '96-97 year until we know the enrollments for the '96-97 year, which, of course, we will not know until that year begins in September.

Ms. Friesen: The '95-96 year, then, was based upon an 11 percent increase to the private schools that was awarded last year as part of the past agreement that the government had reached with the private schools. Could the minister tell me whether that past agreement included the amount for Level I, II and III of special needs? Did it include the textbook allotment? What is included in the amount that the minister has tabled?

Mrs. McIntosh: The numbers that I have given you—and you had asked specifically about St. Mary's Academy and St. Paul's? The number I gave you for St. Mary's Academy is \$1,340,038.98. That includes the basic funding of \$2,466 per student, and that \$2,466 includes the Level I funding. On top of that, included as well in this amount, but on top of the \$2,466, are the monies for Level II and Level III students, who are assessed on a case-by-case basis just as they are in the public system. The cost of materials and everything, same as with the public system, is decided exactly the same way.

So to sum up again, just in case I was not clear enough, they receive the per capita, and the per capita they receive is \$2,466 per student. The Level I funding is included in that \$2,466, just as it is in the capital grant for public schools. They then, on a case-by-case basis, as with the public schools, have their Level II and Level III students assessed, and they are funded accordingly. Their textbooks and materials are provided in the same manner the public schools are.

The total amount for this year for St. Mary's Academy, which includes Levels I, II and III and all those things, is this \$1,340,000. So those amounts you see on the paper I have given you would include all of the grant. If you take a look at the Laureate Academy, for example, which has fifty-six Level I students or something like that, you will see that included in their amount is their Level I funding.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister also table a list of the enrollments in '95-96 in private schools?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, I do have the information. I can indicate that I have the figures for the total enrollment, the full-time equivalent enrollment and the funded enrollment. In Albright School, for example, there are 16 students in total: 15 of them are full-time equivalent; 15 of them are funded. You will find, in the Christ the King School, there is a total of 176 students, full-time equivalent 148 students, and the funded number of students is 148. So the listing goes down. I think you will find that most of the—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. A formal vote has been requested by two members in the Chamber. The committee will now proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

* (1600)

HEALTH

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please.

This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates in the Department of Health. We are on Resolution 21.1, Administration and Finance, Minister's Salary.

At this time, I would just like to update us on our rulings from the past.

On May 7, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), respecting remarks by the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), which he claimed were not relevant to the issue at hand.

I have reviewed Hansard and conclude that the honourable minister's remarks were not strictly relevant and that the honourable member did have a point of order. I would urge all honourable members to keep their remarks strictly relevant to the item under consideration in accordance with subrule 70.3, thereby assisting us to maintain decorum in this committee as we have in the past.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, during the course of these Estimates, we, to a certain extent, were able to obtain some information from the minister with respect to—after the matters settled down, after the initial preliminary period of the Estimates matters settled down, we were able to get some answers from the minister in some very important questions in very important issues.

Mr. Chairperson, the overriding issue that has been brought to our attention time and time again, both in Question Period and during the course of Estimates, is the very, very terrible situation that exists in home care. I want to deal with that issue for a few moments.

Mr. Chairperson, the government has embarked on a policy of privatization. There appears to be no understanding on the side of the minister or the

government as to what effects privatization can have and will have in a public health care system.

Not only do they not understand the ramifications or effect of that and are unwilling to deal with that issue, they have embarked on a privatization scheme in the home care field without any data, without any analysis, without any studies justifying their position. We have seen information come forward time and time again that suggests and in fact indicates strongly that virtually no organization, no group, whether they are a part of the government or whether they are not part of the government, agree with the government's plan to privatize.

Mr. Chairperson, we have tried and made suggestions to the government about helping to resolve this issue. We have said, while we disagree with the privatization initiative, put a moratorium on for a year, study the situation. We have offered names. We have offered names of former Conservative leaders.

Mr. Chairperson, even the minister, in all his rhetorical flourish, could not accuse someone like Sidney Spivak of being in bed with the union bosses or someone like Duff Roblin of being in bed with the union bosses.

We offered names for a commission, an independent review and study of this issue. Let them review the home care initiative, Mr. Chairperson. We have been met with a stony silence. No public hearings, no public input was made and allowed to happen to permit the public of Manitoba to have a say in this decision, so last week an independent group of citizens held hearings in the Legislature, and I dare suggest, and I have never said anything quite like this before in the Chamber, I actually believe that if the minister actually attended those hearings and actually heard some of those presentations, even the minister would have changed his mind.

If he had an opportunity to listen to their reasoned, to the passionate, to the analytical information that was put forward, then perhaps even the minister would have changed his mind. That is why we invited them to attend, but it seems that this is a government that is obstinate in its initiative and in its moves to privatize home care and is prepared to listen to no one, to simply, in its wrong-headed fashion, bull ahead and to put in place its private scheme despite what Manitobans say. Aside from the

effect this has on democracy as we know it, it is bad politics and it is bad policy, Mr. Chairperson..

