

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, 25 June, 1980

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell): Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. GERALD W. J. MERCIER (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Report of The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for the year ended March 31, 1980.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MR. MERCIER introduced Bill No. 97, An Act to amend The City of Winnipeg Act.

HON. DOUG GOURLAY (Swan River) introduced Bill No. 100, An Act respecting the Assessment of Property for Taxation in 1981 and 1982.

MR. MERCIER, on behalf of the Honourable Minister for Municipal Affairs, introduced Bill No. 101, An Act to amend The Planning Act.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: At this time I would like to introduce to honourable members a delegation from the National Legislative Assembly of the Federal Republic of Germany, under the direction of the Chairman of the Committee of Labour and Social Affairs, Mr. Eugen Glombig. We have a total of seven or eight in this delegation.

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

I should also like to draw the honourable members' attention to the loge on my right, where he have the Honourable Bill Diachuk, Minister of Workers Health Safety and Compensation from Alberta; the Honourable Laird Sterling, Minister of Social Services from Nova Scotia; and the Honourable Robert Bogle, Minister of Social Services and Health from Alberta.

On behalf of the honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

We also have 40 senior citizens from the Sprague New Horizon Club, under the direction of Mr. L. Sturk. This group is from the constituency of the Honourable Member for Emerson.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Acting Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK (St. Johns): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I address my question to the Honourable Attorney-General, but as a preamble indicate that yesterday I had occasion to ask about the search that was being conducted for the unfortunate boy, and some hours later it was learned that he had drowned, and I think I'd like to express the admiration for so many people who gave of their time in an effort to find him, to save him. Unfortunately, their efforts did not prevail, nevertheless, they should be complimented for their sacrifice.

The direct question, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Attorney-General is whether or not he will proceed by way of an inquest on this matter and since it appears that the St. Amant Centre itself is proposing to review their procedures involving the care and custody of their residents, whether he would see to it that the government joins in that review to ensure that proper procedures are maintained and that adequate staff is available in this connection?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take that question as notice and respond to the member at a later date.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, by all means we will hear further from the Honourable Minister. Meanwhile I would ask a question, I suppose, to the Acting Leader, the Acting Premier, in regard to the apparent disagreement as between the federal and provincial governments, as evidenced by a report that appeared in the earlier edition of the Tribune and this appeared from the same banner headline in the later edition, and ask the Honourable Minister of Finance, whether it is correct to say that the plans for dealing with the drought that were announced two days ago, and the expectation of federal contribution were only a hope and not really something that the federal government had indicated they would favour.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, we are still attempting to get a copy of the formal statement that was attributed to the federal Minister of Agriculture and we don't have it as yet. We have the article in the Tribune referred to by the Member for St. Johns. The Minister of Agriculture is still in Ontario and the Premier has been in discussion with him on it and we have no confirmation of the indications from the Tribune article at this point. But, however, we would hope that the report is not an accurate report of the position of the federal government and we hope that the lack of understanding indicated in the article is not a fact of

life either. I notice, for instance, Mr. Speaker, that in the article the Federal Minister refers to opening the floodgates on the Greater Winnipeg by-pass on the Red River. It might be helpful for him to know that there are no floodgates. If that is the level of understanding, Mr. Speaker, and I hope it's not, that is now being embraced in Ottawa of the prices and the problem in Manitoba, I'd say we're in for great difficulty. In the meantime we will press on. Our understanding was, at the officials, level that there would be a sharing in the responsibility. There appears from this article to not be, but at any rate the program proceeds.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, just a follow-up. In view of the fact that as far as we know the Honourable Minister of Finance has not yet received clearance from the Finance Department of the federal government in relation to his own budgetary proposals which require co-operation from the federal government, can he inform us whether indeed the program, as announced by him two days ago, was discussed and cleared, even from a unilateral standpoint, with the Federal Minister of Agriculture or his officials?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, yes, agriculture officials; there has been no commitment on the Federal Finance Department in this regard. I would add, Mr. Speaker, that the Supplementary Supply will be in the House within a matter of a day or two for the full amount indicated, the 40 million of amount indicated. I expect the recoveries will be as indicated in the press release, however, we'll wait and see what Federal Agriculture has to say in a formal manner.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister to whom the Manitoba Hydro Board reports. Given the Minister's figures that the combined Lake Winnipeg Regulation - Jenpeg facility, generated 33 million in income and that this represents payment of all interest charges with the exception of 1 million, would the Minister now concede that the value of that facility to the Manitoba Hydro system is a minimum of 250 million?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, the information presented to the Public Utilities Committee by a representative from Manitoba Hydro indicated that under the assumption that we experienced the second greatest drought in the 68 years of record keeping that there would be an estimate recovery in this fiscal year of some 33 million. Mr. Speaker, on average, the figure would be somewhat lower than that. I believe on last year's experience, the information that was presented would indicate somewhere in the order of a 10 million recovery last year. Mr. Speaker, to try and put a figure on the value of it, the member is not far off in indicating the interest costs. The interest costs are shown to be somewhere in the order of 35.5 million per year. In this drought year, if it is the second worst drought in

the 68 years of history, the recovery would be 33 million, hardly enough to cover the interest costs, Mr. Speaker, hardly enough to cover the additional costs that are incurred such as the borrowings that were made for it in foreign currencies.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, has the Minister determined from the Manitoba Hydro what the value of Lake Winnipeg Regulation, Jenpeg, is to the system; given the finance charges and all of the other charges that he's talking about and the anticipated income, has Manitoba Hydro given him a capital value of those structures to the Manitoba Hydro system and does he have it and will he give it to the House?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of the figure related to the installation that the member is referring to. The fact that he is asking for it with such a degree of fervour may indicate that somebody thinks that somewhere this has been done. If it has, Mr. Speaker, it's quite possible. I think you may also find that it may be available from other sources as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster with a final supplementary.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the Minister has now admitted that Mr. Justice Tritschler never gave him that figure, how has he been able to ascertain that there has been a 300 million waste of money by the building of those facilities since he now says nobody has valued that system to the Manitoba Hydro system?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, the member is rambling off into areas at this point in time, referring to figures that Justice Tritschler may never have given to someone. Mr. Speaker, if the member has a straightforward question to ask, it will be dealt with. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, until that comes to pass, it might be more advisable for the member, who had his opportunity last week or the week before, to attend three different sittings of the Public Utilities Committee and ask his questions. I would advise him that is the best route to get that kind of information.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rock Lake.

