



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*



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	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 2, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Pharmacare

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Terry Orlow, Adam Orlow, Adolph Baraschuk and others requesting 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 cut Pharmacare in 1996.

THAT previous cuts to Pharmacare have reduced the budget from \$60 million to less than \$50 million over the past two years; and,

THAT as of April 1996 the provincial government is slashing benefits, effectively putting a tax on the sick and reducing the Pharmacare budget by \$20 million; and,

THAT these cuts more than double the deductible for most Manitobans to over \$1,000 for most families, effectively ending Pharmacare for the vast majority of the population regardless of health.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to cut Pharmacare in 1996.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Pharmacare

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). 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 during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) promised not to cut health services; and,

THAT the Pharmacare program brought in by the former NDP government was the first in Canada and has served as a model for pharmacare programs in Canada; and,

THAT the Manitoba Pharmacare program has enabled thousands of Manitobans over the years to be able to stay out of costly institutions and to avoid financial ruin due to the high cost of necessary pharmaceuticals; and,

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Seventh Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee; the Annual Report of the Public Trustee, '95-96; and the Twenty-fourth Annual Report of Legal Aid Manitoba.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the report of the Statement as to the Fidelity Bonds on Deposit with the Minister of Finance, prepared pursuant to Section 20 of The Public Officers Act.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon visitors from South West Africa: Mr. Motsepe, Government House Leader, Northwest Provincial Legislature; Dr. Phaahla, Government House Leader, Northern Province Provincial Legislature; Ms. Boczak, Government House Leader, Northern Cape Provincial Legislature; Mr. Pule, Standing Committee

Administrator, Northwest Provincial Legislature; Mr. Mabelane, Head of Committee Services, Northern Province Provincial Legislature; and Mr. Ngwevu, Head of Parliamentary Committees and Proceedings, Northern Cape Provincial Legislature.

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

Also, seated in the public gallery this afternoon, we have twenty-five Grade 5 students from Angus McKay School under the direction of Mr. Greg Holowka. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

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

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Rates

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the First Minister.

On May 2, 1996, when the Premier announced to the people of Manitoba that he was going to break his word and indeed sell the Manitoba Telephone System and privatize the Manitoba Telephone System, he included in his brokerage analysis the fact that there would be no impact on the rates for the local consumer here in the province of Manitoba if the telephone system was privatized.

I would like to ask the Premier, in light of his liberal use of the CRTC decision, did the government and the Premier consider the CRTC decision of February 19, 1996, dealing with the Alberta rate application when he made this commitment and this statement to the people of Manitoba on the impact on rates?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I considered all information available to me, principally the knowledge that the CRTC, in its decisions that it makes on behalf of telephone companies with respect to

their rates, obviously considers all of the various factors that are there, but what they do is look at the business components of the decisions. It does not matter whether it is publicly owned or privately owned, they use exactly the same analysis with respect to the decisions they make.

I consider, for instance, what is happening in Saskatchewan today. I would like the member opposite to know, and I will quote from a story in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, SaskTel President Donald Ching's remarks Wednesday to the North Saskatoon Business Association, serves as final proof, if any were needed, that the provincial Crown agency has outlived its usefulness to its owners and should be privatized.

Quote, this is Mr. Ching: Individual telephones on farms are subsidized to the extent of \$58 per telephone—Ching said, in explaining why SaskTel will move to recoup the full cost of providing the service. Facing competition for the first time for its long-distance markets, SaskTel says it can no longer afford to subsidize local phone service to the tune of \$87 million a year, so the Crown agency plans to meet the competition head on and fight for every customer by, of all things, increasing the cost of basic telephone service and charging fees ranging from 75 cents to \$3 for directory assistance.

He says more, and I will go onto it later, Madam Speaker, but the point is that they are having to move to meet market forces. The Manitoba Telephone System is no longer a private monopoly. Over 70 percent of its revenues come from competition and, like SaskTel, they have to fight that competition, and the best way to fight that competition is to be in the private sector, where they can more effectively move to new technologies and be much more—[interjection] Excuse me, I think the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has some comments. I will assume that she is going to ask the next question.

But they have to be able to move to meet that competition and will be better able to when they are in the private sector.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I would like to table the CRTC decision of February 19, 1996, dealing with the Alberta rate application, the private company, and the CRTC clearly states that the issue of rate of return for a private investor must be considered in the rate increases that are awarded to the privately owned corporation.

They further go on to state in the same decision that the Revenue Canada implications also mean that the private investor and the private company will get a higher rate increase for the consumers, something that was opposed by the Alberta seniors and a number of other organizations. When they justified a \$6 a month increase in February when there was only a \$2 increase here in this province, they basically stated that the reasons were the rate of return and the Revenue Canada treatment on private investments.

Why did the Premier say there was no difference between privately owned corporations and publicly owned corporations for rate increases when that is patently untrue?

Mr. Filmon: SaskTel, a publicly owned organization, has announced that it has to recoup \$87 million that it had formerly been using to subsidize the rates in rural areas and on private telephones, and they are going to do it by increasing, under public ownership, dramatically the cost of private telephones and moving up all sorts of charges through the system.

The fact of the matter is that in order to be efficient and effective, telephone systems have to charge the rates that they need in order to provide those services and, indeed, in private ownership they will be able to be more effective in meeting their competition and in fact probably be better able to withstand those competitive challenges.

Mr. Doer: Of course, the Premier knows that Saskatchewan has not entered into long distance competition for five years and made considerable investments in their telephone system by not following through on another broken promise the Premier made about the corporate interests here in Manitoba. He made that before the 1990 election and, of course, flip-flopped on that position as well.

Madam Speaker, given the fact that the Premier has broken his word that he gave to the people of Manitoba during the election campaign, and given the fact that the Premier has also not told us the straight goods when it comes to the fact that the CRTC deals with private corporations differently than publicly owned telcos, who should the public of Manitoba believe? This Premier, who does not keep his word, or Dr. Mary Pankiw from

the seniors' organization that says it will be seniors who will be paying the higher increases?

That is why the seniors of Manitoba are opposed to the ideological and extreme decision of this Premier to break his word and sell the telephone system.

* (1340)

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I reject totally the preamble of the Leader of the Opposition and based on the nonsense in the preamble, his question is also nonsense.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Rates

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): The Premier may find the concerns of seniors and many Manitobans to be nonsense. I think they find his word in the election on the sale of MTS to be nonsense when he said he would not sell MTS.

I would like to ask the Premier how he had the nerve, when he announced along with the Minister responsible for MTS at the press conference announcing the sell-off of MTS with no mandate from the public of Manitoba, to say that there would not be rate increases as a result of the sale, when we had the CRTC on the record February of this year increasing rates in Alberta at the request of AGT directly because of the tax implications of the sell-off of AGT in 1990. How could he say that when he either knew it was not true or he was incompetent enough to make such a ridiculous statement?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I repeat that the CRTC will look at the business plan of a corporation whether it is publicly or privately owned and will justify the rate increases based on the operations of the company whether it is publicly or privately owned. Neither circumstance—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: The efficiencies of the company will have more to do with—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the members opposite do not want to hear the answer.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I will ask him—because this decision was made by the CRTC in February. He announced in May, with only the consultation with the investment brokers, they were selling off MTS. Is the Premier—was he not aware of the fact that the CRTC in the case of Alberta, which mirrored the exact way in which they privatized the Manitoba Telephone System, is allowing a pass-through of costs related directly to the privatization? In other words, the people in Alberta are paying more on their phones because of the privatization.

Did he either not know that in May or was he not telling the truth once again to the people of Manitoba when he made that announcement?

* (1345)

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I might also point out that AGT derived significant tax advantages by the sale of the corporation into private ownership. They were given a tax ruling that allowed them to depreciate assets that had already been fully depreciated. As a result, they gained something in the range of—it was certainly hundreds of millions of dollars of tax advantages. It gave them the ability to operate without having to pay taxes.

So those things are also a factor to be taken into consideration that members opposite are not, that there is a corporation that would not pay taxes as a result of the advantage that they had in moving into private ownership.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Ashton: When will the Premier finally tell Manitobans the truth about what will happen with the sale of MTS and that in fact he was wrong when he said that rates will not increase higher under a private company and in fact will end up just like Alberta under a privatized company? We will pay far more for our phone service than we would if we stayed with the public ownership of MTS. When will he tell the truth to Manitobans about what will happen with MTS?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I make the point that under public ownership the people of Saskatchewan are going to pay significant increases in the ownership of their corporation, and that is the fact that members opposite do not want to accept.

Regional Health Boards Aboriginal Representation

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health told us that he had done all he could to ensure that there is aboriginal representation on the regional health boards in the North and that he was disappointed in MKO for not nominating anyone.

I would like to quote from a letter that was written from George Muswagon, the Grand Chief of MKO, to the Minister of Health: This partnership that the minister obviously was talking about requires clarification. Our organization requires that a full 50-50 partnership be established. MKO is seeking the reorganization of the geographic parameters established by the province, meaning that Swampy Cree Tribal Council is having to deal with three regional health authorities for their member First Nations.

They go on to say: We request that the criteria for appointments to the regional health authorities and the authority of the boards be clarified.

They are also seeking some information as to how these people can be appointed. They are requesting that the remaining vacancies, which is now six, be aboriginal.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister what commitments he is prepared to make today to accommodate those requests.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I acknowledge that those things were discussed, Madam Speaker, in a very cordial way. The MKO people I believe are now interested in participating; whereas it appears from nominations or a dearth of nominations received earlier on that there was not that interest, there appears to be that interest now. I made the commitment to try in future to keep that in mind when further appointments to regional health authority boards are made.

I took note of the issue or the problem related to the fact that the Swampy Cree communities are placed in three different regional health authorities and to look carefully at how best to deal with that, but to make comments like the honourable member did yesterday would be incorrect. It has been clear from the beginning that no matter what the geographical delineation of these regional health authorities, people's access to health services and the patterns therefore are not likely to change.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Lathlin: My supplementary question to the same minister is: Because he has already told MKO that he cannot live with more than two members on the board to be aboriginal, will the minister give me one good reason why he will not consider giving 50 percent of the board seats to aboriginal people seeing as how the population in Norman region is more than 50 percent aboriginal and that to do less than 50 percent would be akin to maintaining systemic racism?

Mr. McCrae: Despite the harsh language used by the honourable member, Madam Speaker, I was unable to make the kind of commitment that the honourable member is suggesting, having already appointed the boards and not having received nominations from aboriginal organizations to the extent that we could possibly, possibly follow through with what the honourable member is suggesting.

The honourable member cannot reasonably be believed, on the one hand, when there was a lack of interest initially and then come along and talk about racism. It is simply out of line.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Lathlin: Madam Speaker, perhaps I could ask the Minister of Health then to explain why the nine people who have so far been appointed to the Norman board include three defeated Tory provincial candidates. The aboriginal people, in order to be appointed to the board, do they have to be defeated Tory candidates or what do they have to be?

* (1350)

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, by raising the spectre of racism as the honourable member has done, he has effectively dealt himself out of the discussion because he has no credibility whatsoever. The honourable member does a great disservice to people who have allowed their names to stand, having been nominated by their fellow citizens in their communities and selected through a process which was designed to allow for maximum community input. The honourable member does a disservice to the whole system when he talks like he does.

Pharmacare Deductibles

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, yesterday, in trying to explain the government's \$19-million screw-up on the Pharmacare program, the minister stated that the program, and I am quoting, was changed to provide "less coverage for people who are rich." Well, now I am sure Manitobans will be very happy to see that most of them are now rich Manitobans by the minister's definition.

Can the minister explain to me how a single senior with an income of \$15,500 will now pay \$246 more for their deductible or a family of four living at the poverty line with an annual income of \$31,000 will now pay 179 percent more on their deductible? Are these people all rich, Madam Speaker?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I would ask the honourable member to do a little research into the effect the NDP 2 percent net income tax had on lower-income Manitobans and maybe we can judge his bonafides by that study.

What is it about an egalitarian program that offends the honourable member so much? What is it about a program which was raised by the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) last spring and who took such great offence when she was reminded that this program benefits the poor to a larger extent than it benefits the rich? What is it that is so wrong with that? It seems to go contrary to everything the NDP ever talks about. Madam Speaker, in developing this program, particular emphasis was placed on people who had incomes less than \$15,000.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Kildonan, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister explain how he is going to take away benefits from two-thirds of Manitobans, by his own count, taking \$20 million away from them, and by his own definition say that all of these people are rich? What is the new definition of rich? Two-thirds of Manitobans are now rich by the minister's standards, and that is why they are being cut off from this program.

* (1355)

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, in his first question, the honourable member for Kildonan carries a brief for those who are poor and he fails in that question because of the egalitarian nature of the program. So he decides, in typical New Democratic fashion, in his second question to carry the brief for the rich people. Now, which is it? Whom does he represent when he comes here?

The fact is that if your income is under \$15,000, you are not expected to pay more than 2 percent of your family income for the deductible. If your income is over that, then a maximum of 3 percent is called for. That is what is called a sliding scale, which is based on income. So the honourable member is having quite a time here today because he cannot argue for the poor successfully and he cannot argue for the rich successfully. So what we have is a fair program.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Kildonan, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, will the minister finally and the government be up front to the people of Manitoba that what they are doing is cutting off two-thirds of Manitobans from Pharmacare—by the minister's own numbers—average Manitobans, taking \$20 million out of their pockets and, incidentally, screwing up the government, by the way, of \$19 million yesterday?

Will the minister not admit that it really is a tax grab on Manitobans and a tax on all Manitobans and a tax, most importantly, on the sick?

Mr. McCrae: The issue is clearly not that of the fairness of the program. That has been clearly

established. The issue is the credibility of the honourable member for Kildonan.

Boundary Trails Hospital Government Commitment

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): My question is for the Minister of Health.

Leading up to the last provincial election the government made commitments, very solid commitments, in terms of capital dollars being spent in health care. Shortly after that election they went ahead and they put a freeze on those capital expenditures. One of the freezes that they put on was for the Boundary Trails hospital which was in essence to replace two hospitals, one in Morden and one in Winkler.

My question for the Minister of Health: Is the government committed to building the Boundary Trails hospital?

* (1400)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable member refers to a very, very difficult decision that had to be made which arises in large part because of the reduction in funding that his colleagues in Ottawa have imposed on all the provinces, including the province of Manitoba. But as we proceed to develop a new capital program, we decided that priorities were an important consideration.

The people from all over Manitoba are interested in, for example, cancer programming for the province of Manitoba, and we were able, with the co-operation and help of the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, to get the cancer program back on the tracks but at a very much reduced level of funding required from the Manitoba government but with no change to the cancer services to be provided to the people of Manitoba.

That was a very good example of why the suspension of the program was necessary in the first place, and the honourable member can be assured, as can everybody else interested in Boundary Trails, that that is very much a part of our consideration in a newly developed capital program.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Will the Minister of Health acknowledge this government's lack of action in an attempt to make a commitment to the Boundary Trails is causing problems in terms of capital requirements between the two hospitals of Morden and Winkler, and that the government needs to make that commitment today in terms of the long-term needs and requirements of rural Manitobans to have a first-class hospital facility in that of Boundary Trails and today indicate that they will get that particular hospital in the next budget coming down?

Mr. McCrae: It is nice to see that the honourable member for Inkster has finally caught on. He can take his place in line behind the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) and all of the honourable members on this side of the House who are also advocating on behalf of the Boundary Trails project.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, then, Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health: Why does he not see the light that not only the Liberal Party is trying to shed on his mind but also his backbenchers and make a commitment to building the Boundary Trails hospital so that plans can be put into effect so we can see this facility. We do not have to wait until the next provincial election before this minister makes a commitment. The need is now; it is not when the next provincial election is called. I request that the backbenchers of the government stand up and ask the question also if they want to see that hospital facility.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, speaking for all Manitobans, I think I could probably say that I would—I can say that I would rather be spending their tax dollars building hospitals rather than paying interest, which is what honourable members in the Liberal Party propose here today and what NDP members propose every day.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Seniors

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, one distinguishing feature of a good government is how it

treats its senior citizens who are on the threshold of the twilight of life.

Earlier today the president of the Manitoba Society of Seniors incorporated had pointed out correctly that seniors are the primary losers of this MTS privatization decision of this Tory government.