* (1610)

I had occasion again to speak to a constituent of mine whom I have mentioned before in the course of these Estimates, a very learned man, someone whose counsel I seek on occasion, and he has been forced into the hospital. He has been displaced from his family, and I mentioned to the minister previously that despite all of that he was supportive of the workers and against the government privatization scheme.

I spoke with him again this morning, and his health is deteriorating. His health is deteriorating, and he said to me this morning, do they not recognize that the continuity of care, that the orderlies that I have trained, make a significant difference in my health? Do they not recognize it will cost more when they bring in private companies, and nurses will do the duties that orderlies now perform on him, and it will cost the government more? Do they not recognize that, Mr. Chairperson?

I rarely bring personal matters of this kind to the Chamber. It has not been my practice, but this is an extraordinary situation. This is an extraordinarily bad government decision, and that is the reason that I bring forward my friend and constituent again and implore the minister to review government policy.

But, Mr. Chairperson, through the course of these Estimates, and we raised it in Question Period, the minister has started to provide us with some information, but with respect to home care he will not provide us with a list of private companies, he will not provide us with any tender documents, he will not provide us with any studies, if there are any outstanding studies that support the government position, and one would tend to believe that it is not that he is unwilling to provide those studies, it is just that they do not exist.

We are in a situation where people have tried to persuade the government, where every means at public disposal and of democracy have been utilized to try to attempt to get the government to listen, and I do not know what more can be done to get a government to listen. It would be entirely different if the government had a mandate to do what they are doing, but they do not.

After the last election, I acknowledged that the government had a mandate, but I stated then and I state now, do not misinterpret that mandate. Your mandate was not the course of action you are following in health care, and that has become very clear in all aspects of health care but, in particular, in the home care situation.

The minister talks about his We Care studies. There is no doubt that we need to provide for orderly discharge from hospitals, but the minister does not even recognize that that is not the majority of care that is provided in the home care system. The minister does not recognize the issue of continuity of care. How could you take workers that people have trained and worked with for some period of time, displace them with a contractual basis and then, perhaps when that contract is renewed, displace them with another contractual worker, not even considering the fact that the turnover rate for private companies is so dramatically high? We heard Evelyn Shapiro give us those statistics.

So, Mr. Chairperson, we are frankly disappointed, disgusted and completely angered, and trying to reflect public opinion as to what this government is doing in home care. It is a watershed in political developments in this province, and I daresay that this issue will be with us until the next provincial election. I have been following politics for over 30 years, and I have watched lots of events. I have watched governments come, and I have watched governments go, but I daresay this is clearly the beginning of the end of this government with this policy.

There is no doubt in my mind. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind. This wrong decision, this inability to be flexible on this decision, this inability to consult will be the downfall of this government. My only hope and prayer is that somehow we can get through to this government.

So, Mr. Chairperson, I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid),

THAT the Minister's Salary, line item 1.(a) of the Estimates for the Department of Health, be reduced by 40 percent, an amount which will be equivalent to the reduction in wages that will accompany the privatization of home care that will result in the deterioration of service to home care clients.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The motion is in order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, we in the Liberal caucus support the motion as has been presented from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). In fact, we, too, had a motion which we had developed, and as opposed to introducing that motion afterward, after this particular motion has ultimately been debated and voted upon, I think that we can, in essence, incorporate to a certain degree most of the sentiments that we have in what the member for Kildonan is proposing.

Of course, when the member for Kildonan talks about a 40 percent decrease in pay, the minister understands, no doubt, where it is that the 40 percent is coming from. The government's decision to privatize home care services is estimated—we are estimating to see a number of home care service providers currently receiving up to a 40 percent decrease in what they are making today.

So I do believe it is an appropriate message that is being sent, and that is how we interpret this, Mr. Chairperson, as a message. Our motion had dealt with reducing the minister's wage to what is being paid to someone, the average home care staff employee, over at We Care Home Health Services.

So we are not too far off in terms of—[interjection] Does he get a TV set? Well, that would be determined, I guess. We would possibly have a vote depending on what the minister has done a year later, but, in essence, the intent of both opposition parties on this particular issue is not that far off.

We have acknowledged right from the beginning that, yes, no system is perfect in Canada, and that includes the province of Manitoba in the sense that there is a need for change, and it is a responsibility of government to look at ways in which it can enhance different programs.

The change that we see here, Mr. Chairperson, is quite radical. It is a substantial change in direction that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) is taking home care services and the manner by which they are being delivered. That change ultimately, we believe, is not in the long term or the short term in the best interests of

Manitobans as a whole, in particular today's clients and future clients of this particular program.

* (1620)

Mr. Chairperson, the Liberal Party has tried to make itself very clear as to our position regarding the strike, and if the government feels that it has to move ahead on this issue, that it is major changes that are required, we have even suggested the way in which this government might attempt to make those changes. I asked the question today of the Minister of Health, what does this government have to lose by holding off for one year and in that year to look at the many other ideas and possible changes that could have a long-term, more positive impact on home care services.