MR. HENRY J. EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance and go back to . . . My question relates somewhat similar to the question posed by the Member for St. Johns. In view of the fact that we saw headlines in the early edition of the Tribune this morning where the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa had taken a certain view in regard to what is being done in Manitoba, I would like to use the province of Quebec as an example and ask the Minister of Finance, if there had been a similar drought in the province of Quebec, I wonder if the Minister could inform this House whether or not the federal government would have declared that as a disaster area, rather than the kind of comments we're getting in the papers today.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The question is hypothetical.

The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. JUNE WESTBURY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Honourable Attorney-General. In reference to the decision of the Manitoba Police Commission awarding 40,000 to Susan Irvine in back pay, I wonder if the Minister will be offering any advice to the city of Winnipeg or if there is any further recourse that the taxpayers of Winnipeg have on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, if asked, I will offer advice. Other recourse available is an appeal.

MRS. WESTBURY: On another matter, Mr. Speaker, further to my questions of March 28 and April 28, can the Honourable Attorney-General, in his capacity as Minister of Urban Affairs, advise whether any decision has been made in regard to the Rosser application to join a Planning district?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I would advise the Member for Fort Rouge to carefully peruse legislation which will shortly be distributed in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I think I may have to take the course of action that the Member for St. Boniface did at one time, in jumping up in my seat. Mr. Speaker, I direct this question, in the absence of the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of Finance and ask him, in the latest announcements that the Premier has made in Brandon, whether or not the province of Manitoba is shifting some of its responsibility of providing credit and purchasing and seeking out of feed supplies onto the rural municipalities, in terms of the announcements that they have made?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, there has been no intention of taking that direction, I don't know from whence the member draws his conclusions or from what statements that were made we would draw that conclusion, however, I will take the question as notice on behalf of the First Minister or the Minister of Agriculture. It's possible that the First Minister may be returned before the question period is completed.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if I might also take the opportunity to remark just briefly, with regard to the search that took place regarding the five-year-old boy from St. Amant Hospital and place on the record the thanks on the part of the government and the various Ministers and participants that were involved in this and the volunteers who went out from the government and from Emergency Measures, the thanks to the effort that was put forth by the hospital. I know that the hospital, which is located in my own constituency, has undergone a traumatic experience in the last few days, it's one that has hurt them deeply and which is now being wrestled with in

terms of their own internal examination. I want to express though again, on behalf of the government, as has been done by the Member for St. Johns, the appreciation to them and also to the volunteers who worked so hard in these last few days.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I direct a further question to the Acting Premier. In his announcement in the Legislature, he indicated that all available Crown Lands would be utilized for grazing and haying purposes during the drought period. Can the Minister indicate how are farmers supposed to graze their cattle on these Crown Lands when these lands that weren't even management area lands, cattle have to be removed off these lands by September 1st, leaving a period of possibly, well the period that's been given July 1 to September 1, a period of eight weeks, when it takes at least two weeks, possibly longer, to fence these areas and leaving a lesser period for grazing. How can farmers expect to ride out this drought period if by September 1 they have to remove their cattle from these Crown Lands?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I will take the full question as notice but I can indicate to the member that there is, of course, a fencing program that is already under way on these lands. With regard to the question on the dates, I'll take that as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George with a final supplementary.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, weeks have gone by since discussion took place about the dire economic position of the hog industry in Manitoba, and since Manitoba is what one could consider the odd man out in providing assistance to its hog producers, as all the other provinces of Canada are providing assistance, and to soften the losses sustained by hog producers of the last number of months, is the Minister prepared to announce any assistance to the hog producers of Manitoba dealing with the soft marketing conditions in the hog industry in this province?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, it's quite true that the hog-producing industry is under a double threat at the present time. One, because of the prices and the second, because of the drought. Both problems are being examined by the Department of Agriculture, by the government. I'll take the member's question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George with a fourth question.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also ask the Minister whether his government has urged the federal government, or corresponded with them, to amend its provincial feed grains policy to assure that supplies of feed grains are made equally available to western producers as they are to eastern producers, so that hog producers, poultry producers and cattlemen each have an available supply. As

well, I ask the Minister whether hog producers and other livestock producers will be afforded the assurance of having feed freight assistance on feed grains that may have to be imported into this country as the hay is being imported into this country and assistance is provided.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, the member's questions are on the record. They will be referred to the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. PETER FOX: Mr. Speaker, my question, too, is in respect to the agricultural area and possibly the Acting Premier may take it as notice. I would like to ask whether there is any assistance, in view of the assistance that is being given to farmers, whether there is any assistance to market gardeners who are having a very difficult time this year growing crops because of the drought.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take that question as notice.

MR. FOX: Would the Minister also take as notice whether there will be any kind of assistance in respect to irrigation so that those market gardeners who are in the process of growing some may be able to get some assistance in that regard due to the low water table? My other question is to the Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs as to whether his department will be doing anything to monitor and make certain that the consuming public is not being used in respect to prices, is not being gouged in respect to vegetable prices since there will be very few Manitoba vegetables on the market.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): Mr. Speaker, in response to my honourable friend's latter question I can say that type of monitoring is an ongoing process on the part of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. FOX: I would like to thank the Minister who indicated there is an ongoing monitoring. Can he indicate whether there will be any kind of firm action taken if there is a price increase which is unjustified.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's a little bit premature for me to be making that kind of a pronouncement at this particular time. It will depend on what the circumstances are.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. A.R. (Pete) ADAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. Some weeks ago he undertook to provide his leadership to resolve a dispute in the community of Winnipegosis with the board and the community at large. I'm wondering if the Minister of Education can confirm if he has received two separate requests from the

school board to provide or send an arbitrator or an evaluator to review the problem.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, to this date I have received one request.

MR. ADAM: A supplementary to the same Minister, I wonder if he could confirm if he has also received a similar request from the Teachers Society.

MR. COSENS: Not a request specifically in that instance, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister would intend to use Section 320 of the Public Schools Act to send an independent evaluator to the community there, by request of the board and the Teachers Society, to try and resolve this serious dispute that is dividing the community hopelessly almost beyond resolving the situation. I wonder if the Minister would now provide and demonstrate his leadership to see if that dispute can be resolved in some way or another.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared to take that particular action at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Cultural Affairs and ask her if she can indicate any action that she has taken in regard to an attempt to raise funds or reduce the deficits of some of our leading cultural organizations. We're getting some very bleak news about the Manitoba Theatre Centre being 91,000 in a deficit position last year and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra running up a 75,000 deficit.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs.

HON. NORMA L. PRICE (Assiniboia): We are having meetings with the Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Speaker, but I haven't heard of any bleak reports for the theatre at this point. But we are having ongoing meetings with the Symphony for their fund raising and a few other things that I'm not at liberty to say right now.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, we're hoping that the Minister would share those secrets with us but I would ask her if she can explain why, after all the fanfare, all the problems that were exposed in the media in the past year, that the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's deficit reduction program according to its general manager, never really got off the ground.