I would like to ask the honourable Minister responsible for Seniors whether or not he had given this concern of the seniors to his colleagues in cabinet, either in committee or in the entire cabinet, prior to the making of the decision or whether he did not participate at all in this decision.

An Honourable Member: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for that—

Madam Speaker: No, I have not recognized the honourable minister. Order, please.

The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister responsible for Seniors): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the member for Broadway for that question because indeed anything that affects seniors in any type of cost or associations, of living conditions, is of concern to this government. One of the reasons that this government embarked on economic development was so that there is a tax base, there is a revenue base, there is an industrial base, there are jobs, there is the creation of wealth, so that there are not these burdens that are put on to the seniors through our health and family services.

The matter of rate increases that the member refers to regarding MTS, as he knows, goes before the CRTC review and the rates are set there. The rates are not set by this minister or this government as to what is going to be charged by the MTS. So the member should be aware that we will continue to try to respond and be receptive to the needs of the seniors here in Manitoba.

Mr. Santos: Madam Speaker, the honourable minister did not answer the question. If he did not participate, please tell this House who did for seniors. Who stood up for seniors in cabinet?

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, let it not be said in this House that this government does not stand up for seniors in the cabinet, in the caucus, or in this government. Seniors are a very, very important part of our population.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Are the members now ready to hear the response by the honourable Minister responsible for Seniors?

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, as has been indicated, as Minister responsible for Seniors, I find that I have to indeed bring forth issues, bring forth concerns. I bring these forth to my cabinet, to my government, to my caucus. In making decisions through all various aspects of the department whether it is in the Department of Health, the Department of Finance, the Department of Family Services, there are ongoing consultations all the time as to anything and everything that might be affecting seniors. So it is an ongoing basis and seniors are brought into the consideration very, very definitely in the decisions that are brought forth.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Broadway, with a final supplementary question.

Pharmacare Reductions—Impact on Seniors

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): My final question to the honourable minister, Madam Speaker: Did the honourable minister get in touch with his cabinet colleague the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) with respect to the \$20-million cut in Pharmacare, and did he bring the concerns of senior citizens about this decision?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister responsible for Seniors): Madam Speaker, one of the criteria of decision making regarding seniors is consultation. I make a point, along with my colleagues, of being involved with the seniors associations whether it is in their community, whether it is in presentations that are made to the group, to this ministry, and we will continue to be in consultation with all aspects of the seniors.

It should be pointed out, too, that seniors make a lot of long distance phone calls and in the last five years, rates of long distance have gone down 50 percent. So there we

are showing that there is a concern. We will naturally be involved with any other decisions that are affecting seniors. It is an ongoing process.

Education System Special Needs Review

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Education about her promises made in 1994, 1995, 1996, to establish an independent review of special needs education, and although money has been allocated to this every year—and, in fact, in 1994, the annual report even claimed their independent review was underway—in fact, no independent review has yet been created, and there is no prospect of a report before 1999.

Could the minister explain what the reason has been for this unconscionable delay and what the impact of three years of broken promises will be on the families of those special needs children?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I should indicate, of course, that I was not minister in 1994 but that is just a small correction because I hold to the commitments of this government. It is just a technical error which we often find in the preamble from the member opposite. But having said that, the commitment to a special needs review is real. I invite the member to stay tuned.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, with a supplementary question.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, we have been staying tuned for three years and all we get is the minister passing the buck to another minister.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member that there is no preamble or postamble required on a supplementary question. The honourable member, to pose her question now.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the minister make a clear commitment to this House today that she will establish a fully independent review which will hold public hearings to hear the views of the families and schools of those special needs children and perhaps she could make a commitment to begin that process before Christmas?

* (1410)

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, the member knows, as do many members of the House and certainly all members of the education community, that special needs interests are one of the very dominant interests of mine personally and of this government as well.

Madam Speaker, I indicate to the member that within the next few days she should hear the details of the special needs review. The detail in putting forward the preparation for it was extensive. The people that have been chosen are eminently qualified to consult with all of the people that will need to be consulted throughout the course of the review. We respect that review will take some 18 to 24 months to complete and—[interjection] Pardon me? The member opposite wishes me to pre-empt my announcement by providing the details which are being prepared for announcement, and if she does, I do invite her to stay tuned for the details of that announcement within the next week or two.

Workplace Safety and Health Inspector Reduction

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) why his department had cut the number of Workplace Safety and Health inspectors since his government came to office from 58 to 42 inspectors. The minister misled the House when he said that the number of inspectors remained constant during that period of time.

I want to table some documentation that will confirm that the minister's department in 1988-89 had some 53.48 staff years confirmed to the position of inspectors and that this year, Madam Speaker, the number is 34.26 in this year's budget document.

I want to ask the minister to explain why he misled the House yesterday. Will he please now once again apologize to this House and members of the public for his misstatements?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, the resources dedicated to field inspections have remained constant and I stand by that. If the learned member for Transcona wishes to have an explanation of that, I will have my staff sit him down and go through the

documentation line by line to show him exactly why that is an accurate statement.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Transcona, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, it is clear the minister does not even understand his own budget documents.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member, to pose his question now.

Fines

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Can the minister explain his statements of yesterday where he said for companies who violate The Workplace Safety and Health Act that prosecutions can be a very ineffective mechanism? Is it the fact that the \$150 fines that are assessed or levied against these companies who break the act, is that why he is saying it is ineffective?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, the member for Transcona proves exactly my point. The maximum fines are \$15,000 on a first offence, \$30,000 on a second offence and the court has assessed a penalty of \$150. There has got to be a better way of ensuring that workers are safe on the job. We are committed to that task, and our numbers in terms of decreasing injuries and decreasing deaths are demonstrating that we are on the right track.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Transcona, with a final supplementary.

Mr. Reid: Then I want to ask either the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) because the Minister of Justice has through her department the ability to make recommendations to the Crown attorneys that represent the cases that the Ministry of Labour would send to that department. I want to ask the Minister of Labour—Minister of Justice why—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Reid: This is serious. You may not think so. You may not think this is serious.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. This is not a—

Mr. Reid: You have lives on the line here and you do not think that this is serious—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Transcona, to pose his question now.

Mr. Reid: Can the Minister of Justice tell the injured workers of this province and other Manitobans in this province why her department only goes to the court and makes suggestions to the judge in cases where injured workers' cases under The Workplace Safety and Health Act go to the court, why her department only asks for minimal fines as we saw under the Power Vac situation where not the maximum fines were asked for in a case like that?

Why is that Ministry of Justice not taking action to look for and seek in serious workplace accident cases maximum fines?

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

Mr. Toews: I can assure you that this government, both the Department of Justice and the Department of Labour are very concerned about injuries that occur to workmen or workwomen in our workplaces, and if the member needs some instruction in what is called due process, I would be happy to sit down and talk to him about it.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Agri-Tec Canada Inc.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Over a week ago the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) announced that a Manitoba-based consortium for agribusiness will continue to pursue opportunities in offshore markets with the help of \$35,000 in funding from the Manitoba government. As Minister Downey noted when he made the announcement, Agri-Tec has helped several of our agribusiness firms navigate the long

and complex roads into overseas markets. With the organization's help, Manitoba companies have won new export customers and in turn created new jobs here in the province. This additional funding will ensure Agri-Tec's valuable marketing support continues.

As a group, Agri-Tec represents more than 800 jobs and more than \$50 million in annual export sales. Under Agri-Tec's umbrella they are able to pool their collective expertise to compete against large multinational corporations. They exchange ideas, experiences and successes encountered individually, and they trade individual experiences for that of others.

From its Manitoba headquarters the organization helps member firms as they penetrate promising offshore markets, particularly in the grain-handling industry. Agri-Tec serves as a one-stop contact for agribusiness and its related project work and helps members deal with lengthy and complex business negotiations and volatile competitive markets. The organization also helps present the industry to trade missions visiting Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, this government has played a pivotal role in the development of Agri-Tec. Since its inception in 1988, Agri-Tec has helped member firms win seven major contracts totalling \$10.9 million. Bids currently in progress involve several significant multimillion dollar projects. Working with Agri-Tec is another example of how this government is working to make Manitoba strong. Thank you.

* (1420)

Manitoba Eco-Network Awards

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Last weekend, on Saturday, the Manitoba Eco-Network Awards Banquet was held following the North America Forest Conference. Awards were given to recognize individuals and groups who have made outstanding contributions to the protection of the Manitoba environment. Awards were given to the Mathias Colomb Band, Dr. Eva Pip, Harvey Williams and Dan Soprovich.

I want to extend my congratulations to all recipients, but in particular I want to recognize Mr. Soprovich who is from my constituency. I want to recognize him for the tremendous amount of work he has done to make people

aware of the impacts of clear-cutting and overharvesting of our forests and the amount of work he has also done to try to protect our forests and wildlife habitat in the province.

You will remember that Mr. Soprovich was once the biologist who worked in the Swan River office that this government tried to muzzle when he raised serious concerns about the overestimate of volumes of hardwoods that were to be harvested under the Louisiana-Pacific agreement. It was Mr. Soprovich who raised concerns when they were given only two days to review 35 pounds of information in the EIA report.

It was this Mr. Dan Soprovich who was threatened by a local Tory executive, to say to him he would be transferred to Thompson if he did not do what he was required to do. But Mr. Soprovich was not to be muzzled, and he spoke very clearly, and he is recognized throughout the province and Canada for his efforts to protect and make people aware of the impacts of harvesting. We should not be afraid to listen to the experts in this field.

I want to commend Mr. Soprovich for his work and wish him well in his plans to do more work on cavity habitat of birds in the area and hope that this government will also show their support in his effort to get funds from the North American fund for environmental co-operation.

We have not had the support. I hope we hear it from this government. These are important issues to the province of Manitoba.

Winnipeg School Division No. 1

Mr. Mike Radcliffe (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to advise my colleagues that I had the occasion to attend the 125th anniversary celebration at Winnipeg School Division No. 1 yesterday. I read a proclamation from our Premier (Mr. Filmon) declaring October to be the month to honour Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

The motto for the occasion is, From a Log Cabin to the Universe. The growth of public education has been a vital and integral part of Manitoba's history, so it is fitting that we gathered yesterday to salute our first school division. All our colleagues in this Chamber celebrate the education system in Manitoba, and I would invite

them to acknowledge the commitment and the care of teachers, of hardworking administrators, capable and enthusiastic students, supportive parents and other members of the community.

We believe that with educational renewal now spreading across Manitoba, an already good system will be made even better. Schools will do an even better job of preparing our students for the future in which an explosion of information and the globalization of the economy will shape their lives. An excellent education system remains critical to our prosperity as a society. We must think ahead and reshape our institutions to face changing circumstances.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing great difficulty hearing the honourable member for River Heights.

Mr. Radcliffe: I will repeat for the benefit of the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), who seems to want to—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Now, in my opinion, private members' hour is very important and every honourable member in this Chamber is a private member and has the right to put his or her views on in this two-minute time slot without interruption and with some respect. I would ask for the co-operation of both sides of the House in ensuring that that occurs.

The honourable member for River Heights, to complete his member's statement.

Mr. Radcliffe: Madam Speaker, I would continue, and say that we must think ahead and reshape our institutions to face changing circumstances, knowing that the world for which we are preparing our students is very different from the one to which we adults were educated.

Let me again offer my sincere best wishes and congratulations to Winnipeg School Division No. 1. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Education System

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): On September 16, opening day for the fall session of the House, the

Manitoba Teachers' Society presented MLAs with an open and visible, a concrete form of a troubling question. The question appears on the outside of an envelope: Puzzled about Manitoba's future? The answer lies within when the puzzle pieces are put together to reveal the words: Public schools, the best investment in our future.

Now, envelope and puzzle are a metaphor, a metaphorical way of telling a government closed to other modes of communication, like consultation and reasonable discussion, that public education in Manitoba has been fragmented. The pieces need to be gathered and fixed together if we are to solve the mystery of our future. Manitoba Teachers' Society, operating on the assumption that one picture is worth a thousand words, has produced a picture, an image, a symbol, and to make doubly sure that the message gets through, they have, in the tradition of educators since Socrates, included questions and answers—sound pedagogy.

* (1430)

The problem here is the students. The students in question, the current government and particularly the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), they and she are slow delinquent learners, even failures. For example, they have failed again and again to put the pieces together to answer the puzzle's question and to see that government cannot invest in Manitoba's future by divesting itself of responsibility for public education.

The minister does not understand that attacking teachers and fostering a divisive educational community means denying our students quality education and denying Manitoba a future. At present, public education lies in fragments. A few more nasty bills may shatter the system, but we begin to suspect that shattering public education and shattering teachers is exactly what this government wants.

Manitoba Breast Screening Program

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, I am glad to rise today in conjunction with the government to mark the first anniversary of the Manitoba Breast Screening Program and to highlight October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. During the first year of operation, the Manitoba Breast Screening Program screened 11,500 women and in its second year of

operation they have already booked their capacity of 15,000 screenings per year.

This program and others like it provide for an ongoing awareness of the options for early detection, diagnosis and treatment, which are increasingly important if we are going to conquer this disease. Particularly for women between the ages of 50 and 69, the combination of regular mammography screenings and breast exams has been shown to reduce mortality by as much as 30 percent. This is an incredible opportunity for us in Manitoba to continue this program.

On a more personal note, Madam Speaker, I want to say that not only do the screenings work but early detection can enable women to carry on full and productive lives, and we need go no further than the Honourable Penny Priddy, a minister in the British Columbia government who has been fighting breast cancer for years and at the same time has managed several very important portfolios in the British Columbia government.

Finally, I hope that the option that the government has said of opening a third site in Thompson and investigating the need to offer improved access for rural women throughout Manitoba with a mobile unit actually comes to pass so that, in effect, next year when we speak of October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, even more Manitoba women will have been able to take part in this excellent program.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Thursday, October 3, 1996, for 9:30 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs for Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m. be amended as follows: the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey); the

member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Firstly, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Economic Development for Friday, October 4, is cancelled.

Madam Speaker: To repeat, the Standing Committee on Economic Development scheduled for Friday morning, October 4, has been cancelled.

Mr. Ernst: Bill 21, yesterday, referred to the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs for Thursday morning, October 3, is withdrawn.

Madam Speaker: Bill 21, which was previously referred to the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs for tomorrow, Thursday, October 3, has been withdrawn.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, it is withdrawn from the committee due to the unavailability of the minister, so it is not being withdrawn from the House. It is being withdrawn from the committee.

Madam Speaker: Okay, it has been withdrawn from the standing committee.

Mr. Ernst: Bills 11 and 25 passed yesterday and will be referred to the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs for tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m.

Madam Speaker: Thursday, October 3, 9:30 a.m., in the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, Bills 11 and 25 to be added to the list of bills to be considered.

Mr. Ernst: Before I call the list of bills, Madam Speaker, in light of the considerable workload and number of bills we have yet to consider before the House, I wonder if there might be leave to waive private members' hour today.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to waive private members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Ernst: Then in that case would you call Bills 42, 52, 53, 8, 9, 10, 37, 38 and 49.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 42—The Northern Affairs Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), Bill 42 (The Northern Affairs Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les Affaires du Nord), standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I would just like to take a few minutes to put a few comments on the record with regard to this bill which is a bill that will enable northern community councils to get more powers, powers similar to what the rural municipalities have. It clarifies the rules on funding and payment to these communities concerning services and debt.

It also makes incorporation of communities easier. In one of the communities that I represent this is something that is very important, and they have been pushing for some time. That is the community of Camperville under the leadership of Mayor Sonny Clyne, who has been wanting to see this type of legislation go forward, where Northern Affairs communities would be able to be more in line with communities under The Municipal Act.

Madam Speaker, I think whenever we look at Northern Affairs communities we have to look at the terrible record of this government on how they have handled northern communities, and certainly they have not done a very good job. I encourage members to go to some of the

communities. I represent several of them, and their record is not good. You know, this is a government that spent over a million dollars on a Northern Economic Development Commission and then put the reports on the shelf with no action on any of these recommendations. It is just a terrible record.

I encourage members to go to some of these northern communities where there is a need for economic development, there is a need for better services, there is a need for better roads into these communities and, in particular, farther in the North where we see CN abandoning their lines to many communities where there are no roads, Madam Speaker. This government has not done a very good job in ensuring that there is an equity of services to all people.