Mr. Chairperson, we have yet to date, out of the hours that we have spent on health care, not had any concrete evidence to demonstrate that the privatization for profit is going to, in the long and short term, be of benefit to our clients. We have not seen any rationale that this government used in order to jump to the conclusion that we have to privatize.

Mr. Chairperson, the point that I made earlier today is that in the private sector there was a study that was done in B.C., and they said in the private, for-profit sector you had a very high rate of return, approximately 50 percent. Compared to nonprofit and unionized, that is very high. How can you argue that a high turnover, a 50 percent turnover on a yearly basis in this particular case out in B.C., is not going to have a negative impact on the quality of service? If you marginalize, and that is what this privatization for profit is going to do, it is going to marginalize the health care services in many different areas. As a result of that, you are going to see substantial rate reductions, and it is going to be very difficult for people, for Manitobans, for even current people that are making or providing those services, to be able to stay in that field or to stay in that occupation.

This is a very honourable profession to be in, and this government has chosen in an attempt to make a number of—I should not say a number—very few people very rich. They are going to see that money, those profits created on the backs or on the salaries of the individuals that are providing the service. It is, indeed, most unfortunate.

That is why what we suggested is that the government, at the very least, when it puts out the tender, it sets in some sort of a salary structure. If you are going to stick to privatization for profit, you can at least ensure a certain amount of quality in part by ensuring, Mr. Chairperson, that there is some sort of a basic salary structure put into place. We have also suggested to the minister that special treatment should be given to nonprofit organizations. I went on for hours talking about, both inside the Chamber and outside this Chamber, the benefits of utilizing our community health clinics. This is something, and I question specifically the Minister of Health—the Minister of Health gives no indication whatsoever that he has investigated to any degree the benefits of expanding home care services—or expanding the role of our community health clinics to provide for a service of this nature. What do our community health clinics do today in terms of providing foot care programs along with a number of other prevention-type programs? What has this government done to enhance those community clinics?

This is an area that, if they were to look at, and they do not have to start from the word go, Mr. Chairperson, they can look at the province of Quebec and see how the province of Quebec is handling this particular issue of the community clinics and how the community clinics should provide a role in the province of Manitoba. So, yes, we believe, ultimately, that one of the ways in which you can ensure a standard of quality service is through a salary structure. We believe as a political party that preferential treatment has to and should be given to nonprofit organizations, whether it is the Grey Nuns, Nor'West Health, the Victorian Order of Nurses.

We make no bones, and we are not going to apologize for our position. Most importantly, we believe that this government should institute a 12-month moratorium. It has absolutely nothing to lose by doing that, and, ultimately, for the sake of our clients, Manitobans, health care workers, all interested people, it is in our best interest to act quickly, to institute that 12-month moratorium. If the minister were to do that and indicate that prior to an actual vote, we might even withdraw the motion.

Having said that, our intention is to support this particular motion as it has been read into the record. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I, too, would like to speak to the motion that was put forward and, I guess, discuss a few of the things brought forward by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in his statement in support of it. It seems odd to me that a member of a Liberal Party—we have a federal party in power in Canada that are dramatically reducing health transfer funding and suggesting that we have to look at ways of making things work, but yet there is still no desire or no necessary need for change.

I think that basically our health care system, as we see it today, is probably the most in dire need of change, and I think that the minister has dealt forthright and straightforward with these as far as the idea of change.

Just a couple of comments I would like to make as he talks about salary structures and setting up special tenders. In a way, he is really supporting privatization, but he is suggesting that it should be done in such a way that it would suit, perhaps, his ideals as opposed to the ideals of the general public. I think that when he suggests, what do we have to lose by putting a moratorium on it for a year, I would suggest that the \$2 million a day that we spend in interest is something that we all have to consider as, how can we reduce that amount to make the savings necessary?

So, therefore, I would suggest that the motion is—I do not know if the term is “not in order,” but I certainly do not support any kind of a motion to that extent.

Mr. Chairperson: Is the House ready for the question?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I will be very brief. I regret that the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) felt that this was something he needed to do. I think he probably does it with a little bit of pain in his heart, because I do not think this is something that he enjoys doing. Certainly, every effort that I have made and that of my colleagues on this side of the House has been with the interests of the clients of our home care service in mind. I do not think the honourable member's resolution resolves anything or is in any way helpful. Thank you.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the motion, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: The Nays have it. The motion has been defeated.

Mr. Ashton: I request a recorded vote.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The question before the House is the motion from the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), that the Minister's Salary, line item 1.(a) of the Estimates for the Department of Health, be reduced by 40 percent, an amount which will be equivalent to the reduction in wages that will accompany the privatization of home care that will result in the deterioration of the service to home care clients.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 24, Nays 27.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The motion is accordingly defeated.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday). Good night.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 13, 1996

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