MRS. PRICE: Mr. Speaker, one of the former mayors of the city had undertaken to do an extensive fund-raising program which sort of disintegrated and they now have a very competent woman that has started on it and I'm sure you're going to find some different results.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood with a final supplementary.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I would also ask the Minister if she can explain the apparent failure of the Corporate Campaign. There seemed to be some improvements in certain aspects of fund raising but the Corporate Campaign alone was only one-half of its target. Is she aware of any particular problems or can she shed light on the failure of that campaign?

MRS. PRICE: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Elmwood can appreciate that I don't take a direct part per se in the fund raising of the different organizations. But I would like to tell him that we really don't have a bleak picture about the major arts in general. Last year, the Ballet had some 300,000 deficit; they're in the black this year, so I would hardly call that bleak. Our theatres are doing quite well, in fact, other than the Symphony, we're quite pleased with their results.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. LEONARD S. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs who is responsible for rent stabilization. As I understand his reply to the Member for Transcona yesterday, the Rent Stabilization Bill is not yet ready, for whatever reason. In view of the confusion that seems to surround the matter of the termination of rent controls, exactly how and when, would the Minister be prepared to make a statement now to clarify the confusion that seems to exist in the community at large with regard to this question of rent stabilization and rent control?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, if my honourable friend will look on his desk, I believe he will see a copy of The Landlord and Tenant Act.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I have just had one tabled in front of me, but I was not clear — I had not had the chance to read it — it was not clear to me that this related to Rent Stabilization Act. It is my understanding that there was a Rent Stabilization Act governing rent controls in the province as opposed to legislation governing landlords and tenants and condominiums. Now, maybe the Minister can clarify that but I believe that one way or the other I think it's incumbent upon the Minister to make the position of the government very clear because landlords, some are jumping the gun. Many tenants are upset and angry and I think it's incumbent upon the government, Mr. Speaker. My question is, does the Minister not believe that it is now time for the government, and this Minister, to make a clear statement clarifying this particular problem that now exists because of lack of information?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, the statement that was made with respect to the termination of the Rent Stabilization Board was made two years ago, in

April of 1978. There is no intention of deviating from that particular program. I, again, must apologize for the delay in the tabling of this particular piece of legislation but I think that the provisions of the particular Act, if my honourable friend will read them, will become obvious even to him.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East with a final supplementary.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister may have indeed made statements in the past but it's a matter of clarifying the situation because there is a lot of confusion. Mr. Speaker, I would gather it's the government's policy simply to terminate the rent control legislation that we have, although I have not had the opportunity to study the bill. So my question to the Minister . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. Order please. Would the honourable member proceed with his question, please?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I'm attempting to get to the question. —(Interjection)— I'm attempting to get to the question. I've been listening to my colleagues across the way too long. Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Minister could clarify the matter of landlords asking for exemptions from the existing legislation. There are many irate tenants in my area in Brandon who are very upset about exemptions being granted to landlords over controlled buildings and I'd like the Minister to explain what is the basis for such exemptions because the tenants out there don't seem to understand.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, obviously my honourable friend does not understand either. I'm not sure what he is referring to when he mentions exemptions. The suites that are exempt from controls are those that have been decontrolled. The apartments that are not subject to control are those that have been decontrolled and the classifications have been clearly set out in previous statements to this House, particularly in the statement that was made by my honourable friend, the Minister without Portfolio, in April of 1978. That exemption procedure or that decontrol procedure has been carried on since that time. When apartments that are eligible for decontrol have been applied for and have met the conditions set out under the Act, they have been decontrolled and there's quite a large number of those apartments that have been decontrolled. They're not exemptions, as my honourable friend suggests, and I presume that's what he's talking about; they're not exemptions, as my honourable friend has indicated, but simply apartments that have been decontrolled according to the provisions of the statement that was made in 1978.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member with a fifth question.

MR. EVANS: This is the fourth, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify that, my understanding from

correspondence — and I'll try to get to my question, Mr. Speaker — is that there is a procedure for applying for exemptions and some have been granted on controlled blocks. So what is the basis, if a suite could be exempted at one point, why is an exemption order now not permitted?

MR. JORGENSEN: The practice that has been carried on is that if an apartment block . . . There were three classifications; four, as a matter of fact. The first was the exemption of all areas outside the city of Winnipeg and Brandon. They became free of controls at the date that statement was made. The second classification were those that were over 400 a month rent and more. They were exempt after a certain period. Then the third classification were those that were built after October of 1973 provided the third classification. The fourth are the voluntary vacancies. When a person voluntarily vacates a suite, the landlord then can apply for a release from controls for that particular apartment.

As my honourable friend may know, there have been a substantial number of those voluntary vacancies in the last while. If they met the conditions that were applied as a condition for decontrols, then the suite was decontrolled. But I wonder, in order to clarify it, if my honourable friend can cite to me a specific case that they could use as an example of what he means and perhaps I can then look into it a little more fully.

MR. EVANS: With permission, Mr. Speaker, without belabouring the item, there is one particular tenant who has been in correspondence with the Minister. I will gather the materials together as I have it and send it to the Minister's office and perhaps he could look into it. I am indeed confused by the criticisms that are made and I think it's worthy of the Minister to look into the matter.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to look into that. I probably have the correspondence, as I have a number of people who simply object to the removable of rent controls. That is not a surprising or an unusual attitude.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. JAY COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of the Environment and it's in light of recent media reports that the Department of Natural Resources is using the controversial pesticide, Fenitrothion, as a spraying mechanism to control spruce budworm in some of the forests in the province. I would ask the Minister if he has been in contact with the Minister of Natural Resources to determine the advisability of using this controversial chemical and to determine if it is intended to use it further during the course of this spraying season.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I have not been in touch with the Minister of Natural Resources on this particular matter. The chemicals that are in use and

the chemicals that are applied to the Environmental Branch for use are those that have been approved by the federal government. That happens to be one that falls under that classification.

I might add, sir, that the registration of these chemicals goes through a somewhat rigorous testing procedure. It is tested by Agriculture Canada, the Plants Products Division; the Control Product Section; the Evaluation Unit; the Compliance Unit; the Technical Services Unit and the Laboratory Services Section. Then it goes through Health and Welfare Canada under the Bureau of Chemical Safety; the Bureau of Chemical Safety Additives and Pesticides Divisions and the Agricultural Chemical Section and the Occupation Toxicological Section.

Then it has to be approved by Environment Canada under the Environment Impact Control Directorate, the Contaminants Control Branch and the Regulations Development Compliance Division. Then finally it is approved by the Canadian Wildlife Service at the Wildlife Toxicological Division.