Another area is in the area of the fishing community. Those are communities, again, that I represent along Lake Winnipegosis that are Northern Affairs communities. The people in these communities are suffering very badly because of this government's lack of policy and leadership when it comes to restocking lakes. We see a policy that has been put forward now to shut down the summer fishing on Lake Winnipegosis which will have a negative impact on not only the fishermen but also, again, Northern Affairs communities.

So the government is taking one step in giving the Northern Affairs communities the ability to have more control and move towards self-government in those communities, but the government has a terrible record when it comes to what they have done for economic development in the Northern Affairs communities.

I urge the government to recognize that you need good roads to get into the communities. People in 1996 should not be stranded in the spring because their roads are full of mud, nor should they be stranded because CN has been allowed by the federal government and not had very much argument from the provincial government to cut railway services to these communities.

So I urge the government to recognize that they have more responsibility not only to give the communities more power to the councils, but to ensure that there is economic development in all parts of the province and proper health care service for the people in those areas.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, this bill, unfortunately, does not do anything in terms of northern development. The principles in this bill will not make a major impact on northern communities that have been suffering from cutbacks and neglect from this government.

This government spent over a million dollars on the Northern Economic Development Commission. When the report was done, this government put it on the shelf, and there has been no action whatsoever since then in regard to implementing any of the recommendations that were put forward by the commission. In fact, copies of the report themselves have been difficult to find at any government offices. As people were going around asking for copies of the report, people have had to be referred to Winnipeg to access the report.

Like the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report, the recommendations of the Northern Economic Development Commission were never taken seriously by this government right from Day One. The legacy of this government in northern Manitoba is nothing but cutbacks, neglect.

Now that we are at a crisis again when CN is attempting to abandon northern rail lines, this government has no answers because it does not really care as to what happens in northern Manitoba. Similarly, the federal Liberals who privatized CN, abolished rail line subsidies, their support for transportation in the North has been silent since the CN announcement of rail abandonment.

Madam Speaker, anyone who has travelled on any northern railway, on any northern road, particularly Provincial Road 391, knows just how serious the situation has become. So, notwithstanding Bill 42, northern residents have no reason to believe that the conditions in the North are about to improve. The high cost of living, limited government services, limited educational services, limited medical services, limited training opportunities will continue, as will record-high unemployment. Remote northern communities have faced the brunt of government cutbacks and neglect since the time that this government has been elected.

Traditional industries such as fishing, trapping and hunting have greatly declined throughout the North. The elimination of the federal government's fishermen's

freight subsidy for northern fishermen wiped out nearly one-third of the fishery in the North, and it has caused a lot of harm for those people who reside in the North. Provincial government cutbacks of the province's freight subsidy for fishermen have also hurt the North, so Bill 42 is really but a minor step forward in principle of local control, but as long as this government continues to deny northern Manitoba its fair share of funding and services, this bill will have very little real impact on the lives of northerners. So we approve the principle of this act from this side of the House, and we would agree to move it to committee.

* (1440)

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 42, The Northern Affairs Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed. Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 52—The York Factory First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 52, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), Bill 52, The York Factory First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act (Loi sur l'accord de mise en oeuvre de la première nation de York Factory relatif à la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I know my colleague the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) wants to add his comments on this bill as well. I am pleased to see that the parties, York Factory First Nation and the province, have been able to come to an agreement with respect to flood compensation, and it is reflected in Bill 52. I think it is long overdue, considering the amount of time that has been involved in the negotiations to come to this agreement, and I am happy that the parties have finally arrived at an agreement at this point. I look forward to this bill moving as quickly as possible to committee and becoming law for the province of Manitoba. I will leave

the opportunity for my colleague the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) to add further comments with respect to Bill 52 prior to that passing to committee. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, of course, we on this side are very pleased that these agreements have finally been concluded and they have been approved by the community of York Factory First Nation. I congratulate the York Factory First Nation for having shown determination and perseverance in their pursuit of this particular agreement.

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

I also want to acknowledge the dedication and the same kind of determination that has been displayed by previous chiefs and councils of York Factory First Nation. This agreement has taken long to conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It has taken nearly 20 years, and in those 20 years, chiefs and councils, administrators, advisers have come and gone. Indeed, a lot of our First Nations chiefs and councillors and administrators from that First Nation have passed on and will not be able to see the benefits of this particular agreement, so I congratulate and I acknowledge the hard work of the York Factory First Nation.

I also want to remind the House, this Legislature, that on four occasions now I have joined others to point out to this government the conditions of the road that goes from Thompson to Nelson House. At times, as you probably know, that particular piece of road has been deemed to be unsafe by members of the RCMP, and it indeed has caused some problems, serious problems for those First Nations who rely on that road for transportation of people and also ambulances that go back and forth on a piece of road.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I conclude my very brief comments and again congratulate the York Factory First Nation for having reached this agreement. I hope that whatever they have agreed to, the terms and conditions of the agreement will benefit not only the people who are currently living in York Factory but also the children who are going to be coming up and taking over the leadership positions, and their children will benefit from this agreement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 52. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 53—The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik), Bill 53, The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act (Loi sur l'accord de mise en oeuvre de la première nation de Nelson House relatif à la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I just want to add a few brief comments with respect to Bill 53, The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement.

I have had the opportunity over my time in this Legislature to travel to many of the northern communities, along with my colleagues that represent those particular communities in the North. I have been much impressed by the efforts of the people of northern Manitoba, particularly the First Nations people, in their efforts to make a living and in their ways of life.

I have had the opportunity and privilege to witness some of their traditions and to talk with the chief and council in several of those communities. I would like to thank my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to go along and to participate in that process. For me, it was quite an education. I hope that other members of this House will take similar opportunities to travel to northern Manitoba and to meet with council and band chiefs because I think it is an important process to continue the dialogue.

I am happy to see that this agreement, as with Bill 52, The York Factory Northern Flood Agreement, this Nelson House First Nation Agreement also seems to show some significant progress. We are happy to see

that after a number of years. I would like to reiterate the comments that were made by my colleague the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) in congratulating the chief and council and the elders of those communities for their perseverance and patience over quite a number of years in coming to an agreement with the provincial government, and I am happy to see that this bill is a result of their patience and their hard work over those years.

So, with those few words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know my colleague the member for The Pas has some other comments he would also like to add on this bill, and we would like to see this bill move to committee as quickly as possible. Thank you.

* (1450)

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Again, just some few words on this Bill 53, The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act. Again, I would like to congratulate the people of Nelson House First Nation for having concluded the agreement. I have acknowledged the hard work and the dedication of those people who were able to in the end conclude the agreement. I also want to mention those people who are not with us now, those who have passed on while this agreement was being worked on, past chiefs and councils, past administrative staff, people who have worked diligently month after month, year after year, trying to get this agreement to a conclusion.

This bill, of course, is in the interests of all Manitobans, particularly those in southern Manitoba, that these bills be ratified and approved and made into law. The agreements upon which these bills—and I refer to Bill 52 as well—were drafted have been approved for some time now. We also hope that agreements between the remaining Northern Flood communities, Norway House First Nation and Cross Lake First Nation, are finalized in the near future.

Anyone who has travelled in the North and has taken the time to listen to the stories of elders and other residents of the Northern Flood communities will understand the major impact the hydro development has had upon the lives of everyone. These developments have literally changed a whole way of life for a lot of people, particularly those who come from the Northern Flood communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable member. Could I ask those honourable members wanting to carry on a conversation to do so in the loge? I am having difficulty hearing the honourable member at this time.

The honourable member for The Pas, to continue.

Mr. Lathlin: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The lives of those people that I have just referred to will never be the same again. No amount of money or land or any other material compensation could ever replace what has been lost by these people.

Not that long ago there was a disruption of hydro power in southern Manitoba when some of the transmission towers were knocked over by strong winds. At the time that that happened I was thinking if perhaps that incident made a lot of people in the south realize how very much they depend on northern Manitoba, and so for that reason I thought that this should maybe open the eyes of a lot of people who come from the North and would start supporting programs and services that are so badly needed in northern Manitoba.

So again congratulations to the Nelson House First Nation, and I hope that nothing but good will come from this agreement and that it will benefit the whole community. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 53. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a matter of House business.

Earlier today, I referred Bill 25 to the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs for tomorrow morning. I gather it is a little problematic, and so I would like to withdraw that bill from the committee for tomorrow morning and deal with it at a later time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: It does not have to be agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Then the meeting for Bill 25 on Municipal Affairs will be withdrawn from committee for tomorrow. Agreed.

Bill 8—The Chiropractors Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), Bill 8, The Chiropractors Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les chiropractistes) standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have canvassed individuals and organizations involved in this area with respect to this amendment, and from the comments of the ministers and from the feedback we have received thus far, it appears that there is no major problem with the passage of this bill into committee to allow us in the House to hear from the public with respect to their comments on the amendment to The Chiropractors Act. This is the first significant amendment, I believe, since 1932, and the amendments largely bring the act into line with that of other professional bodies in the province of Manitoba. It also allows for an expanded capacity of chiropractors to carry out some additional duties for the treatment of their patients' ailments which we agree with certainly in principle.

So, with those few comments, I can indicate that I will be the only speaker on our side of the House with respect to this act. We look forward to the public presentations in committee to be made on this act.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the same here on our side of the House with this bill, The Chiropractors Amendment Act. The minister, when he made his comments, said he had consulted with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba;

therefore, we feel that if he has consulted—and I think seeing it go to committee as soon as possible. So, if there are people who are interested to make comments at committee stage, we will let it go to committee as soon as possible. Therefore, I will be the only speaker, and let us send it to committee. Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 8. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 9—The Public Health Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), Bill 9, The Public Health Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is it the will of the House to have it stand? No.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, similarly to the comments that I made during the passage of the last bill to committee, I will be the only speaker for our party with respect to this particular amendment.

What the bill seeks to do is to increase significantly the penalties to be applied for violations of The Public Health Act. In principle, this is a positive step insofar as the penalties are far too low with respect to the types of violations. I do not think most Manitobans are aware generally about the significant provisions in The Public Health Act dealing with many aspects of our welfare and many aspects of our health concerns. It varies from food inspection, to livestock inspection, to ventilation, to burials, to medical and dental inspections, use of x-rays, et cetera.

The significance of public health indeed is profound in our lives. Frankly, if one is to review the history of the evolution of modern health care and the evolution of our system of health care, one would find that in fact the changes made in public health provisions are probably the most significant factor that have contributed to the

longevity and to the state of welfare and health of our citizens in the past century.

There are numerous examples, from water supply, to inspection of food, inspection of mechanical and other health devices, that speak volumes about the effect and the benefit of public health to all citizens. So it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the penalties that apply to violations of this act are strictly enforced and strictly upheld.

We have heard, and I am providing these comments by way of preamble or foreshadowing for the minister when we go to committee about some of the concerns I will be raising at committee with respect to these provisions, but we have heard evidence that one of the problems with violations to The Public Health Act has been the fact that penalties that apply are so insignificant that constant violations of this act are of a nonconsequence to violators and hence are a detriment to the enforcement of the act for the protection of all of our health. It is my understanding that that is the government's rationale, and I would hope that is the government's rationale behind the increasing of the penalties under this particular act.

* (1500)

So I will be asking of the minister a little bit more elaboration and explanation of the rationale but, clearly, from our side of the House the increase in penalties is a positive step, and we will be supporting the movement of this particular bill into the committee stage.

I also would like to forewarn the minister that I will be asking him for information when we go to committee with respect to statistical data on the number of convictions and violations under the act, and I will be asking the minister for general information with respect to the enforcement of the act and where the major enforcement provisions have been. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) raised issues in the House yesterday with respect to the enforcement of The Public Health Act and concerns in that regard.

I think when this matter goes to committee we will have a very useful and hopefully helpful discussion with respect to this bill and violations of The Public Health Act. This is a very short bill but I think it can be significant.

I am just going to close my comments by indicating again and re-emphasizing the significant effect that public health enforcement and public health regulations can have on the quality of life in Manitoba. I have been somewhat concerned and somewhat critical of the government over the past few years when I have seen a lessening of some of the application of public health inspections.

I recall the fact that there was a branch of one of the research and technology labs in Manitoba that have now been privatized, unfortunately, a branch that was carrying out something that we could refer to as prophylactic protection. That is, they were going out and trying to anticipate difficulties and problems and trying to determine in advance where we might have problems.

The best example is the hamburger disease. We actually had a scientist who was actually going around to various facilities and checking the meat on the shelf to determine the extent that hamburger disease was a factor, and the level was very significant, surprising, I think, to all Manitobans. We no longer carry out this activity. We no longer have people who are doing analytical studies.

Further I am concerned because the privatization of many of our labs and research facility has meant that there is now a user-pay principle that is now applied to public health, so that water testing and many food testings carried out by municipalities and individuals now have a greater fee attached to them than they did in the past. This serves as a detriment to additional testing. This serves as a detriment to people doing more testing, and, for economic reasons, less testing has, in fact, occurred. Given the moves that the government has made with respect to privatization and the user principle in this area, we will see less testing. I think this is a negative factor in Manitoba, and this is a negative factor with respect to public health.

Again, emphasizing that, if one is to review the literature and if one is to review the evidence, there is absolutely no doubt and any researcher or anyone who is familiar with health and the study of health and epidemiology, not just in this jurisdiction but throughout the world, will tell you that the most significant benefits that have accrued to our population with respect to improving the quality of life and health have been in the areas of public health.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

So we can never go wrong, we can only serve better the cause of our fellow citizens by improving, by expanding our public health provisions. That is why that we are supporting the movement of this particular amendment to committee, and certainly on principle we have no objection to the increase of fines and to the increase of penalties on violators of public health because we owe that to our fellow citizens and fellow Manitobans. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, in regard to Bill 9, The Public Health Amendment Act, I will be the only speaker to put a few comments and say that we want to see it go to committee. We are pleased to see that the increase in the level of fines in the public health will go from \$500 to \$5,000. It also removes the provision that requires the permission of the Minister of Health before a prosecution is initiated. I think it is a good move, and this will make the act consistent with others in other jurisdictions. Therefore, we would like to see it in committee and listen to the people, what they have to say when it goes to committee.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 9, The Public Health Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 10—The Pharmaceutical Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), Bill 10, The Pharmaceutical Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur Les pharmacies), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, I will be the final speaker for our caucus on this piece of legislation, and then we are prepared to pass it through to committee. I asked to speak on this because I wanted to reiterate some of the comments that the member for

Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) had made in that, while the government states that this is a technical and house-keeping bill, a very short piece of legislation, in reality it is another in a long line this session of antidemocratic bills that are designed to further the oligarchical ambitions of this government. It is the furthest from an open government that you can go.

Basically, this bill allows the minister, not the cabinet, to make changes to the formulary, to tell Manitobans what they can and cannot have covered under the eviscerated Pharmacare system that we currently have in our province. Now, people may not understand the distinction between cabinet- versus minister-making decision. Well, it seems to me, there are two major differences. One is that the cabinet is made up of more than one individual and, one would hope, would have a range of opinion there, so that there is the potential for a broader discussion of issues, whereas the minister, even with an advisory committee, is ultimately responsible only to himself. He has the ultimate authority.

The other problem with this is that with a cabinet decision there is a window, there is a degree of openness, there is an ability for the public of Manitoba to access the decisions of cabinet through the process of Orders-in-Council. Now, this bill will preclude that window of openness for the people of Manitoba by giving the minister the right to make changes to the formulary, with potentially devastating impacts to the people of Manitoba.

It is a bad principle, no matter who is in government. Ministers should very seldom have that kind of power, well, I should say, never have the kind of power that is being given to any Minister of Health in this bill. So, on principle, no matter who is in government, this bill is bad, especially in the area of health care, and especially with this government, with its record of devastating the public health care system.

We need to have more openness, not less openness, and especially with this particular Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), who has proven time and time again he is unable or unwilling, and I am being charitable to give him the unable rather than unwilling, to act in the best interests of the people of Manitoba.

Bill 10 gives the Minister of Health in this government unwarranted and unnecessary powers.