After it goes through all those tests, Sir, and receive registration, then we assume that the people who are doing the testing know what they are doing and the fact that they've given a registration to that particular chemical that it is safe to use under the conditions in which the chemical is intended to be used. Any abuse of that, of course, will create problems. But if the chemical is used according to the directions, we presume that the chemical is safe for use.

Now, in the particular instance my honourable friend has mentioned, notices were sent out. There were no objections received. I would think that under those circumstances the people in that particular area were not objecting to the fact that the chemical was being used to remove undesirable insects that were giving problems to the park.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many reasons why the persons in that area might not object to the use of that chemical and one of them might be that they are not fully aware of the effects of that chemical. The Minister has outlined a stringent program of control and he says that after that has been completed, he assumes, or the province assumes, that that chemical will be safe for use in this province. My question to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, is has he checked with his counterparts in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and/or Newfoundland who previously had made the same assumptions as the Minister has made and found, to their shock later on, that they had considered themselves to have made a wrong decision and have in fact discontinued the use of this controversial pesticide in their province because of some very serious linkages to health effects and diseases among children in the area, who succumbed to those diseases after spraying had been accomplished and where a linkage, or at least a reference appeared to be very plain? Has he contacted his counterparts in those provinces in order to determine why it is they had to, after a great deal of consideration, disregard their initial assumptions and discontinue the use of this chemical?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend has a capacity to listen to almost every report

that comes out that is in opposition to any chemical. I know what his ultimate objective is and that is to remove all chemicals from this province, whether they're good or bad. But if those chemicals were harmful and if there was any question about it, then I'm sure that the federal branch, who in the first instance licensed these chemicals, would have done that kind of investigation and would have ensured that the investigations that were carried on were thorough and based on some scientific fact rather than some reporter's skillful mind. I think I would prefer to listen to the chemists and to the experts who study and examine these chemicals to ensure that they are safe, rather than some wild story that my honourable friend may concoct, and when the federal department have reached the conclusion that this chemical is unsafe, then it certainly will be withdrawn. But it doesn't make sense to me, Sir, to have one level of government, one department of government, registering a chemical and saying that it is safe and then having everybody saying that it's not safe. —(Interjection)— My honourable friend says I'm reading his speeches. I wasn't aware that he made that particular speech, but at least we've come to the same conclusion.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill with a final supplementary.

MR. COWAN: I would only hope that the Minister of the Environment will discuss his comments with the Minister of Agriculture and tell him that the federal government is always correct in their assumptions, and is in fact the final authority in regard to any matter that may come before the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. ORDER please. It's very difficult to hear the comments of the Honourable Member for Churchill. Would the honourable member care to ask his final supplementary question?

MR. COWAN: Certainly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your assistance. I would ask the Minister, in regard — and I must thank him for sending me over a copy, very promptly upon request, of "Review the Safety of Use in the U.K. of the herbicide 2,4,5-T", I would ask the Minister if he has taken the opportunity to discuss this particular document with chemical experts in the area, in fact, university professors at some very capable universities that we have here in the province, in order to determine what their opinion of the contents of this particular report might be. I would also ask the Minister if he can confirm that the report does, in fact, state that further research shall have to be done in light of new data that has come from the United States Environmental Protection Agency regarding field studies on miscarriage rates in Oregon, which was not evaluated by this particular advisory committee when they did this report and they have, in fact, indicated that they must review their initial conclusions.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. JORGENSEN: Somewhere in there, there must have been a question, but I failed to detect it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time for question period having expired, proceed with Orders of the Day.

MINISTERIAL TABLING OF REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if, by leave, I may have permission to table a report that I indicated I would be tabling as soon as the contents were revealed at the hearings of the Railway Commission. This report, Sir, is the Subservice Investigation Ground Water Monitoring at MacGregor train derailment site. I have three copies.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, would you call the motion in my name on Page 7, and then proceed to adjourned debate on Bill 31, then Bill No. 19?

MR. SPEAKER: On the Proposed Resolution of the Honourable Attorney-General, the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN: Stand, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreeable to have the matter stand? (Agreed)

ADJOURNED DEBATES ON SECOND READING

BILL NO. 31 — THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACT

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 31, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to take part in this debate and outline some of the concerns and criticisms that members of the opposition have to both this bill and to Bill 19. Mr. Speaker, we do find the two bills so close together in content that it may happen that some of our comments on Bill 31 will tend to spill over perhaps into Bill 19. That being the case it would probably not be our intent to speak at any length on Bill 19. We can consider that remarks would be included within Bill 31.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward with considerable interest to receiving The new Public Schools Act, for we saw there an opportunity for the Minister to make clear what his government intended in the way of education in the last two decades of this year. We recognize, Mr. Speaker, that The Public Schools Act has been on the statutes for perhaps 50 or 70 years. Its origin dates back into the last century and it has been added to and amended and re-amended and amendments to the re-amendments until the bill itself became very thick and cumbersome and very difficult to read.

We note that the Minister, in introducing the bill, said that he did so with pleasure and that he did so

with satisfaction. We can but note, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister is easily pleased and easily satisfied. We should pay credit where it is due, Mr. Speaker, and note that the proposed Bill 31 before us is, in fact, much smaller than its predecessor. The Minister has pointed out that many of the old and archaic and obsolete provisions have been deleted. We no longer find references to institutions that no longer exist and we can't find a hitching post referred to anywhere within the Act. It is true that the Act has been redrawn and reassembled very neatly and very properly into sections, they flow one from the other. There is a much smaller number of sections; there is a smaller number of pages and whoever was responsible for drawing up this bill, did so in a very neat and tidy administrative manner.

What we have before us, Mr. Speaker, is really a set of regulations put into the form of a bill, almost everything having to do with the administration of education — when a board shall meet, requirement that such a thing should be done in 7 days or 14 days. It's all in here, Mr. Speaker. It's a civil servants delight. Everything is laid out as to what should happen. The Minister is fond of referring to leadership when it comes to education. We do see some examples of leadership when it comes to this bill, Mr. Speaker, we find that it has been drafted by the Ministers civil servants and the leadership, in this regard, has been shown by the officials of his department who have instructed the Minister to proceed with this bill through the House.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted today to deal with a few things that we see in the bill. Some of my colleagues will be dealing with them in greater depth. We also wish to point out what we find is not in the bill and that we could have expected to be there.

In no particular order, Mr. Speaker, I would like first to mention the matter of voting rights, as they appear within this bill. Coming from a party that prides itself on its defence of civil liberties and freedom of choice and these sorts of things, it is rather odd that the Minister is proposing to take away voting rights from some Manitobans. Now the Minister has not referred to this most important item when he introduced his bill. None of his colleagues have expressed their concern on this particular regard and perhaps the Minister can tell us how many Manitobans he intends to disenfranchise with his bill. There are people now who are entitled to vote in school board elections, who will not be permitted to do so once this Minister has passed the bill. I would be interested to know how many people the Minister intends to deprive of their voting rights, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister knows, I would invite him to interrupt me right now and explain to the House why he is taking this punitive action against some Manitobans and how many people he intends to deprive. Since he does not rise to his feet, Mr. Speaker, I can only assume that he doesn't know. Probably his officials have not explained to him why he is taking this step and how many people he intends to disenfranchise.

Mr. Speaker, I listened rather interestedly yesterday afternoon when members of this House were discussing seatbelts. I don't propose to refer to the discussion that happened, except in the manner of the civil rights of motorists and the sensitivity of gentlemen opposite in being unable to vote on a

resolution that required mandatory seatbelts; in other words, one particular rather insignificant civil liberty was to be taken away from motorists. The gentlemen opposite were so sensitive about that they brought in an amendment in rather motherhood terms about encouraging the use of seat belts.

Mr. Speaker, we see a principle involved in this bill that puts that civil liberty to shame. Here is perhaps the most basic civil right that any Manitoban has and that is the opportunity to vote, to have a voice in the making of legislation and without which all of these other so-called civil rights pale into significance.

Just as an aside, Mr. Speaker, I would refer honourable members, those who are keen on bills of rights, to refer to the bill of rights that they have in the USSR, Mr. Speaker. If you want to see rights that are protected, just read the way they are protected over there. But those citizens don't have the opportunity to change their government, here we do.

This Minister, Mr. Speaker, is proposing to take away from some Manitobans the right to vote for their school boards. Mr. Speaker, he is now proposing to take that right away from people who are criminal or who have been found guilty of some offence, or who have committed treason. These are Her Majesty's loyal subjects, Mr. Speaker. From the time, probably since the bill was first written, they have been entitled to vote for their school trustees. The Minister now says, no, you may pay taxes but you may not vote for who will represent you and, Mr. Speaker, that rings a little bell of taxation without representation and the Minister, being a teacher, will surely recall what happened to another group of people who had that particular concern some two centuries ago.

I would like to suggest to him that he explain this matter to his colleagues and maybe one of them would care to rise and perhaps, if I have not read the bill correctly, perhaps explain to the House where I am wrong. But what the Minister intends to do, and it is written quite clearly in Bill No. 31, is to bring the voting procedures for school trustees in line with the Local Authorities Election Act.

I should point out for the benefit of the member that is just leaving, and with some embarrassment, that it was the previous government that made those amendments to the Local Authorities Election Act which took away a number of voting rights back in 1970; rather than move to correct that, this government is simply moving further along that direction of reducing the rights of Manitobans to choose their representatives.

Wanting to move on, Mr. Speaker, to something else that we find in both of these bills and that is that a bill that says it is the Public Schools Act talks at some length about private schools. We have to raise the question as to why there is not a Private Schools Act and why the Minister insists on referring to that matter in Bill No. 31 and also in Bill No. 19. We have spoken to the Minister over the last couple of years on estimates, where the government has insisted on putting aid to private schools under the heading of aid to public education.

We pointed out to him there the inconsistency of that and here we see that it is being perpetuated in the bills. That's a minor issue but now we find that instead of having private schools and public schools in this province, we are to have private schools and

public schools and something else that's really not defined, Mr. Speaker. Because we find that the Minister has brought in certain regulations, or said that there shall be certain regulations having to do with private schools, private schools that are defined as receiving public support.

It is intended that teachers who are teaching the equivalent courses shall have to be certified and there are other particular safeguards in there. But there are schools other than that where there is apparently no definition and, it would seem, no control. There is a part of the bill that says that every child must attend a public school unless a) he has a letter from the Minister, or b) that it is certified by a field representative that the child is attending a private school or elsewhere. Now "elsewhere" is not defined. Apparently the Minister's bill and the regulations do not refer to those private schools that are not receiving grants and so we now have three classes of schools in this province — private schools, public schools and some other sorts of schools, the children of which do not appear to be under any sort of control or monitoring. We're not even certain whether they are subject to the Minister's inspectors or field staff, or field representatives, I'm not quite sure what the proper term is this year, Mr. Speaker.

On the matter of aid to private schools, that has been dealt with at some length by at least one other member on this side. What we see now is that grants to those private schools will no longer be channeled through the school divisions where it will be known to the school trustees and the public in that area, these grants will go directly from the government to private schools. We see in information that the Minister has given us that schools such as St. John's Ravenscourt and Balmoral Hall have been in receipt of such aid and it would not be until the estimates of the following year or Public Accounts that we would be able to find out just how much money is going and to whom.

Mr. Speaker, I see a great danger in this continued move, over some 15 or 16 years now of aid to private schools. Every small move that has been made has been done so with that protestation, oh this is not aid to private schools. Now we see without any doubt at all that this government is prepared to give aid to private schools at a certain amount and why should that be the end, why should it not be more, and more and more? Since the Minister is going to insist on certain standards in private schools, as far as the teaching is concerned and the physical environment in which it is, why should he not make grants to those schools at the same rate that any other school is receiving?

Mr. Speaker, I see a clear danger involved in this aid to private schools. That as the amount is increased, so the number of parents will grow who resent paying their taxes to the public school system. The pressure will be on for their tax dollar to be diverted toward their private school. The next step from there is that the standards of the public school education will fall and there will be greater pressure, greater inclination for parents to take their children out of the public schools and put them into private schools, since the amount of tuition fees will presumably be kept low by means of public input. So you will have a vicious circle, Mr. Speaker, one thing will lead to another and finally, what we will have is a

two-class system. We will have a number of elite private schools for the select and a rather degraded public school system for the rest.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to mention also the matter of the funding of education. I get to this a little bit later but I will note in passing that a considerable amount of criticism, suggestions have been levelled at the financing of education. Some of the Minister's own colleagues behind him have criticized the Greater Winnipeg Education Levy and the Minister himself said, as of a year ago, that it was under study. Well we find exactly the same wording in the present bill. The Minister has made no changes in the arrangement, the funding of the Greater Winnipeg Education Levy. We find, as far as the Foundation Program, which also has been subject to some criticism, that to is still in the Public Schools Act.