In particular, though, I would like to speak just briefly to the comments made by the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), I believe, yes, who on September 23 spoke on this bill in the House, and he stated that it is really, in essence, not very meaningful. He said, it basically adds efficiency to the system of business of running the government. I find it passing strange that a member of the government would say that this legislation, with the unwarranted number, degree of powers given to one individual, is a small, unessential, meaningless piece of legislation.

An Honourable Member: It is called accountability.

Ms. Barrett: The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) says it is accountability. Well, it is the furthest thing from accountability, because the people of Manitoba do not have the ability to look at Orders-in-Council at the very least and say what is happening. Well, they know whom to hold accountable anyway, and they are holding this government accountable.

The other thing is that the member for Emerson said, it is a small piece of legislation, only two or three paragraphs long. I would just like to give the House a couple of examples of small, quote, documents—in one case, a document, in one case, not even a document—that have had an enormous impact on the English-speaking world, on the western world, on the developed world.

The first, which comes from my background, is the Gettysburg Address. The Gettysburg Address is 243 words long, written on the back of an envelope and had an incalculable impact on the Civil War in the United States and, by extension, all of the culture and society of North America in the last 130 years. That was a small piece of writing but certainly not inconsequential.

In the second example that came to my mind when the member for Emerson was speaking comes from the English tradition, and it is my understanding that the English constitution is an unwritten constitution. There is not any piece of paper anywhere in the Commonwealth, nor was there any piece of paper in the Empire preceding it, that documented what had happened. It evolved over

a thousand years from the Magna Carta on through, an unwritten constitution.

Again, Madam Speaker, not even a small document, a nonexistent document, so for the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) to say that because it is a small document it is meaningless, it is unimportant, it is—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Barrett: For the member for Emerson and others of his colleagues to try and trivialize this piece of legislation, because it is a short piece of legislation, is the height of hypocrisy. It is trying to make more opaque, rather than more open, the processes of government. It is eliminating and lessening the accountability because, in order for someone or a government to be accountable, the people to whom they are to be accountable have to know what is happening.

Because there is no Order-in-Council now, because the minister can by fiat dictate and bring in potentially major changes for the people of Manitoba and their health care system, this is not good government. It is not efficient government, it is not effective government, but it is very much following the lines of this government which is not interested in good government. They are not interested in responsive government. They are not interested in accountable government. They are interested in gaining more power for themselves and less accountability to the people of Manitoba. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 10, The Pharmaceutical Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 37—The Ambulance Services Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on Bill 37, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), The Ambulance Services Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les

services d'ambulance), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
[agreed]

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, The Ambulance Services Amendment Act is a more substantive bill in terms of wording, and just following on the comments of the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), I just want to reiterate that short words and the bills that are only a few paragraphs are not any less significant than those that are larger. But this particular bill is a substantive and very substantial amendment to The Ambulance Services Amendment Act.

I have to indicate at the onset that we have problems with this act. In principle, we are supportive and we have raised the issue in this House on numerous occasions. We have raised in the House concerns about the use of stretcher ambulance services and the nonjurisdictional regulation and the confusion and the nonregulation of these services. So, in principle, we are in agreement with a piece of legislation that would finally clarify the role and function of these services and would provide for Manitobans and for all those involved, security in knowing that individuals are being provided with safe and appropriate transportation.

Now, having said that, Madam Speaker, I indicated that we have some problems with this bill. First off, I think that the bill ought not to be The Ambulance Services Act. It should probably be entitled something like the emergency medical response and health transportation act, but having said that, I want to go to the core of our difficulty with this bill.

This bill substantially changes the rules and regulations that apply to services of this kind. As I have indicated, we have called for some kind of clarification of the role that the province would have in regulating these types of services. However, this bill, like others before this Chamber, is again an attempt by the government to move decision making away from the Legislature, away from the public and into the hands of the minister.

For all the reasons enunciated by myself and my previous comments on Bill 10 and for all the reasons enunciated by the member for Wellington very well put

just preceding this speech, we are against that kind of nondemocratic initiative. This government has moved to more of an executive style of management than any other government in provincial history. They have moved, through many bills and through moving through regulations and through moving matters from regulation into the cabinet office, into an executive style of government. The last government in this country that moved to an executive style of government was the late and very unlamented Brian Mulroney, Madam Speaker, and one of the reasons for the downfall of that very bad government was the movement of the government decision-making powers into an executive style of government. It does not matter what political stripe one is, when one moves into the isolated, cloistered cabinet room and makes only decisions based on an executive basis, ultimately, those decisions will not reflect the viewpoints of Manitobans.

Why do I say that? Because there are significant regulations in this bill that deal with the regulation of stretcher service that are not enunciated in the bill, so where are the rules and regulations? Well, the rules and regulations are going to be as decreed by the minister by Order-in-Council, by regulation. Fair enough. I wrote to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). I said, I cannot in good conscience, and our caucus cannot in good conscience, support this bill without having an opportunity to review the regulations that you are going to promulgate with respect to this bill, because frankly most of the regulation and most of the significance of this bill will be contained in regulations.

* (1520)

The minister denied me access to those regulations, and if that was not bad enough, Madam Speaker, the minister indicated there were regulations available and that the minister would not allow members of the opposition to have access to those regulations in order to determine our position with respect to this bill. How can we support a bill that purports to regulate a service when the regulations for that service are contained in regulation and we do not have access to those regulations? It is bad enough we have seen on many occasions that the regulations are not drafted prior to the legislation coming through. That is an occurrence that has happened on many occasions in this Chamber, but what is worse is that the regulations are available, and we in the opposition, we representing the public, do not have

access to those regulations. So how can we have good conscience, how could we pass, how can we support a bill of this kind, one that seeks to regulate a particular service of great significance to tens of thousands of Manitobans that consist of millions of dollars worth of health care expenditures that literally deals with life and death situations and, yet, we do not have access to the regulations that are going to be enacted when this bill becomes law?

So, Madam Speaker, even though I have indicated that, in principle, we have supported some form of regulations—and we have raised questions in this House on this very issue over the past several years—how can we support a piece of legislation that does not tell us what those regulations are, and worse, how can we support a piece of legislation that has regulations already drafted and which we on the opposition side do not have access to?

So we do not know what the ramifications of this bill are. We do not know frankly what the government is going to do in this regard, because the vast majority of provisions in this act are going to be determined by regulation. This policy of the government is very consistent with the theme that has developed, a theme of secrecy, a theme of a frankly bunker mentality that has developed on that side of the House that has resulted in a very—Madam Speaker, no better example exists than the Pharmacare debacle. The Pharmacare botch-up that occurred that was raised in this House yesterday when we saw that the government, because of its poor planning, because of its nonconsultation, because of its secrecy, because of its inability to discuss the issues with Manitobans, botched the Pharmacare changes, cost an additional \$19 million in taxpayer dollars when the government said it was going to save \$20 million.

That is what happens when a government adopts a bunker mentality, when a government becomes so cloistered, sits in the cabinet office and only discusses amongst themselves major issues, that is what happens. That is when you make mistakes, Madam Speaker. That is why we see mistake after mistake after mistake in the health care field. It is because it is a small group of people on that side of the House that are making decisions amongst themselves without expanding to include Manitobans who, after all, have a major stake, a significant stake in legislation of this kind and regulations of this kind.

In good conscience, Madam Speaker, we in the opposition who are representing the public, even if we agreed 100 percent with the application of this bill, could not in good conscience pass this bill or approve this bill when the minister is sitting with the regulations that put flesh on this bill and that define this bill and will not even share them with the opposition. Now, if that is not an affront. I am surprised at members opposite, members opposite who have an understanding and experience in the parliamentary tradition, would not rise up and say to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) surely, surely in the interest of the parliamentary system and in the interest of good government that they would say, surely we must pass these. We ought to provide the opposition with an opportunity to see what the regulations state in this regard.

But, no, I am afraid from comments of members opposite and from the lack of comprehension that we are not going to get that, and it is a serious matter. It is a serious matter because, in my experience, governments tend to defeat themselves, and governments tend to go down under their own momentum, and that kind of mentality, that kind of secret mentality, that kind of mentality where you sit in a bunker and make decisions amongst yourselves, and pat each other on the back and say, boy, we are doing great, and do not reach out is a sure and certain recipe for defeat. That is why this government is in so much trouble. That is why the public has no confidence whatsoever in the health care initiatives, the changing initiatives, the shifting-sands initiatives of this government, Madam Speaker.

You know, I do not expect members opposite to—because they have not in the past—listen to the concerns we raise, Madam Speaker, but I ask them to consider the principle. Consider the principle of a bill. It is regulating an industry. It is regulating a service. It is regulating a major health service that has an act that purports to regulate the service and has numerous, numerous regulations that we do not know about. Consider the implications of that. Even if you do not agree with our opposition, surely you will respect the parliamentary system, surely you respect the right for Manitobans to have an opportunity to look at what we are supposed to pass. That just sets the whole stage for so much that we have seen in initiatives by this government or lack of initiatives by this government and in particular what we have seen in health care on an increasing basis.

Madam Speaker, if we had not leaked the Treasury Board document, about the 100 percent privatization of home care, the government would have tried to sneak it through. The government was going to try to sneak it through, a major, a significant change, if we had not had the opportunity to review the Treasury Board document. The members might laugh, but the Treasury Board document is the government document that was going to privatize 100 percent of home care and charge user fees. If we had not had access to that document, the government would have snuck through the changes to home care. As it is, their plans are certainly, in structure, a disaster waiting to happen, but the complete privatization of a health care system, of a home care system, without consultation of the public is undemocratic. And they were going to sneak it through.

If we had not obtained information about the closure of the hospitals, we would not have been able to save Seven Oaks and attempt to save Misericordia Hospital, because they were trying to sneak through those changes without the public knowing. Madam Speaker, again I return to the \$19 million Pharmacare disaster that the government found itself in. Perhaps if the government had consulted, the government would not have been forced to, six months after the fact, bring in regulations dealing with that loophole. By any count that is a major, major mistake by a government. [interjection]

Maybe the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) will have a chance to debate this issue. I hope she takes advantage of it to talk about it, and perhaps as she is talking from her seat she can have a chance to stand up and perhaps debate and explain to me why this government and this minister has adopted an attitude of hide the information, keep it from the public. Perhaps she could explain to me why the government has refused to release the regulations. How can we in good conscience pass this bill? [interjection]

I certainly would appreciate if the member—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Chomiak: —if the Minister of Education would use the occasion when I have finished debate to stand up and rise and state her comments on the record rather than shouting from her seat, Madam Speaker.

An Honourable Member: I am not shouting—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would appreciate it if the honourable Minister of Education would refrain from debating while the honourable member for Kildonan has been recognized to speak to the bill.

* (1530)

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have other concerns with respect to this bill, and it is respecting the cost that will be attributed to this. Though the Minister of Education may not care, people who are involved in health care and people who are involved in receiving this service do care about the costs that are going to be attached to this service.

Just by way of forewarning to the minister, if this matter goes to committee, we will be looking for information on not only the regulations that apply to this act but the costs that could be attached to this service so that we will know if, as is the case in other areas of health care, we are going to be seeing an increasing offloading of costs on to the sick, onto municipalities, onto other services that provide health care. We have seen the greatest shift of costs from the public health care system onto the individual, the sick individual, under this eight years of this failed government's health initiatives than any other time in provincial history.

We have seen a deliberate attempt to implement user fees on a variety of costs over and over again. Today in the House the minister attempted to suggest that the user fees now attached on the Pharmacare program are done for the purpose of equity, that the rich would pay, but of course the minister's own figures indicate two-thirds of Manitobans are going to be cut off completely from benefits. Indeed, the questions we raised and the examples we cited in Question Period about the senior earning \$15,000 being forced to pay over 200 percent increase in their deductibility or the family of four on an income of \$30,000 being forced to pay 167 percent increase in their deductibility and in fact having to spend over \$1,000 or \$1,600 in drugs prior to receiving any kind of benefit, is that illustrative of the rich in Manitoba?

So we have seen an offloading of costs, and there are concerns in this area that will see further the

implementation of a user fee concept. We already have that, and we have seen that over and over again with respect to the policy as it applies to ambulance care. That, Madam Speaker, raises a very interesting issue. As the government seeks to shut down beds, downsize hospitals and move patients from facility to facility, we are having patients who are sick having to bear the cost of moving from one facility to another through no fault of their own. So, if a program is not offered in one facility and they have to receive a service in another facility, they have to pay the cost, even though it is the government that has cut out the program.

Again, another example of user fees being put on the backs of the sick and the suffering, because it is not the well that are doing that. It is not the well that are moving from hospital to hospital requiring a service; it is the sick. That is what this government has done increasingly, be it the home care equipment supplies, the home care fees that the government is contemplating doing, the removal of eye examinations, the downsizing of chiropractic care in the middle of the budgetary year—all of a sudden there are fewer visits. Over and over again, we see costs being put on the back of the sick and the suffering. I dare say we are going to see more of that through the provisions of the regulations, if we ever see them, with respect to this particular bill.

Madam Speaker, just like in Bill 49, there is a grave concern outside of Winnipeg, and I would guess that members opposite have heard concerns regarding amendments to The Ambulance Services Act, this particular bill. We are canvassing, and I hope members opposite will canvass in their constituencies, those involved to obtain their advice and their information with respect to this bill.

So, if the members opposite are not willing to share information with us and to share the regulations with us, surely they perhaps could share it with their constituents and be able to obtain some information with respect to whether or not this bill should actually be passed into law.

With those few comments with respect to this bill, I say with a great regret that we cannot support a bill where we are not provided with the information that allows us to determine whether or not the very service that this bill purports to regulate—where we are not provided with the

information as to what those regulations will be. It is not even a case, as I indicated earlier, of the government not having those regulations. Indeed, it is a case of the government not wishing to share those regulations with members of the opposition, members of the public or anyone. I think that is a very, very bad precedent. I think it is a very bad decision. I think that makes for bad law and bad legislation. Is it any wonder that the confidence level of Manitobans in this government to manage health care is at an all-time low. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Bill 38—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (2)

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), Bill 38, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? No? Leave has been denied.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I can indicate at the onset that I will be the only speaker from our side of the House with respect to this bill, and that while we will be permitting this bill to go to committee today, we also have some very grave concerns and questions with respect to this particular bill.

While we do not see the same difficulty with this bill as we saw in the previous bill, that is, Bill 37, where the government is refusing to provide the public with information on the regulations that it is purporting to put into law, that it is desiring to put into law, we do have some difficulty with some aspects of this bill, Bill 38.

At the onset, Madam Speaker, one of the problems with this sort of omnibus amendments to bills, like those contained in Bill 38, is that they deal with different subject matter contained in a bill. From time to time the public and members on the opposition can agree with some of the provisions in the amendment but disagree with other provisions in the amendment, and that makes

it very, very difficult to adopt a comprehensive approach to a bill and probably does not serve the public interest.

Let me deal, Madam Speaker, with the three major aspects of the bill that the government is asking us to amend. I want to indicate that we will be questioning the government extensively on the provisions of this amendment at committee, and that is one of the reasons why, while we are opposed to some aspects of this bill because of lack of information and further problems which I will deal with later, we are going to use the committee and hope that the committee stage will permit us an opportunity to obtain more information with respect to these particular amendments.

Now, if one is to look at the comments of the minister with respect to this bill on second reading, it certainly does not provide us with a lot of background or information as to the provisions of this bill. The first difficulty that we have with this bill is the provision that transfers authority to the Minister of Health to make regulations regarding physicians' fees from Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. Again, this is another example—I think it is the third or fourth this session—[interjection]

You know, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh) ought to get up and debate. I know she is chomping at the bit from her seat and constantly is going on, so perhaps she could enter this debate.

* (1540)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind all honourable members, it is only a common courtesy and a courtesy that you, when you have the floor and are speaking, would also be demanding, and that is to permit the member who has been recognized to debate the bill uninterrupted.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, one of the reasons on these particular amendments that I would—Perhaps if members opposite do not want to listen, that is one thing, but I think they might—

An Honourable Member: I am listening, David.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns). There are significant principles involved in these amendments that I think members opposite ought to take back to cabinet and ought to consider.

Again we see another example of the government, by amendment, moving Order-in-Council decisions into the office of the minister, again another move towards executive decision making. This would allow the minister to make, by fiat, by declaration, changes to the fee structure, the medical fee structure in Manitoba, without Order-in-Council, without providing the public with information about what the minister is doing. Now is that significant? That is significant. That is a quarter of a billion dollars of expenditure. That is a quarter of a billion dollars worth of expenditure, Madam Speaker. Do not members opposite think that we in the public ought to have opportunity to have input into that decision? Not by this amendment.