We note, Mr. Speaker, that the present government has said that it is their intention to move towards an 80 percent share of the cost of public education in Manitoba. It is rather interesting to note, Mr. Chairman, that the Foundation Program is only a part of the total cost of education and it has been the practice, in the last few years of the previous government and the first three years of this government, for the government to pay out 80 percent of the Foundation Program, leaving the other 20 to be picked up by special levy, which is not what the Act says. The Act says that some 75 percent will be paid for out of provincial funds and 25 percent locally. That has been changed by Order-in-Council or regulation over the last several years and it has become an accepted fact of life each year that 80 percent of the Foundation Program should be paid or is paid out of provincial funds. So we could at least have expected that change to have been reflected in Bill No. 31 but when we read it we find that, no, there is still the 75 percent figure and we wonder why? Is this a move backwards that the Minister intends; does he intend to do away with the progress that has been made over the past few years or is it simply that he would intend to continue every year to make that announcement that rather than the 75 percent the government will in fact pay 80 percent?

Mr. Speaker, we notice something new that is in The Public Schools Act or would appear to be new this year. That is that the Minister is saying that no pupil in a school division may become a school trustee, and that is rather odd to understand. First of all, most of the pupils in a school division will of course be under 18 and hence not eligible to seek office but there will be some who are 18 and 19. There will be a number of adults who attend evening classes, perhaps not for education as it is usually understood but perhaps for hobbies or past-times, carpentry work or basket-weaving or some physical exercise that is being put on. This would immediately render them inaccessible to run as school trustees. Or put in another manner, Mr. Speaker, it would indicate that in a particular school division every adult is entitled to go to evening classes except the school trustees. Now really, Mr. Speaker, that makes little sense. We would want to know from the Minister why this particular provision?

We note in the same section that there is a provision that no employee of a school division shall

seek office as a trustee and this may be a debatable point. It has been argued that the decision should be left to the voters; that if they wish to elect a school caretaker or someone else who works for the division, it should be entirely their choice. I recognize the problem facing the Minister, that it would be extremely difficult for a person to work for the same school board for which he is a member. That may be a debatable point and we shall surely hear more of that matter later, but where the Minister comes up with this particular provision that no pupil attending school in a school division can run as a school trustee is frankly beyond me, Mr. Speaker, I see no reason whatsoever for it.

Then we come to a matter that my colleague from Logan dealt with at some length in his remarks and that is the matter of the field representatives; I believe that's the correct term this year. We had some discussions on this particular point during the Minister's estimates, and the Minister told us, in all innocence, with his hand on his heart, I believe, that school inspectors, field representatives, had no police powers, that's not their function; they had no inspectorial powers. They were there to liaise with the school divisions, to monitor and assess, to report back. The Minister had a number of phrases of what it was that they were assessing and reviewing, but as far as police measures and police powers, no, no, not at all, that's not what they were intended for. If that's not what was intended, then, what was in fact written into the bill? What powers did the Minister give to his field representatives? Well, the same power to suspend a teacher's certificate remains there. We see no change in that. Now possibly that protection was needed 50 years ago, 70 years ago, when we had a little, red school house that was many miles from anywhere, under the guidance of a permit teacher; when there were no school boards with their staff, principals, in the same manner that we have today. Maybe there was a need for it in those days. The Minister has said to us that when such a thing should happen it would only be in the direst emergency, when the children or the school itself was somehow in danger.

Mr. Speaker, we wonder why this need arises today. We also note that a school board may contact a field representative with a request that he take away the certificate of a particular teacher and, again, we wonder where the responsibility lies, Mr. Speaker. I suppose it's possible to envision emergency situations at a school where it is desirable that the teacher no longer remain in that classroom or within that school building for whatever reason. What then is the responsibility at the principal involved? Does he not have a concern for the whole of the school? Does he not report to a superintendent? What are the powers and responsibilities of a superintendent? He is directly answerable to the board. Does he not have the authority to take whatever action is required to resolve that particular emergency? Mr. Speaker, we believe that responsibility and that duty is there already, as far as the school division is concerned, and that it is not necessary for a field representative to come in and suspend the certificate of a teacher which immediately would make him ineligible to continue to teach.

But that is only one of the powers of a field representative. The Minister says that there are no police powers here. Let me remind the Minister, and those other members over there, who had a great deal to say a few years ago when the previous government brought in some bills — three or four I believe it was — which gave inspectors from a department the right to enter certain premises and to look at certain books and documents. They were called snooper provisions and the opposition of that day was highly indignant about those particular provisions that the government was proposing to put into a bill.

Mr. Speaker, if you care to peruse these two bills and see the powers that the Minister is giving to its field representatives, those snooper clauses pale into insignificance. A field representative has the right to look at any school board records and a municipality's records. He has the power to look at any student's records and any teacher's records. Not only that, but because he has the powers of a school attendance officer, he is entitled, and with the protection of the law, to ask any questions of anyone about any subject which he says may have a bearing on his duties as a school attendance officer. Not only that, but the field representative has the power to enter into any premises where children tend to congregate — and it mentions certain places, certain public premises, and they are listed — but it also says anywhere else where children may tend to congregate. Mr. Speaker, children tend to congregate in my house from time to time or in my yard. The field inspector, acting as a school attendance officer, has the right under this Act to enter my house at any time because that's a place where children tend to congregate, and your house, Mr. Speaker, and the house of any member in this Assembly.

There are further powers which go far beyond what would seem to be required, that a field representative has the powers, under the Canada Evidence Act, of a commissioner. The powers of a commissioner, Mr. Speaker, are truly staggering when you consider who it is that these powers are being given to; not for a particular single investigation, but general powers. This field representative has the power to summon witnesses, Mr. Speaker, and those witnesses may be examined under oath with the full backing of the law beyond them. The commissioner may view premises and the view may be had, if deemed necessary to the inquiry, at any time by day or by night. What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that one of these field representatives, having reason to believe that there may be evidence or indication in your house, may break in at 3 o'clock in the morning, whether you are there or not, and search for whatever it is he says, or believes, in their opinion, is the words that's used. If, in his opinion, he believes that there may be something in any premises in this province, he may break in or enter into.

Not only may he act on his own, Mr. Speaker, but the commissioner, this field representative, may call upon the services of the police to assist him. He may command the service of one or more police officers. He may seek the services of experts and he may conduct searches. Mr. Speaker, is this really the sort of liaison information of gathering help that the

Minister says that he intends to give to school divisions? Well, perhaps he does intend his field staff to do just these things. That being the case, why does he give his inspectors all of these police powers? Mr. Speaker, we don't give our police the power to break into any premises at any time simply because a policeman may be of the opinion that some information is in there having to do with the absence of a child from school.

One of my colleagues quoted a famous expression in this House about the muffled cadence of jackboots. Mr. Speaker, this goes far beyond this, this is the rattle of steel-soled boots that we are hearing.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that unless the Minister or someone over on that side tends to make alterations, that rather than the term "field representatives," that these people — all 16 or 17 of them — will become known as "Cosen's cops".

Mr. Speaker, I've used up rather more time than I expected speaking on those matters that are within Bill 31. But far more serious, and I wish I had more time to deal with it, are those things that do not appear in this bill. I have already mentioned the fact that what we have here is a regulatory statute, a civil servant's delight. What we do not have here is a solid indication of the government's will and intent to make those fundamental changes in education that are going to be needed to take us into the next century.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has missed a golden opportunity. He had an opportunity here to crown a brief legislative career with a monumental Act that would take our education system into the next century. He has given up the opportunity to go down into the law books, into the history books, as the Minister that made far-reaching changes that brought education into the Eighties instead of into the 1950s, which is what we see here.

Mr. Speaker, let me just read an introduction to a bill by a Minister of Education, May 23, 1980. This is right up-to-date and this Minister said in introducing a bill that was not a comprehensive bill, it had to do with education but a part of education, and I quote: "It is with a genuine and sincere sense of historic occasion that I introduce this bill. It is a very technical bill. It contains no rhetoric or inspired phrases but it does embody, Mr. Speaker, a very important principle and represents the culmination, in a legal sense, of a course of development on which this province has been embarked for more than a century. The principle, Mr. Speaker, is that of universal access to public education. The concept is simply that an educational system which is supported by the taxation of all citizens has an obligation to be of service to all children, exceptionalities notwithstanding."

I will read more, Mr. Speaker. "This bill does two things. First, the basis of universal access contained within this bill guarantees the right of all children, condition notwithstanding, to be enrolled in a school. No longer will retarded children be enrolled after an assessment program established in law which has, in fact, denied universality of access. All children will now have a basic right to be enrolled. Second, school boards must assume responsibility for providing suitable programming for all children. This will include the provision of special education

programs and special education services for its exceptional pupils in the language of instruction of such pupils."

Now, Mr. Speaker, this wasn't written in socialist Saskatchewan. This came from the Minister of Education of the Conservative province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, the Minister goes on over several pages here to explain what the bill will do. He gives some background on work that has proceeded in the past and the Minister is well aware that the changes that have been made, far-reaching changes in Ontario, in the divisional school boundaries there. He also knows that there has been a very expensive and a very long investigation into declining enrolment in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we look in vain for such indications of government policy that Ontario is doing in Bill 31 and Bill 19. We will seek in Bill 31 some indication that the Minister recognizes the problems of declining enrolment and is making a commitment that that problem of declining enrolment will not fall heavily upon the children in some school divisions because it doesn't happen evenly across the province. But we look in vain for that, Mr. Speaker. We don't see that sort of indication and we don't see that will and intent by this Minister; what we see is a regulatory bill.

We don't see far-reaching changes in the financing of education. The Minister knows that's a problem. He's been told by his officials. He's been told by school trustees, by parents, by teachers, by the opposition, by everybody, and he says that he is working on it this year. In comes a new bill that says the Foundation Program will stand; the Greater Winnipeg Education Levy will stand; it's all in the Minister's brand new Act, yet he's going to start chopping and changing and tinkering with the bill, putting on new band-aids next year, Mr. Speaker. Next year that problem will be faced yet he brings in a bill this year. Well, it didn't work last year and it's not working this year. Perhaps it should be put off until next year, until the Minister can come in with a comprehensive plan, until he can come in with the sorts of things that his Conservative colleague in Ontario is saying down there.

The Minister is also aware that Ontario has a laid-out plan for the closing of schools where it is necessary. The Minister knows that schools have been closed in Manitoba in the last year. He knows that there will be more to be closed this year and next year. What protection are the parents of the children given in those areas where a school is to be closed? This is an area that surely cries out for some leadership by this Minister to show that he is aware of the problem, that he intends to deal with it and not simply put it off as one of those things that the school board is responsible for.

Mr. Speaker, just to sum up, Bill 31 gets our opposition, not because of what it does but because of what it does not do. The Minister has flubbed his chances. He was given a golden opportunity. He has thrown it away.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, the House has been informed by some of our speakers,

amongst them the critic on education for the party, that the Official Opposition will be voting against this bill, voting against this bill for many reasons. Some real concerns over the powers of field representatives has been covered by a few speakers and also — and I certainly would agree with those statements of the last speaker — on what this bill omits.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify my position. I will be voting in favour of this bill but I want to explain that position quite clearly. It is not that I've tried to leave the party or tried to fight the party in any way. I agree with their concern and if this bill should go to second reading and any amendments are brought in, I certainly will have no hesitation in support of these amendments.

I want to vote, I will vote in favour of this bill because, for me, what I consider the most important part is that small section on aid to private schools. I want to make it quite clear that by doing that it doesn't mean that all those that are in favour of aid to private schools should vote in favour of this bill, no matter what else is lacking. I think that they can all, of course, speak for themselves but I know that other members of the party are supporting that part of it, although they will follow party line and vote against the bill. But for me it has been probably the first priority. It has been what probably has led me to seek office here 22 years ago, to try to rectify what I considered were very unfair practices and laws that we had here in the province of Manitoba, where we discriminated against a group of people and where we caused a hardship on many of them.

At the time, Mr. Speaker, you remember that was before the revolution tranquille in Quebec and that was when the question of language, with the French language anyway, and the question of faith was pretty close together. Since then there has been more improvement in recognizing French, although I'm certainly not satisfied with that, in recognizing French as a teaching language and Manitoba as more of a bilingual province.

But on the question of aid to private schools therefore, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize to show that we can't . . . No matter, it seems that there's always something that happens and then the injustices prolong for a few more years. A few years ago the then government, led by Premier Schreyer, made a real effort to bring in aid to private schools and at that time there was division in the party and the Conservatives certainly, after many of them stating that they were in favour of aid to private schools, then voted in block, except the one that rebelled and then did not seek re-election. He told me that this was one of the reasons that they pulled the whip, and that was supposed to be a party whip, because they felt that they would take advantage of what they thought was dissent in the ranks of the government to try to capitalize on that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very surprised, although it's not the first time, but some of the arguments from the Member for Inkster and also the Member for Elmwood and St. Vital today really saddened me and surprised me very much. First of all, it was mentioned by one of them, reminding the Conservatives that a few years ago they had a vote on that question and the vote was 17 to 1 against, and they were taken to task because they'd changed

their minds. I certainly think this is wrong — a new session — and I think I know the reason why they did it. Unfortunately, they certainly were misguided but they thought this was a chance to reap political hay and I think that they were wrong. They were certainly proven wrong. Mr. Speaker, I don't hold that against anybody if they'd changed their mind. In reverse, we could say that then the majority of the members of the New Democratic Party supported aid to private schools so there might be a change there also. Mr. Speaker, I don't think that that's wrong at all.