This amendment would move the authority from Order-in-Council to the minister. Now, that may or may not be significant in the eyes of members opposite, but certainly, given the issues that we have raised in previous speeches about this difficulty, it is I think appropriate for us to be skeptical of the government when they do that, given the track record in so many health care decisions. I do not want to repeat what I repeated in my previous comments about some of the terrible decisions that have been made and some of the very bad health decisions and botch-ups that we have seen recently. So, Madam Speaker, it would allow the minister—I suppose the minister—he did not indicate in his comments—might argue that in the interests of expediency and arriving at agreements he ought to be authorized to make these decisions and just do it and take it to cabinet and approve it and go ahead and do it, but I do not accept that, because if one looks at the pattern, if one looks at The Pharmaceutical Act, if one looks at the previous amendments to the prescription drug program, if one looks at the precedents that have been set in The Ambulance Services Act, you see a move towards secretive decision making. If anything, the government should be opening up the decision-making process, particularly in the area of health care. The amendment that allows the minister to make the decisions without Order-in-Council, I think, is, for all the reasons that we have indicated in our previous comments, bad policy. It is bad for the parliamentary system and it is something that we have a good deal of difficulty with.

The other major amendment deals with the Minister of Health being able to determine if someone in Canada under a ministerial immigration permit can qualify as a resident of Manitoba for purposes of medicare. Now,

from the minister's comments, I cannot ascertain specifically why this amendment has been brought in, although I have had experience in dealing with issues of this kind. We believe in principle that this is probably a good amendment insofar as we have seen difficulties between federal and provincial jurisdictions in this area and the ability of people who are here on immigration permits qualifying for health care coverage.

If we recognize in principle that one of the benefits and one of the rights of Canadians is access to health care, then the ability of an individual who is here on an immigration permit to have access to health care is something, and allowing the minister to have the power and the authority to declare that, I think is probably a positive step, although I do have some concerns and we will be querying the minister at committee with respect to the use of this power. But in principle we certainly are supportive of the principle that people who come to this jurisdiction and are here in Manitoba with valid credentials ought to have the right and access to the health care system. I think that this partially arises, although I do not know, and, again, this will be something that we will try and ascertain at committee, this partially arises from a much publicized case recently in Manitoba with respect to individuals. I can indicate that I have had personal dealings in matters of this kind, and it seems to me and we seem to feel in principle that this is probably a positive step, subject to clarification from the minister.

The third major aspect of this amendment is the provisions respecting per diem personal care charges and income and giving authority for the charging of fees in personal care homes. Now, I am not clear why this particular amendment is necessary, and certainly the government has had authority in the past, and it is not clear to me why the government is requiring further authority in this act to charge for services. Now the minister implied and indicated in his comments that this was routine nature and the implication was this is housekeeping. Frankly, from our experience with the government in health care in the past few years, any provision dealing with the charging of user fees is something that we want to take a very close look at, because this government has gone so far down the road with the provision of user fees and the application of user fees that Manitobans are paying millions and millions of dollars. There are actually sick Manitobans who are

paying millions and millions of dollars more in user fees as a result of changes brought in by this government under the so-called health care reform.

So, Madam Speaker, we are somewhat suspicious of this particular provision, and we will be querying the minister about the need for this particular change and about the manner and fashion in which it is going to be applied because, when one deals specifically with the per diem rates of personal care homes, there is probably no better example of Conservative Party health care reform than that, the negative Conservative Party health care reform. We see Manitobans paying tens of millions of dollars more out of their pockets to be residents of personal care homes at the time when the government's contribution to personal care homes is not up, but it is down, and the government is paying less to personal care homes—

An Honourable Member: Not true, Dave.

* (1550)

Mr. Chomiak: It is true. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) ought to check the last annual report and the last Estimates. I will send them to him tomorrow if he would like. It will indicate that the government is paying less money to personal care homes now than they did three years ago, \$3 million less, in fact, if memory serves me correctly. That money is being offset from—is being paid directly by the users. Now there is a debate about what the level should be, and there has always been a debate, and there has always been a fee that has been charged, but this government has literally doubled the fee. The government has literally doubled the fee, and the contribution from those in personal care homes is doubled. The government's share of the contribution has dropped, and the individual share of the contribution has gone way up, Madam Speaker.

So we are justifiably concerned about every time we see amendments brought in by this government, particularly omnibus amendments that deal with the charging of fees. We are justifiably concerned as to what this government is up to, Madam Speaker, because we have already indicated on numerous occasions that the government has slipped through—and that is compounded by the fact that the government is attempting to move decision making away from the public forum and back into the cabinet

room, to the back rooms of cabinet, where they can make all these changes without alerting the public. That causes a good deal of difficulty, obviously, for Manitobans. It is not only bad from a policy standpoint, but it is a bad health care policy, because any study will show you that user fees are not appropriate.

It is ironic that the minister stands up and says time and time again, we do not charge user fees. I do not know what his definition of user fees is, but if you talk about the doubling of personal care home rates, if you talk about the destruction of the Pharmacare program, the elimination of two-thirds of Manitobans from Pharmacare benefits and, in many cases, the increase of 200 percent and 300 percent of people's deductibility, if you talk about the home care equipment supply user fees, you can talk about the deinsurancing of eye examinations, you can talk about the decline in insuring of chiropractic visits, you can talk about the soon-to-be declining benefits under lab and X-ray technologies, if you talk about the soon-to-be announced, I would presume, elimination of physical examinations for men under Pharmacare, what is that but user fees, Madam Speaker? So I think that members on this side of the House are justifiably concerned when it comes to the imposition of these kind of charges.

So, Madam Speaker, with those few comments, I am going to indicate that we are reluctantly moving this bill on to committee stage because we have a considerable number of questions that we wish to determine from the minister when this particular bill goes to public hearings at the committee stage. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 38, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Loi no2 modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie). Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 49—The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of

Health (Mr. McCrae), Bill 49, The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant Les offices régionaux de la santé et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), who has 24 minutes remaining, and standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

Is there leave to permit it to remain standing? [agreed]

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to rise and put some words on record regarding Bill 49, The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act.

As our Health critic and various other of my colleagues have pointed out, Bill 49 is not a good piece of legislation, it is a bad piece of legislation. In its thrust, it gives the appearance of decentralization and democracy, but it is the appearance of democracy only. It is the glitter on the outside. It is not the substance.

This bill will politicize the health care system even more than it is now politicized. There is not even a mention of the five basic cornerstones of medicare, the five basic principles underlying the Canada Health Act: universality, comprehensive coverage, portability, accessibility in public administration. This piece of legislation could easily have been drafted in New Zealand and was probably borrowed from New Zealand, or it could have been drafted in the Newt Gingrich never, never land south of the border. This bill does not reflect what Manitobans want in health care, does not reflect the direction that Canadians want to go in health care.

This bill is an attempt to camouflage the cuts that are coming, and while the province has to endure the spectacle of \$250,000 worth of glossy ads extolling the virtues of our health system, and while the minister handpicks loyal Tories to chair the regional health authorities—all men, by the way, and men who undoubtedly will be handsomely rewarded on a per diem basis—the rest of us will have to watch as a cynical, tired, arrogant third-term government savages what was once a good health care system, in fact, even a great health care system, but I do not suggest that you should take my word for it.

I would now like to take a look at the concerns of the Manitoba Health Organizations. They have at least 50 concerns, but we can boil them down to at least eight, and I will go over them very briefly, Madam Speaker, before I go into some detail.

The Manitoba Health Organizations' first concern was that the decision making is too centralized. The minister garners too much power onto himself. Secondly, the concern for MHO was that there is an evolution of a health care by regulation, rather than by a public or legislated process. That is a dangerous direction to go. The third concern was that regulatory power is starting to override statutory power and especially as it applies to The Labour Relations Act. Fourthly, the bill has made virtually no reference to the nature and status of community health centres, nor is there any reference to the guiding principles for the delivery of primary health care as developed by the Health Advisory Network task force on primary health care in 1994. Fifthly, the act is very vague, or even silent. I guess, on any appeals processes. We know there will be disputes, that there will be labour relations issues, yet there are no appeal processes spelled out. The sixth concern that MHO has—

Point of Order

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would like you to ask the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), as you have asked him before in this House, to please show common courtesy, and if he has comments to make, he should make them on the record, not from his seat. He has been in this House far too long for this not to be the case.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Government Services, on the same point of order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): Madam Speaker, perhaps you could rule on this, but I believe the last time that we looked you were the Speaker and the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was the member for Wellington only. If that is correct, then I would ask the member for Wellington to stop interrupting her own members when they are trying to present ideas for us to listen to in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I really appreciate the assistance I get from both sides of the House quite

regularly, but the honourable member for Wellington is indeed correct. She does have a point of order. I would ask that indeed all honourable members observe common courtesy and not interrupt the member that has been recognized to debate on the bill.

* * *

Mr. Jennissen: Madam Speaker, the sixth concern that MHO had was Part 6 of the transitional provisions respecting employees. They suggest, and I think they are absolutely correct, that it is too adversarial. The act grants extraordinary powers to the commissioner who is not publicly accountable. Labour relations issues should be dealt with by the Manitoba Labour Board. That is the proper board to deal with labour relations issues.

Seventhly, the act adds levels of bureaucracy, so we have now, besides local boards and the Department of Health, regional boards and district health advisory councils. That seems to me to be a question of overkill. Now, some more cynical members of the House have suggested it was a job creation strategy for unemployed but loyal Tories. I do not know, Madam Speaker.

An Honourable Member: How many of them?

Mr. Jennissen: At least 10.

An Honourable Member: Did you find that many Tories up north?

Mr. Jennissen: Oh, nine.

Number 8, the concern that Manitoba Health Organizations had was the repeated vague references in the bill to the charging of fees for unnamed services, because MHO feels and I feel along with them that this will translate into more user fees, more deinsuring of health services—

* (1600)

Point of Order

Mr. Pallister: A point of order, I was having trouble hearing the comments from the member for Flin Flon because the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was engaging in a rather loud conversation with the member

for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) at the back of the House. I am wondering if we could restore order in the Chamber, please, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Government Services indeed does have a point of order. The honourable members have been requested before, but I would also ask that the honourable members who are standing at the back of the Chamber to either have the meetings in the loge or outside the Chamber, so that we can all ensure that order and decorum is first priority in this Chamber.

* * *

Mr. Jennissen: So MHO is concerned that the charging of fees for unnamed services will translate into more user fees, more deinsuring of health services and more erosion of the basic tenets of the Canada Health Act. Core services must be spelled out and continue to be insured, continue to be protected.

Now, Madam Speaker, I listed those eight major concerns that MHO had. I would like to go into just a little bit more detail about those very valid concerns, without even touching the hundred basic concerns that our Health critic has about this bill.

First of all, decision making being too centralized. It is a concern we have because it is not an isolated incident. It is a habit this government seems to have, and we see it also in other areas, for example, with the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). Ministers are granting themselves a lot more power than we feel they should have.

Now, I find this particularly disturbing because this government talks a lot about open government, broad public consultation and responding and listening to the grassroots, and saying that on the one hand and then giving more power to ministers makes mockery of this concept. The minister makes the real decisions, but his appointed regional health boards will take all the political flak. In fact, we are asking ourselves questions here in this House as well as up north, Madam Speaker, is there any chairperson of any regional health authority right now that is not a Tory? Are any of these chairpersons skilled, or have they been trained in the complexities of delivering health care?

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

It seems to me that when the minister or his staff exclusively appoint Tories as directors of regional health authorities and hand-pick other Tories for this authority that the guiding criterion is loyalty to the party, not competence necessarily, not critical decision-making ability necessarily, nor is it necessarily an accurate reflection of the wishes and beliefs of the people of that region.

For example, today I learned that the Norman Regional Health Board has nine members on it. I suppose there could be 15, but some of my colleagues have facetiously pointed out we could not find 15 Tories up north. That is probably not true, but it is disturbing when we take a look at the composition of this board. For example, of the nine appointees three of them were Tories that ran for office and lost. So a third of the board are Tories. Now, that is an awful lot of Tories on a board when very few people vote Tory in that region, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Also, on that board we have only two people out of the nine that are of aboriginal descent. Now we know that at least 50 percent of the people living up there are aboriginal, and there is a bit of tokenism. There is no gender parity, but there is a bit of tokenism. There is one woman on the board, one out of nine, but I am almost positive that 50 percent of the population up there is female. So we do not see an accurate reflection on those boards of the population composition of the North, that is for sure.

Now we feel on this side of the House that we should be democratic, that boards should be elected, that regional boards should be elected as well as local boards. Some members opposite have said, well, local boards are usually not elected. Well, that is no excuse. Maybe we should start setting a progressive trend.

A further concern I have is the remuneration for the chairpersons and the members of these regional health authorities. I know they get a certain stipend. I do not know how much that is. It is not very much, but I do believe the per diems are extremely high, and, again, if this is the case, this would be most annoying because funds are going to another bureaucratic level that is appointed and not going to the people that really need it. So it is not just annoying, I guess, it is downright

dangerous and scary to see that hand-picked Tory loyalists are getting rewarded while health care workers in the front line are taking cuts. I can already see the headlines, health care workers shafted, Tory loyalists rewarded.

Also, there appears to be considerable confusion regarding the length of service of these hand-picked boards. I think originally they were supposed to serve for one year before elected boards would be phased in. Now we do not know if that is going to be two years or three years or perhaps never. The main question remains: Why not elected boards? Is the minister afraid that elected boards would refuse to implement the draconian measures, the huge cuts that are coming down the pipeline? Do the boards exist basically to deflect the heat away from the government and from the minister? The answer to that, my honourable colleague says, is yes.

The second point that MHO made, and I would like to go into some detail here, is the concern about the evolution of health care via regulation. This would by-pass public hearings, by-pass input by stakeholders and would by-pass the legislative process. It would by-pass this Chamber. The interests of users, providers and funders of the health care system must be balanced. This requires broad consultation and support. Removing large sections from public scrutiny or from debate in this Chamber is not a healthy direction and it is certainly not a democratic direction. Democratic processes should never be supplanted by technocrats and bureaucrats.

Talking about debate in this Chamber, I wish the government would allow more of its members to at least defend the bills they are submitting. We have talked about a gag order, and we would like to know the reasons for the gag order. I am sure it is more than just time constraints. Could it be that some of the bills are so bad that the government cannot even persuade its own backbenchers to defend these bills? I presume in these bills there is much to be ashamed of, at least in this bill.

In the guise of restructure and reforming health care, we on this side of the House smell more cutbacks, more slashing, more hacking. If there are any benefits, they may well go to a handful of technocrats or loyal board appointees, whose job it is to screen the minister and his government from the public wrath that this bill will inevitably engender when it is fully implemented.

But we do expect this kind of behaviour from a minimalist government, because this government wants to run health care like a big corporation, and they find, this government finds that debate is inefficient, that democracy is too slow. Bill 49 is true to form. The minister has the real power, the boards shield the minister, the technocrats run the system, and the people's voice means nothing or very little.

This government used the Legislature, this Legislature, as an annoyance, not as part of the democratic process.

The third concern that the Manitoba Health Organizations had was regulatory power overriding statutory power. This is especially the case in connection with The Labour Relations Act. It would be fair to say that this government has not had an harmonious relationship with labour. I only have to point out the home care workers strike or the casino workers strike.

Frankly, why should any worker in this province trust this government? Ask virtually any health care worker, any educator, for that matter, anyone who has seen this government attempt to slash and cut its way to an alleged better tomorrow. I put emphasis on the word "alleged."

There are fears that certain aspects of Bill 49 will give the Minister of Health the power to become a mini-Minister of Labour or, if not the Minister of Health, then at least his appointed commissioner, and my honourable colleague from Kildonan has already pointed this out. Regulatory power should not be allowed to override statutory power.

The fourth concern of the Manitoba Health Organizations was that although this minister and this government put a lot of emphasis and certainly put out a lot of rhetoric on community-based health systems, they do not really practise it.

This bill hardly mentions community health centres. What happened to their announcement initiative entitled Next Steps? We agree that community-based health services are less costly than institutional services. So why not strengthen that approach? Why start an initiative, then abandon it or ignore it or underfund it?

There is no overall focus in this bill. It is a scattergun approach. Of course, the real fact is that if you want

community-based health care that is effective, you must fund it, you must allow it to be locally controlled to be maximally effective.

What have we instead? No local control, we have fiefdoms. The minister acts as a king; he appoints RHA chairpersons as his vassals. My honourable colleague from Elmwood was absolutely right when he stated about Bill 49, that the real purpose behind this bill is twofold, namely, that it is to create an administrative system that (a) deflects criticism away from the government, and (b) in the light of balanced budget legislation, guts the old system to replace it with a new privatized system.

Part and parcel of this will be massive cuts to health funding, increase in user fees and deinsuring of various medical services. In other words, we see the slow birth of an American health care system. So the inevitable result will be a two-tiered system, one for the poor, one for the rich, and, of course, using the minister's own guidelines, I guess, two-thirds of the province is rich, so one-third of us can expect to be hurt by this alleged new system.

Fifthly, the Manitoba Health Organizations were concerned that the act is silent in regard to appeal processes. Various health authorities will be created, amalgamated and dissolved. We know there will be disputes, that there will be consumer appeals, labour relations issues and so on with no clearly spelled out appeals mechanism in place.

* (1610)

This means that the centralizing power the minister has given himself via this act is ominous news for those individuals and organizations who will be negatively affected by Bill 49. This does not sound even remotely like open government to me. This sounds more like totalitarianism, the kind of totalitarianism the government decries when it comes from the left and it holds in reverence and sanctions when it comes from the right.

Sixthly, Manitoba Health Organizations is very concerned that Part 6 of the bill, Transitional Provisions Respecting Labour Relations and Employees, is much too controversial and too adversarial. Given this government's less than sterling record in relations to labour in

this province, it is almost an act of vindictiveness to create a special commissioner. This commissioner has no public accountability, and yet this person will be given extraordinary powers. In fact, we can take an example, Part 6, Section 65(1)(b), "The commissioner shall make recommendations for each regional health authority established or continued under this Act respecting which union shall be certified as the bargaining agent for the employees in each such bargaining unit."

Why should the commissioner who is beyond public scrutiny be given such powers? Why even have a commissioner? Since the chairpersons of the regional health authorities are well-known loyal Tories, I presume that the appointed commissioner will be a super-Tory, and this from a government that preaches restraint and cutbacks. Another bureaucrat, another level of bureaucracy and almost a guarantee that this bureaucrat or level of bureaucracy will be hostile to labour. Labour relations issues should be dealt with by the Manitoba Labour Board; they have a proven record. A commissioner would only be another appointee in the back pocket of the Minister of Health. It would be a step that would politicize health care into unknown and dangerous directions.

The seventh major concern of the Manitoba Health Organizations was that this government does not listen to the people it claims to represent. In October 1994 in forums sponsored by this government, presenter after presenter asked for less bureaucracy in the existing health system. What is Bill 49 doing? It is adding more levels of bureaucracy.

An Honourable Member: Does that make sense?

Mr. Jennissen: My honourable colleague from St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) says, does that make sense? It obviously does not make sense.

We had the Department of Health and local boards. Now we are going to get the Department of Health, local boards, regional boards, perhaps even two Winnipeg superboards and a commissioner. I could almost add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is next? A partridge in a pear tree? Only this government, using Mulroney mathematics, could conclude that if two levels of bureaucracy are too much, then four or five or six levels are not enough.

The eighth concern that the Manitoba Health Organizations had was a concern relating to the repeated references to the charging of fees for unnamed services. In fact, to quote MHO, we do not support the insidious deinsuring of health services and do not believe that such an important issue can be left entirely to regulations. At a minimum the act should include broad categories of service which will continue to be insured; for example, an MHO list of the categories to be insured: health education; health promotion and disease prevention; communicable disease control; public health services; social services; home care services; long-term care residential services; rehabilitative services; chronic care services; acute care services; palliative care services; diagnostic services; and emergency services. Unquote.

Core services must be protected and MHO rightly senses that this government through this bill is well on the way down the slippery slope of increased user fees. We seen how Pharmacare costs have escalated for the average family, similarly, we can well imagine more deinsuring of health care services taking place, more user fees.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were eight basic concerns of Manitoba Health Organizations. They have many other concerns as we do also. Our Health critic, our respected colleague the MLA for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), has formulated a hundred questions on regional boards that need answers before we can even get serious about Bill 49. The minister and his staff would do well to look at these hundred questions, because Bill 49 is not acceptable to us as it stands now. The member for Kildonan suggested that the government withdraw this legislation and go back to the drawing board, put out a white paper and after extensive input of stakeholders actually listen to what is being recommended and draft an alternative legislation. That would be the sensible thing to do, the practical thing to do, the nonideological thing to do, but that would mean real consultation and that would mean real decentralization of power away from the minister. That would mean the end of appointees and pork-barrel politics with regard to regional board members, the end of the cuts. In short, it would mean dealing with substance, not with show. Because right now many Manitobans as well as members on this side of the House have grave reservations about Bill 49. It is a decidedly un-Canadian piece of legislation. Bill 49 would exacerbate an already explosive situation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, whenever possible, I visit the Flin Flon General Hospital and visit both health care workers and patients, and what do I see? A dedicated staff worked to the bone; patients worrying that their nurses are going to crack under the stress; nurses feeling that they cannot guarantee safe care because of the staff cuts. Morale is low, physicians are leaving, the hospital is short-staffed, especially at night. There is only one nurse on emergency, wards are being amalgamated, creating more stresses. We are looking at staffing cuts of 13 percent. Many health care workers have had their hours reduced, and this is a hospital that services a huge northern region, not just in Manitoba but also in northern Saskatchewan.

Flin Flon is a mining city. If there ever were, and let us hope there never will be, a major catastrophe in the mines, how could this hospital cope? They are already stressed to the max. And after northern hospitals faced \$4.5 million in cuts, are they now to brace for even more cuts in 1998? They have already cut to the bone. What could they possibly cut next?

I see nothing in Bill 49 that would alleviate the situation for Flin Flon General Hospital. More cutbacks will mean more job losses, will mean more patients will have to be stabilized and flown to Winnipeg, and costs will escalate, but Winnipeg is cutting hospital beds too, and there are not enough life flights to meet critical, periodic demands now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would dearly wish that Bill 49 was a step in the right direction, but it is not. I would dearly wish that Bill 49 was the beginning of a solution that would erase our health care problems or at least minimize them in this province, but it is not even an attempt at a solution. I think it is part of the problem.

Scarce dollars that should go to areas of greatest need are syphoned off for new levels of bureaucracy and for rewards for Tory hacks. This bill is full of cynical politics. It has little to do with that first, pristine vision which first created medicare in Saskatchewan over 30 years ago, and I am proud to have been part of that, and the same right-wing establishment that reviled Tommy Douglas over 30 years ago because he dared to introduce medicare is now trying to recapture what they lost—medicare for profit, user fees, two-tiered health care system, one system for the rich, one for the rest.

We fought for medicare then, despite the howls of the right-wing establishment, and we will continue to fight for it now. Bill 49 does little to advance civilized health care, compassionate health care, a system that is based on needs, not a system that is based on the size of our wallets.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not condemn regionalization. As the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) has pointed out when he discussed Bill 49 on September 18, regionalization has been an established feature of the delivery of health care in Europe for almost 40 years. Community-based health system, local control, local governments, is democratic, desirable and efficient, but this is not what we are getting here.

In this proposed regionalization, the minister retains complete control. As the member for Crescentwood aptly point out, we are talking about a full circle, a closed circle, a closed system. The minister provides the funding, he drafts the regulation, he hires the staff, he delivers the service, he holds the data. Neat and efficient, yes; democratic, no. It is much more of a feudal structure than a modern, democratic structure.

* (1620)

We on this side of the House have serious concerns about the antidemocratic nature of Bill 49. There is a lot of talk about grassroots democracy and the devolution of power by members opposite, but they do not really practise it, and the longer this government is in power the more arrogant it seems to become. They would never have dared to draft this legislation in their first term of office. They would not have dared, but pride goes before the fall. By-passing the people and the Legislature will cost this government, because there is a steep price to be paid for arrogance. We hope, and we are probably hoping in vain, that the government will reconsider, that the minister will reconsider and retract Bill 49. We hope, and we are probably hoping in vain, that the minister will fire his appointed directors, not because they are bad people—I do not believe any of them are—but because they are redundant, and they have not been elected, they have been appointed.

We do not need another level of costly bureaucracy, and there is no more insidious, cancerous breed of bureaucracy than appointed Tory bureaucracy. Those of

us who do not believe that can visit the Saskatchewan jails where the former Tory cabinet ministers are spending some time at the taxpayers' expense.

We hope, and we are probably hoping in vain, that the minister will circulate a white paper and, after extensive public consultation, draft legislation that will create democratic regionalization of our health system. Manitobans are tired of the authoritarian, top-down approach favoured by this government. Manitobans deserve better. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Barrett: I would, too, like to speak very briefly about Bill 49, the regional health boards, and I would like to ask a few questions of the government and of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), and they deal with accountability.

Now, this is a word that this government bandies about with great abandon, a word that they do not appear to understand the meaning of. As a matter of fact, instead of accountable, this legislation along with many other pieces of legislation in this session decreased the accountability to the people of Manitoba and increased the power in the hands of the cabinet and in many cases in the hands of the minister himself.

So just a few questions that I would like to put on the record, and I hope the Minister of Health is able to answer these questions in debate in the House or most certainly at the committee hearings. I think we speak for the people of Manitoba who are very concerned about the direction this government is taking and would like the answers to some of these questions.

Why are the regional boards mandated to make their rules and by-laws public when many of the minister's rules and regulations are not made public? Again it would appear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that what is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander, and if the regional health boards are going to be held accountable to the public that they represent, the Minister of Health, who is supposedly representing the best issues of all Manitobans, should be equally as responsible. Unfortunately, in this bill and others he is choosing not to be.

Why must the boards submit their plans to the minister, but the minister is not required to submit his plans to the

board? Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how can regional health boards do the job that they are appointed to do if they do not know the full range of what the minister's plans are? If they are operating in isolation one from another, they cannot possibly do an adequate job. Again, it goes back to accountability. The minister must be at least as open as he is requiring his health boards to be.

Why are regional health boards required to hold annual meetings, but the minister is not? If we are decentralizing, if we are going to be more grassroots oriented, it is incumbent upon not only the regional health boards to be open but the minister to be open and to be held accountable annually, if not more frequently, to the people of Manitoba. Given the fact that so many of the pieces of legislation before us in this House provide a screen between the minister and the people of Manitoba, it is essential that he remain accountable to the people of Manitoba. He is becoming less and less accountable, although he is requiring his regional boards to be very accountable.

If the regional authority is going to provide to the health needs in the community and provide for assessment of those health needs in the community, why does the minister retain the power to arbitrarily eliminate the requirements or needs of that region? Again, we have the hypocrisy of Bill 49 as other bills. On the one hand, the minister says the regional health boards will have all sorts of accountability factors to hedge around their actions, but it does not really ultimately matter because the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) can do whatever he wants to do anyway. He does not have to follow what the regional health boards say. He can, with a flick of a pen, eliminate everything that the regional health board says is important, and he is the only one who is accountable to himself. This is not democracy; this is dictatorship.

If the boards must provide regional and yearly plans, why do we not see the same requirements for the minister to provide this type of information to the public? Again the same thing, if a minister is going to be accountable, it has to be open, and this minister, this bill does not provide for any openness for any accountability.

I would like to ask the government why this particular act, of all the acts in the Legislature that deal with the health of the people, is given superior authority over all other acts dealing with health in the province? I have an

answer, and I imagine that the government will be willing to tell whether my answer is correct or not. I think it goes back to the fact that this act gives the minister enormous powers, enormous discretionary powers, hidden from the people of Manitoba. That is why this piece of legislation is of a higher order than any of the other health bills in this province. That is wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not accountable, open government.

Why does the provincial government become the final arbiter of what services can be provided? Who was ultimately responsible? Is it the boards who were supposed to develop the policy or the government who appears to be the main funder? Again, who is in charge here? It appears that the government is giving a great deal of responsibility to the regional health boards, but at the same time, the ultimate authority is still in the hands of the minister, without any accountability to the people of Manitoba or even to the regional health boards. The minister can do what the minister wants to do, and there is nothing the rest of the people of Manitoba can do about it except lump it until the next provincial election. That is not good health care. That is not going to lead to good health. Why was unprecedented power given to the minister to appoint an official administrator to take over a region? Again, to act as a surrogate to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). This is not accountability.

There are several other questions I would like to ask the government, but my time is growing short. I guess, the final one that I would suggest to the minister or anybody else on the government side, if they would choose to debate this piece of legislation, if this regional health model is to be community-based, why are all the discretionary powers and all the final decisions left in the hands of the minister? I think this is, to me, one of the ultimate and basic questions about this legislation. Health care is our responsibility. It is also our right. What this minister is doing, what this government is doing with Bill 49 and other bills like it in the Legislature this session is, it is taking that right and that responsibility unto itself. It is not giving the people of Manitoba the information that they need to make decisions about their health care system.

It would be bad enough if the government was open and honest with the people of Manitoba and says, we do not trust you, we are going to take all this power unto ourselves because we do not trust you, because we hold

the purse strings, and we are the only ones that are going to make the decisions. At least we would know where we stand with this government. But this government tries to hide and obfuscate and pull a veil of secrecy over what it is actually going to do. That is why they are not debating this piece of legislation, because they know that is exactly what this government is doing.

The people of Manitoba are not stupid. The people of Manitoba are already speaking out. They are very concerned about this legislation, as we are, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With those few words, I would close my remarks on Bill 49.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

The hour now being 4:30 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

* (1630)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 13—Shutdown of AECL

Mr. Ben Sveinsson (La Verendrye): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today and introduce private members' Resolution 13.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that

WHEREAS the Whiteshell Research Laboratories of the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. is an important part of the scientific research activity taking place in Manitoba and western Canada; and

WHEREAS the Whiteshell Research Laboratories is home to many unique scientific facilities and projects; and

WHEREAS the Whiteshell Research facility provides a significant contribution to the economy of Manitoba and western Canada; and

WHEREAS the Whiteshell Research facility is a major employer in eastern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. centre, in preparing its next budget, is considering the closure of its facilities in western Canada and their consolidation in Chalk River, Ontario; and

WHEREAS the Chalk River site is in need of much capital improvements, while the Whiteshell facility is far more modern with better infrastructure; and

WHEREAS the cost of doing business in Manitoba is now more competitive than other jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS crown institutions and facilities should have the opportunity to prove their value and worth to the taxpayer.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call upon the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. centre and the federal government to put forward their plans and options for the future of the facility, including the financial analysis on which their proposal is based; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call upon Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. and the federal government to provide a long-term and viable commitment to the Whiteshell Research Laboratories.

Motion presented.

Mr. Sveinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and introduce this resolution. The urgency for this resolution has quite recently been underscored with the news that AECL has confirmed 20 engineers from a small reactor division will be moved to Toronto to begin work on two medical isotope reactors being constructed at the Crown company's Chalk River facility. This decision by AECL is shortsighted and flies in the face of an agreement from AECL to hold off all transfers and layoffs until after the task force has finished its work. Their reasoning that the agreement was to wait until after the report was released not until after the federal government had fully responded to it can be described as splitting hair. Unfortunately, the hairs they are splitting belong to the 1,800 residents of Pinawa.

Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. is a federal Crown corporation which reports to Parliament through the Minister of Natural Resources. Its mission is to do research on nuclear energy and use the result to develop commercial operations. The company's objective is to secure maximum benefit for Canada from associated research and development of Candu reactor technology. The Whiteshell Laboratories, since its inception in 1963, has had a significant positive impact on both the local economy as well as the economy of Manitoba. AECL provides a grant to the local government district estimated at \$800,000 a year, or 80 percent of its \$1-million annual budget. It provides another \$120,000 for the school system. The mayor of Pinawa, Lorne Swanson, has summed up his community's anxiety. We have no raw materials. We do not have an enormous market. We are limited in our options. We will keep looking to keep our options open, but I just do not know.

A review of the economic impact of AECL will emphasize its contribution. The 1990-91 total expenditures of AECL Whiteshell Laboratories were \$91.5 million, \$78.2 million of which was expended directly in Manitoba. Of this \$78.2 million, \$66.4 million is estimated to have stayed in this province in the form of \$54.3 million in labour income and \$12.1 million in commodity purchases supported by Manitoba's industry. The \$78.2 million in Manitoba expenditure is estimated to have levered \$98.7 million in additional spending in Manitoba for a gross production level of \$176.9 million. This is a growth benefit to the Manitoba economy which can be further described as increasing by \$2.26 for each \$1 spent by AECL—a 1996 economic impact study by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics reported Manitoba expenditures of \$72 million by AECL in 1995—of those expenditures, 85.5 cents were spent in Manitoba itself.

Whiteshell Laboratories employs approximately 700 full-time and part-time employees in research and development. The facility has provided as many as 1,000 quality, state-of-the-art, high-technology jobs to Manitoba for 33 years. Our government recognized the importance of the Whiteshell Laboratories, and took a lead role last December when AECL's plan to close Whiteshell was leaked to the media. A task force composed of the Honourable Len Derkach, the Honourable Darren Praznik, the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), the member for The Maples (Mr.

Kowalski), the Pinawa mayor, Lorne Swanson, the reeve of the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet and myself travelled to Ottawa to make the closure an issue and seek the intervention of the federal Natural Resources minister in this matter.

As part of our presentation, we asked for a fair opportunity for Whiteshell to compete for any work in a downsized AECL rather than have it all consolidated at the Chalk River site. Through the efforts of senior federal cabinet minister the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy the federal government appointed a task force under the leadership of Peter Siemens to investigate this situation and develop proposals for the survival of the Whiteshell Lab. Our government participated fully in this task force through our one provincial representative allowed, Mr. Stuart Duncan, Secretary to the Economic Development Board.

The result of these efforts, as I am sure we are all aware, was a task force report provided last June to the federal government, recommending that AECL set up a new and independent company to manage the site and to be responsible for transferring various AECL programs, activities and technologies to new entities or private-sector partners for the purpose of commercialization and eventually building a financial healthy site in Manitoba.

* (1640)

With respect to the provincial government involvement, the task force called for the province to have a role through its existing programs in working with these new companies and to help them grow. Our government has made it clear that we will not backfill federal reductions to Whiteshell Laboratories with direct provincial grants. However, the province will consider assistance in financing viable attempts and new commercial options through existing programs such as Grow Bonds and REDI as it would any commercial venture. Also, new companies may be eligible for unique provincial tax programs such as the manufacturing investment tax credit and research and development tax credit.

The difficulty with this situation, further illustrated by the recent announcement that 20 positions are to be moved to Chalk River, is that the federal government has failed to make Manitoba aware of the course of action they plan to take.

A serious concern our government and Manitobans have with the federal government and AECL is their lack of development and sharing of a long-term plan. The reasoning for this lack of planning is two-fold. Firstly, I understand that AECL is reluctant to give up several of its technologies and programs to a new company it would not have direct control over. Secondly, AECL has never made a provision in its current funding for either the closure of Whiteshell Laboratories or a transaction to a new company.

AECL's agreement of 1960 with the Province of Manitoba obligates AECL to pay an annual grant in lieu of taxes for Whiteshell Laboratories and the Pinawa town site. This agreement is still in effect today, and we continue to ensure this obligation is met. There exists a number of AECL facilities which are unique to Whiteshell Laboratories that cannot be feasibly transferred to Chalk River, and a total Whiteshell shutdown does not make any economic sense. These unique aspects include facilities actively involved with nuclear waste management hot cells, the RD-14 loop, a four-storey building that models the security system for Candu reactors and a new \$1-million facility that would be on line this year for hydrogen research.

We all understand the importance of fiscal restraint, but our government has clearly demonstrated its willingness to work in a close and co-operative manner with the federal government to ensure the conclusion all members present desire. If AECL is actively reviewing plans to consolidate its operations, it must come forward and spell out the reasons in detail before any final decision is made, so the local, federal and provincial politicians can scrutinize the reasons and offer rebuttal.

The federal government must also address the regional, economic and social impacts and a loss of scientific infrastructure in Manitoba as a result of the closure and decommissioning of the facility. The federal government has made it abundantly apparent that any decision on the future of Whiteshell Laboratories is theirs and theirs alone. The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy stated unequivocally: Let us get this straight. The future of Whiteshell Laboratories will be determined by the federal government, not by AECL. It is a cabinet decision.

Further to this, Provencher M.P. Dave Ifody stated this: To shut down Whiteshell Laboratories is not a

recommendation of the Liberal government. This was contrived by the senior bureaucrats at AECL.

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

It is therefore necessary that the Liberal caucus impress upon their counterparts in Ottawa the value of Whiteshell Laboratories to Manitobans. I also appreciate the comments by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) who acknowledged his party's previous lack of attention to the Whiteshell Laboratories when he stated: I think AECL languished under more or less all provincial governments.

This resolution will ensure that the issue of Whiteshell Laboratories does not languish, that it will be brought to the forefront of discussion in Manitoba and in Ottawa. I want to make it clear to the federal Liberal government that the AECL site is a federal responsibility, including all liabilities associated with the site. Our government and Manitobans are willing to work in concert with the federal government to find an appropriate solution, but we insist on full access to information, information that AECL to date has provided in a limited manner.

Our government believes that Manitoba Whiteshell Laboratories can be part of the solution to secure an economic future for AECL. We have extended an invitation to AECL and the federal government to work together in an open, consultative process to ensure the maintenance of the essential operations of AECL in Manitoba and to identify and pursue promising new opportunities for the industry in Manitoba. This resolution allows all members the opportunity to demonstrate clearly to the residents of Pinawa and the federal government that we recognize the irreplaceable role of the Whiteshell Labs as a centre for scientific research in Manitoba as well as the sizeable economic impact of this facility.

So I encourage all members present to support this Resolution No. 13 and call upon AECL and the federal government to provide a long-term and viable commitment to the Whiteshell Laboratories. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): I take this opportunity to rise on the resolution in regard to the Whiteshell Research Laboratory, and it is with some personal commitment that I rise to make comments as I was a member of the very short-lived all-party task force

that went out to Ottawa on a trip to appeal for the jobs and the technology that we have in Manitoba. The Minister of Energy (Mr. Praznik) led the delegation. We did attend, went to Ottawa, made the appeal for Manitoba and got what then seemed like a very tenuous commitment from the federal Liberal government, and unfortunately we have seen those concerns come forward. The loss of jobs at Pinawa is serious and we have seen people leave. A number of scientists are choosing to move into Ontario and we are seeing what is commonly known as a brain drain from our community in eastern Manitoba, which is extremely unfortunate.

AECL is a top-of-the-line scientific research facility. It has been in operation since 1963 and provided over a thousand jobs. It is not the situation today. In fact, it is rather curious that the beginnings of the cuts to AECL actually happened when the Minister of Energy (Mr. Praznik) was the executive assistant for the then Energy minister Jake Epp. That is when the jobs started to flee, and we have seen the continuation of that process.

Point of Order

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Acting Speaker, on a point of order, I know our colleague for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) would never want to be inaccurate in her information. I think it is worth pointing out at this time, in the interests of accuracy, that when I served as a special assistant to the Honourable Jake Epp, it was during his tenure as Minister of National Health and Welfare, and that I left his employ after I was elected—or before I ran for this Legislature in 1988. He did not become Minister of Energy and Mines until some time after, and that is when he assumed responsibility for AECL.

I know the member would want to ensure her statements are accurate on the record of this House.

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

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

* (1650)

Ms. Mihychuk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want the record to reflect what is accurate. I do want to clarify that the now Energy minister was actually working for the Department of Health, where we saw the health cuts occurring, and by coincidence we saw the cuts at AECL as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is that when we look at the legacy of both the Conservative and the federal Liberal government, it does not stand proud for Manitoba. We have seen the loss of jobs from the Whiteshell Labs and from Pinawa. It is hurting that community, and it is hurting our economy. The economic benefits of the Whiteshell Labs in the Pinawa area are estimated at approximately \$100 million to Manitoba annually. That is a very significant contribution to our economic well-being.

Manitoba, it is interesting to note, receives approximately 50 percent of its federal science and technology funding through the Whiteshell Labs, and given the federal government's proposal, what looks like an inevitable movement towards moving a lot of our research and development to Ontario, that would mean that Manitoba would have the lowest investment by the federal government in science and technology, a situation that is not tolerable to the people of Manitoba and is unfair to Manitobans.

When you look at the federal contribution, Manitoba would then be in the worst situation in Canada, and, again, we ask for a commitment that is not only rhetoric, not only the pretense of a task force that do not follow-up, the pretense of going to do something actually practical but no interim funding. It is going to take more than a hearing to the public, and we had some wonderful submissions.

I had the opportunity to go out to the Whiteshell Labs and to Pinawa to hear submissions to the task force. I had the opportunity to visit the public presentations of the task force and to review the options that were presented, many of them creative. Many seemed practical but not to be developed without a certain amount of commitment, that the federal government, the minimum that they can do is provide that incentive to ensure that we are treated fairly like the rest of Canada.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our caucus was recently out to the Whiteshell Laboratories in September where we toured the aboveground facilities and talked to many of the scientists there at the lab. This is not the first time that we have been out. We have been out numerous times. In fact, over two years ago, the NDP, through our Leader, requested an all-party committee to look at the developing of a viable future for this facility. This was well before the last election, well before the recent announcement, the short-term announcement that this was going to be in crisis. I mean, it was clearly obvious to this side of the House that indeed the Whiteshell Labs were in a crisis situation two-and-a-half years ago. We requested an all-party committee and it did not happen.

What we did get though from the Minister of Energy was a short-term solution, a so-called all-party task force where three members did go to Ottawa but, unfortunately, there was no follow-up. We have not met since. We have not consulted, and we have not taken further action. Whose fault is that? Clearly, there is a responsibility on the part of the minister to maintain and ensure that that task force, so-called task force, has meaning and can play an important role in preserving the life of Pinawa and the Whiteshell Labs.

So since our trip out to Ottawa where we did get some waffling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we got some—we got this task force, and we got a commitment from the federal Liberals to look at options, but looking at options and then following through is typical of the Liberal policy and typical of the red book. It is full of good ideas, but they do not implement the darn things. It is not only the federal Liberals who have a role here and a responsibility to ensure that the Whiteshell Labs and Pinawa remain strong and growing. In fact, what we have seen from this government, from our provincial government, is virtually nothing. We have not seen a commitment from this government. We have not seen anything but one trip to Ottawa. We have not seen the continuation of the task force. We have not seen a commitment by this government for perhaps interim funding. In fact, let me go to the resolution passed by the R.M. of Lac du Bonnet, May 31, 1996, where they are—and I put on the record—

WHEREAS ACL has decided to phase out and eventually close down the Whiteshell Labs in Pinawa, effectively eliminating approximately 800 very important

jobs, thus creating immeasurable hardships for the people in our area; and

WHEREAS our Manitoba provincial economy now stands to lose an estimated \$100 million in economic benefits because of this massive cut; and

WHEREAS a very few years ago our provincial government set a precedent in wisely deciding to assist the residents of Pine Falls in assuming ownership of their paper mill by setting aside a large sum of money to help in this transition.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the council of the R.M. of Lac du Bonnet request in the strongest possible terms that our provincial government now redirect some of this money and now do the same for the people of Pinawa and surrounding areas by offering financial assistance to the Whiteshell task force, NUCO, during the transition period that will take place when private enterprises and businesses take over this facility.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the council of the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet express their heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Mr. Peter Siemens and the Whiteshell task force and the Whiteshell support group and the many others who have dedicated long hours of hard work to see all of this hopefully come to a successful conclusion; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that our MLA, Honourable Darren Praznik, be immediately advised of this resolution, so he can convey to his colleagues and caucus the urgency of our situation.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that clearly articulates the position of the R.M. of Lac du Bonnet and we, too, are concerned. We are asking, what is the commitment of the provincial government? What are they substantially going to do to save the Whiteshell Labs to look at long, sustainable alternatives for a very important sector of our community? We ask the provincial government to now say where they are going with the commitment to Pinawa and Whiteshell.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am rising today on what is a serious resolution, one that requires, I believe, a strong, forceful and I think accurate portrayal of the facts from all members of this House. We are talking

about the saving of a very significant piece of the scientific infrastructure of this province, and what we have heard from the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) is all I can describe as probably one of the worst accounts and one of the most partisan bits of dribble in this Legislature on an important serious issue. In fact, her comments remind me of someone who has tried to kill something for many years, and then as the patient is dying away, comes and says how I really want to save you.

I should remind the member for St. James that her federal colleague, Mr. Blaikie, a Manitoba member of Parliament, spearheaded a resolution in the House of Commons that would have effectively shut down all of AECL and Whiteshell if it had ever become the policy of the Government of Canada. I would remind her that, when her party was in power and the lease on the underground research lab came up for renewal, her government delayed and delayed and delayed signing that lease, renewing that lease, until finally the candidate for their party in the Lac du Bonnet constituency, Mr. Clarence Baker, had to almost threaten to resign his candidacy to force their government to renew the lease.

If she does not believe me, she should talk to the former Minister of Natural Resources in that New Democratic government, the former MLA for Lac du Bonnet, whose association with the party, one of the reasons he left that party was because of their lack of support for that facility while they were in power.

* (1700)

Today for her to get up and criticize us or even the federal Liberal government in Ottawa is absolute hypocrisy and, quite frankly, we do not need that kind of contribution to any debate. Now, the member may smile across the way, but there are 700 people in my constituency and who live in other constituencies including the city of Winnipeg who work for that institution whose lives are on the line and all she can do is make partisan comments. All she can do is sum up and say we are a great saviour. We New Democrats called for a task force. If the New Democrats had had their way year after year through the '80s, they would have shut the place down. Did she take to her federal colleagues in Ottawa a statement to have them reverse their position on nuclear energy or AECL? Where was

that? Nowhere, nowhere to be seen because, quite frankly, the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) wants to do a nice little bit of politics in the House today and, like her colleagues, could care less about the future of Pinawa. That has been proven time and time again.

I do not always agree with members of the Liberal Party, and I am concerned about what our federal Liberals are doing, but I will tell you, I have not seen that kind of partisan contribution to the kind of unified front we need from our Liberal colleagues. They have at least risen to the occasion to be part of this effort to save something for Manitoba without looking like hypocrites, as the member for St. James has done in the speech today.

The member for St. James reads the resolution of the R.M. of Lac du Bonnet. Did she also read the resolution of the R.M. who opposed a demonstration site for a research facility for storage? No, she did not raise that. The R.M. of Lac du Bonnet has two very conflicting views on the record. She did not raise that. She talked about Pine Falls and the contribution. She said, where is the provincial money in this particular cause? I ask her, how much, and for what purpose?

Now, I am told by one of the community development people who attended some of the NDP visits in that particular area when they were out in my constituency that members of their caucus, and it may have been the member for St. James, stated very clearly to them privately that if the NDP were in power they would not be putting any money into it either, not with what is happening in health care and education, that they would have no financial contribution. So for her to stand up in this House today and say, where is your money, you should be putting money into this, when her own colleagues, if not herself, in Pinawa left a different—

* * *

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. James, on a point of order.

Ms. Mihychuk: I appreciate the minister's passion. However, I would like to clarify that it was not myself at any tour that he is presumably quoting, and I would appreciate if he would use caution when alleging that

members were making statements. I was there, and I would ask that the minister put on the record the truth and what he understands to be the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. James did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Praznik: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, I will tell you, I am going to be delighted to send the Hansard of the member's comments back to the individual who informed me, who on a first-hand basis has that remark, and we will see if the member—because I tell you, I would believe my constituent any day over the members opposite on this matter.

The bottom line here, the bottom line in this whole thing is, we, last year, when the federal government and AECL were in the process of shutting this thing down and did not have the common courtesy to inform anyone—we all found out because of a leaked story through the Free Press—we went down on an all-party basis, we lobbied in Ottawa, we achieved at least enough political pressure to have the federal government create a task force. The province was invited to have one representative on that task force, and we did in Mr. Stu Duncan. We concurred wholeheartedly with the appointment of Mr. Peter Siemens as chair of that task force. We worked very closely with that task force.

On three occasions we requested that that task force secure from us the financial information from AECL as to their comparative costs of operation in Manitoba versus Chalk River and in no time was that information provided to us. The closest we got was, they do not keep that kind of record. Well, that is, in my mind, unbelievable. Besides the point, Mr. Siemens and his task force managed to work through the issues and come up with what we believe to be a very viable plan to save a significant portion of the operation there and give it a future. Quite frankly, seeing the kind of state of operation of AECL, getting out of that company is probably an excellent thing for the Whiteshell.

That report was filed in June. Everybody realized that Ministers Axworthy and Gerrard and the federal Liberal

cabinet had been handed a situation from AECL that they had not been prepared for. AECL, either to close the site or do a transition, had never counted in its budget for that money, and they had to dump that issue onto the federal Treasury Board. So, in fairness to the federal ministers from Manitoba and the federal Minister of Natural Resources, they needed time to figure out what they were going to do. We gave them July, we gave them August and we gave them September. Every signal that they sent indicated to us that they would have a decision by the end of September. That time has now passed, and now it is time again to put the question very seriously to them, what is their response to that task force? Will they accept it? Will they order AECL to transfer, not just buildings and assets, but transfer the intellectual capability, the intellectual property, which is essential to success?

Now it is time to take that forward, and we have indicated time and time again that the province of Manitoba will be there with the kind of financial support and programs we have to grow the new companies. If the members now are indicating that we should be there with some kind of blank cheque, which is different from what they said in Pinawa, from what I understand, but if we are to provide some blank cheque, for how much, for what purpose? Until we know what the federal government is going to do, what their plans are, then there is nothing to negotiate but a blank cheque. Everyone who understands this issue knows that, and it is of concern to all of us, as Manitobans, to ensure that decision is made quickly because every minute that passes, every day that passes, we are losing the intellectual capabilities that make this thing happen.

The larger issue for Canadians is, how does AECL run? They transferred the treasury division from Pinawa to Ontario. Only one person to date has accepted the transfer. Now they are flying people out to train new people in Ontario. Someone should really ask that question in our federal Parliament from the opposition benches about how this corporation is run, but beside the point, the time has now come where we must have an answer from the federal government. No answer is an answer in itself, but I am still hopeful. Minister Axworthy, being in Lac du Bonnet, made the point very strongly, that the decision rests with the federal cabinet and not with AECL, and now it is time to have that answer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that in the next few days I expect you will see more activity and action on this particular area. We are in a very crucial time. I think we have only a matter of weeks to see this decision made so that people can get on hopefully with a positive decision, and we as a province, we are ready to be there once that decision is made.

The member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), in listening to her remarks today, tells me firstly that she does not really understand the intricacies of this issue, and secondly, all she is looking to do is try to score a few points, but it sounds to me and to those who know this issue like almost a death-bed support because, when AECL has needed the support of Manitobans in the past, the New Democrats have not been there. They have not been there one bit. For them to stand here today is sheer hypocrisy, and today, when they need that united front, all the member for St. James can do is paint some kind of picture that has no resemblance to reality. That is really a shame. It is really a shame that they would take that view when Manitobans require all of us to be pushing on this issue and playing with the facts.

I want to thank my colleagues in the provincial Liberal Party because it is difficult to take on federal colleagues from time to time, particularly a very strong national government in terms of their numbers, but they have been there to support us on these issues, and they, I know, would not take that kind of stand to turn this into some kind of issue and be hypocrites, as our colleague the member for St. James has proven in this debate. So, on behalf of my constituents, I want to thank those members of the opposition who do come to this with sincerity to achieve the job, because it is that kind of effort that is required, and I hope this House will demonstrate its support by passing this resolution today. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1710)

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I will put some few remarks on the record on the private member's Resolution 13 dealing with AECL.

Again, as my colleague from St. James has said, we do not have a problem with the concept behind this resolution. It is an important part of our fabric as a province. It does provide or has provided for 30 years up

to a thousand very well paid, very highly skilled jobs in the eastern part of the province of Manitoba. No one wants to see that brain drain occur. No one wants to see that. The member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) said that as well, and I would like to call the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) to order. He should not talk about hypocrisy as a member of the government. He has no call to talk about hypocrisy on any issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find it interesting, when I read this resolution, I was reading it in a broader context perhaps than just the narrow concern about AECL, and I do not mean narrow in the sense of unimportant. I want to be very clear on that, because members opposite have a penchant for saying one thing and meaning another when they talk about accountability and really are talking about antidemocratic action. I do not mean narrow in the sense of unimportant, because AECL is very important to the province of Manitoba. It is very important to the people of eastern Manitoba. It has been a part of our heritage for almost 30 years, as I stated.

However, when I read this, and it talks about where the Whiteshell Research facility is an important part of the research activity taking place in Manitoba and western Canada, when it is a facility that provides a significant contribution to the economy of Manitoba, when it is a major employer, guess what parallel occurred to me? The Wheat Board. The Canadian Wheat Board is also those things, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So in addition to supporting AECL for the reasons that have been stated in this resolution, reasons that we agree with, Mr. Deputy Speaker, reasons that we are on record as agreeing with, the member for Lac du Bonnet aside, where is the provincial government on the issue of the Canadian Wheat Board, which also is an important part of the scientific community in Manitoba and western Canada, which also provides a significant contribution to the economy of Manitoba and is also a major employer. The Canadian Wheat Board employs maybe not a thousand, but 500 people in the city of Winnipeg.

When the world at large is asked about Manitoba, what do they know about the province of Manitoba? One of the things that they talk about is, they talk about the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. They used to talk about the Winnipeg Jets, the Phoenix Coyotes, Mr. Shenkarow's pet project, and the Winnipeg Jets, whose highest paid

civil servant, or we assume he is the highest civil servant, because we cannot get the government to be open and accountable as to exactly what Mr. Shenkarow got paid by the taxpayers of Manitoba, but I digress, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Canadian Wheat Board is one of those elements that people outside the province of Manitoba, people outside the country of Canada, people across the world know about the Canadian Wheat Board. It is one of those things that is seen by countries across the world as a defining feature of Canada and Manitoba. Now, the Canadian Wheat Board, again, is a major player in the province of Manitoba, and while it is important that we have support for the continuation in some form or another of AECL it is also important, we feel, that this government not be hypocritical and narrow in its focus and do the same thing in a private member's resolution—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. If the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) want to have a discussion, I would ask them to do so in the loge. I am having difficulty hearing the member for Wellington.

The honourable member for Wellington, to continue.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your intervention, but as one who has been called to order on more than one occasion myself, I can understand how these things happen.

However, where was I? Yes, we have a world-class facility here in Manitoba in AECL. We also have a world-class facility here in Manitoba in the Canadian Wheat Board. Where is the private member resolution on the Canadian Wheat Board on the importance of single-desk selling, on the importance of retaining the elements, the elementary part of the Canadian Wheat Board? It is nowhere to be found. Yes, we can talk about AECL, and I will return to AECL regularly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I just find it a bit hypocritical that the government is picking, it cherry-picks, the issues on which it wishes to be supportive and beat its breast about maintaining a support for an organization in the province.

We are not only in danger of losing AECL and the money that represents to the province of Manitoba, the people that that represents to the province of Manitoba,

and the energy and the vitality that represents to Manitoba, we are also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in danger of losing probably to the same, well, parallel kinds of people and energy and money and vitality if this government does not get off the fence and support the Canadian Wheat Board.

I find it also interesting that the last WHEREAS, again, I was struck by this: WHEREAS Crown institutions and facilities should have the opportunity to prove their value and worth to the taxpayer. Oh, my goodness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is unbelievable. This from a government whose Leader just prior to the last election, whose Leader prior to the 1990 election, stated in a single declarative sentence: We are not selling the Manitoba Telephone System.

An Honourable Member: Read my lips.

Ms. Barrett: Read my lips. That is a simple declarative sentence. Well, not quite as simple as it could be, but it is close to as simple as it could be.

An Honourable Member: Did he not also say trust me on health care?

Ms. Barrett: As my honourable friend said, he also said trust me on health care.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is another case where in the context of AECL this government can put in place a statement that talks about the utility of Crown facilities and institutions in the context of AECL. Where has it been with MTS? Where is it going to be with Manitoba Hydro? How can we take credence? How can we assume that this government has any credibility when it comes to an issue as important as AECL when they have done, at the very best, nothing when it comes to Crown corporations and, at the worst, they have gutted them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would like to ask the government to, again, have a private member's resolution supporting the Manitoba Telephone System responsive to the statements made by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) over the last six years, statements that were very unequivocal that the Manitoba Telephone System was not for sale. Well, the Manitoba Telephone System is for sale. If the Wheat Board goes down, it will be as a direct result of this

government's inaction on the part of the farmers of western Canada, inaction which will have the impact--

* (1720)

Point of Order

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know what relevance the talking about the reference to the Wheat Board this has with the resolution of AECL, and I would ask you to bring the member to order and to deal with the resolution and speak to the resolution, rather than wandering off as she is doing.

Ms. Barrett: On the same point of order, I am speaking directly to the final WHEREAS of the resolution. The final WHEREAS of the resolution does not have the acronym AECL anywhere in it. I have been referring back to AECL in virtually every sentence of my speech, and I am drawing comparisons. I do not believe that the member has a point of order, and that I am well within my bounds in my remarks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Sturgeon Creek did not have a point of order. I was listening very carefully to the member and she has been referring to the resolution.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: I will end my remarks by saying that, as I began my remarks on this resolution, we understand and recognize the problems that are faced by the people of Pinawa, by the province of Manitoba, as it tries to deal with an arrogant and uncaring federal government. I think the problems that the people of Manitoba face dealing with an arrogant, uncaring, antidemocratic provincial government are reflected one level higher in the federal government's inaction and uncaringness about this concern.

With those remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will conclude.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gives me a great pleasure to rise on this resolution here—[interjection] Yes, why not? I mean we are working together here for the benefits of Manitobans, whether it is

fed bashing or not. I think it is important that we should pass it today so that we work together. But I think the hypocrisy of the NDP here this afternoon when we look at what they did when they were in power, they wanted to shut it down. It was sustained by the Liberals and the Tories when they were in power.

I think it is very important for Manitobans today that we work together to make sure that this plant in Pinawa remains as such for the benefits of the employees and for the town of Pinawa and that we work and contact the federal government to see that we have a long-term plan for this plant in Pinawa. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to add my comments to this resolution. I have had the opportunity to travel to the communities of Pinawa and Lac du Bonnet over the course of the last year and a half. It was just a matter of a couple of months ago was my last opportunity to go to that region of our province and, in fact, I had the opportunity to take a tour of the AECL facilities. I was much impressed by what I saw and heard in our discussions with the employees of that operation and of the management of that facility. I, along with other members of my caucus, have been to this community a number of times over the course of the last 12 or 13 months, talking with the employees, with the people of the community that are very concerned about their future, the future of this facility, not only in Manitoba but in that part of the province, and what it means to the economy of the province of Manitoba.

In talking with the plant management, we find that they had—well, I see the introducer of this resolution references to the fact that perhaps he wants me to hurry up, and he does not want to hear what I have to say on this resolution. It is unfortunate. I thought he might be interested that I would want to, in some way, show my support for what he was trying to do by way of this resolution, and he does not want to hear my comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is unfortunate. He wants me to speed up this process.

Point of Order

Mr. Sveinson: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like the honourable member for

Transcona (Mr. Reid) to know that I do love his support on this resolution, and I am just a little excited to get this resolution passed.

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

* * *

Mr. Reid: I just wanted to relate, for the information of the members opposite, because I know my colleagues and I have had the opportunity to travel to AECL and talk with the people there, what I learned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that this is a world-class facility. There is no doubt in my mind, although I do not have a lot of experience in touring other facilities of this nature, but just talking with the employees there, they are very proud of the work that they do in the research area. If you take a look at the facilities, although it has been downgraded in many ways by the federal government, which is a shame in itself—and I think that there are significant opportunities that both the federal and provincial governments are missing by way of opportunities for the communities of Lac du Bonnet and Pinawa and for the AECL facility.

I think back to the comments that were made in discussions that we had with the employees there and with the management of that facility, and I think of the discussions that we have had in our caucus with respect to opportunities for AECL, because we have talked about this, what we would like to see and where we think it should be going in our province. Listening to the comments that were made by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) here, who happens, I believe, to represent at least a portion of that area and the planned facilities, he and his government are missing a significant opportunity. The federal government has struck a task force to look at opportunities to expand or to sell off portions of the facility. And what is this provincial government doing? They are not even getting involved in the marketing aspect of this facility itself. They are missing an opportunity to jump on board with our caucus and with the federal government to try and market this facility to other businesses in the world, to try and get somebody to come in there.

So for this minister to stand up and say he has interest in retaining the facility, he is missing the most important

part. The minister says we do not own it as a people. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government references, for the fourth time this month, the CN facility opening up the customer call centre here. For the fourth time, they raised that. We do not own that either, but we encouraged the jobs to come here. So how can the government say, because we do not own the facility, that they do not want to get involved in the marketing aspect. To me, that is nonsense on the government's part. You have to get involved if you truly believe in your own words, get involved in the marketing aspect of that facility, get involved and try and bring opportunities to that community and to that part of the province of Manitoba. Do not just sit back and criticize the federal government here, as you are attempting to do. Get out there with the Industry, Trade and Tourism department—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would ask all honourable members to tone it down. I know we have had a long day, but I would ask the honourable member to put his questions to the Chair, or his debate to the Chair. I think it might help the decorum just a little bit.

Mr. Reid: Through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the government. It is very important that the government

recognize they have a responsibility beyond just words, that they can get involved through the Industry, Trade and Tourism department that they have as a part of their government operations and look at and be directly involved in the marketing of those facilities to bring other opportunities to AECL, so that when the federal government, when the final curtain comes down on that facility as a nuclear research facility, that we have other opportunities to invest in, like hydrogen research.

Why can we not look at the utilization of hydrogen as a fuel? We have an abundance of hydroelectric power in the province of Manitoba. Northern States Power sale is coming back to us in the year 2000. Use that and start the groundwork on that now. That is just one of many ideas, I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is available to the government. I am sure they have the technical people in their departments—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Transcona will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour now being 5:30 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday). Have a great evening.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 2, 1996

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Members' Statements	
Presenting Petitions		Agri-Tec Canada Inc. Dyck	3926
Pharmacare Martindale	3917	Manitoba Eco-Network Awards Wowchuk	3926
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Winnipeg School Division No. 1 Radcliffe	3927
Pharmacare Martindale	3917	Education System McGifford	3927
Tabling of Reports		Manitoba Breast Screening Program Barrett	3928
Seventh Annual Report, Victims Assistance Committee; 1995-96 Annual Report, Public Trustee; Twenty-fourth Annual Report, Legal Aid Manitoba Vodrey	3917		
Oral Questions			
Manitoba Telephone System Doer, Filmon Ashton; Filmon Santos; Reimer	3918 3919 3923	ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Regional Health Boards Lathlin; McCrae	3920	Debate on Second Readings	
Pharmacare Chomiak; McCrae Santos; Reimer	3921 3924	Bill 42, Northern Affairs Amendment Act Wowchuk Lathlin	3929 3930
Boundary Trails Hospital Lamoureux; McCrae	3922	Bill 52, York Factory First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act Reid Lathlin	3931 3931
Education System Friesen; McIntosh	3924	Bill 53, Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act Reid Lathlin	3932 3932
Workplace Safety and Health Reid; Toews	3925	Bill 8, Chiropodists Amendment Act Chomiak Gaudry	3933 3933
		Bill 9, Public Health Amendment Act Chomiak Gaudry	3934 3935

Bill 10, Pharmaceutical Amendment Act Barrett	3935	Jennissen Barrett	3944 3950
Bill 37, Ambulance Services Amendment Act Chomiak	3937	Private Members' Business Proposed Resolutions	
Bill 38, Health Services Insurance Amendment Act Chomiak	3941	Res. 13, Shutdown of AECL Sveinson Mihychuk Praznik Barrett Gaudry Reid	3951 3954 3956 3958 3960 3961
Bill 49, Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act			