The Member for Inkster also stated that it was a sneaky way of bringing in a bill. Every year as we went along there was a little more and a little more and a little more and everybody protesting that that was the maximum. Well, I don't like that style. It's been done, but it's been done by the former government and it's been done by all governments since I'm in this House. It's been done where you worry. Unfortunately politicians so seldom lead. They must send kites; they must fly kites; they must see the way the wind blows; they want to make sure that the political climate is right before they do anything.

I would much prefer, Mr. Speaker, following the MacPherson Commission Report in 1959-1960, following the unanimous recommendation of that committee, proper legislation would have been brought in. There might have been an uproar by some people but then you would have corrected an injustice that most people felt that there was and you wouldn't have had this divisiveness for the last 22 years. It would be settled now. I saw that.

I saw the step by step, for instance, in trying to unify the city of Winnipeg, the unification of the suburbs and Winnipeg. First of all it was amalgamation; well, not in the House but I'd sat in the House and it was no secret that the Roblin government felt that this would be the first step and that it would lead to something else. Then the New Democratic Party took over power and they brought in unification. They also looked at the political climate. They named 50 councillors. Many of them privately felt that that might be too large, too unwieldy, but they felt that this was the next step and eventually then to make it work better, when the people were accustomed to it, when the first shock passed, well then that was changed.

That was done in the French bill. First of all, French was accepted as a teaching language for 50 percent of the time and then Bill 113 was brought in and I'm sure that we should — and that's one of the things I'll cover later on — that there should be improvements in that, Mr. Speaker. I don't like that any more than the Member for Selkirk does but I have accepted that as being a traditional way of life in this House since I've been a member. I think there is too much fear. When you feel that you're doing something right, I don't think that you should be afraid of the leadership. It's funny, I've heard so many times, when we talked about the French bill, when I brought legislation that French should be a teaching language, I was told, Larry, it's political suicide. I made a point to ask for a recorded vote every time it would come in, on bill, I think it was Bill 56, the Roblin bill on French, Bill 113, and lo and behold, apparently the only time that we had unanimous vote, except when there was a message

of sympathy of something like that, but it was on those votes. A few people ducked the vote, but then those that stayed in voted. That was supposed to be political suicide and we're living and things are better and there's no revolution between groups. The climate has changed, no doubt.

I would have much preferred, it would cost way less divisiveness, less unhappiness, less hardship, if we would have had this in 1960, if we would have followed, after all the statements had been made, we'll follow the recommendations of the MacPherson Report, and then it was added, if it was unanimous and it was unanimous. Nothing happened, or very little happened, and we saw how many people suffered because of that, Mr. Speaker.

I accept it. I'm not saying it's true, but I don't blame this government more than the Roblin government or even our government that brought certain things in stages also.

Mr. Speaker, the two main points in education that I believe in is parental rights in education and equal opportunities for all students. And in this society, in this thing, the right to educate the children belongs to the parents, nobody else; except in the Democratic country there was a delegation of this right to the state, the school division, the governments. That doesn't mean that the will of the parents should not be considered, that they shouldn't be taken into consideration or that people should try to impose their conscience on others.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying that the private schools are necessarily better. I think that I believe they're better but I'm not saying that they are. Mr. Speaker, it is a question with certain people, it becomes a question of conscience, nothing else, and I don't know of any Democratic country, a country that calls itself civilized, that want people to go against their conscience. They are not trying to change the whole system. If people feel that the public system is the model par excellence; I don't happen to believe that. But if it's felt in certain quarters that it is the model, why would not other people have a chance, the parental rights in education be respected; and secondly, why not equality of opportunity for both?

Mr. Speaker, we've talked about equality. We said, well, you're free, we've given you the freedom, this great freedom here in Manitoba, to educate your people the way you want because you have your private schools, but you must pay for them. The same people that are saying this, and some from this side of the House, are the people that talk about true equality and true fairness. They realize that you must pay your taxes first and then, and who knows, with the economic situation the way it is now, who can afford to pay their full taxes now, and there is an ever increasing for the provincial government to pay more, a bigger load of the education. The last speaker talked about 80 percent but what about that other group? Oh, they say, but the freedom is there, you can go ahead. That's just like saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that I want a bottle of rye. You might say, well, you can have it, but everybody in Manitoba here the public drink is scotch, so you buy scotch. First you pay for the bottle of scotch, then you pay for your bottle of rye, and this way you have it. It is ridiculous.

MR. GREEN: That's very good.

MR. DESJARDINS: It might be very good but it's ridiculous, it doesn't work like that, Mr. Speaker.

We're not crying about the hospitals. I would think, again I'm not going to make a statement like I'm the only one right, but I would believe that the best run hospitals are in Manitoba are those that are run by religious groups, such as the Grey Nuns. I think they're terrific. There's no sign there, Just Catholics, and you hear at times prayers over the loudspeaker and you have people of different faiths, and the different clergymen are going around their business, are helping, and it is felt right there, it is a department at St. Boniface Hospital that they must be ready to receive the comfort of their religion. I think they're right. Especially when you're close to death, close to your Maker, well then you start thinking and you want that comfort. But nobody is criticizing that. We're not hearing, well, all right, it's going to be a public hospital and you're going to take the nuns out of there.

In Manitoba, we're not talking about south, the United States or somewhere else or in Uganda. Here in Manitoba, not that long ago, you could not have a crucifix in the school. The teachers, if they happened to be brothers or nuns, could not wear their habits at certain times. Of course, that was pretty close to the French; it was the same thing, you had to throw your books in the fire if the inspector, I guess the forerunners to the field representative, came in and if the inspector was there you had to throw your French books in the furnace. That is supposed to be a free country. This is the way we respect democracy.

I want to read something that struck me as being right to the point. We are saying that we want good education in public schools and speaker after speaker, who are opposed to this, it's very clear they are afraid of the quality of private schools. They are saying everybody will want to go to the private schools. That reminds me of the people after the Montreal Canadians won so many championships in a row, they said, dismantle the Canadians or the Yankees, the same thing in baseball. That is not how you build something. It is, "try to reach to the top", not "pull to the bottom", Mr. Speaker, in this great democracy, this great model of education, the public school.

Let me read something that I saw, I could quote from Newsweek of June 9th, and this was dealing with the United States but a lot of it is true, and I think that by reading this I think that you will see the point I am trying to make. "Tax supported schools call themselves public. The label is democratic but the reality is not. To get the school you want for your child you have to live in the right place, in the right district. If the school is popular, getting a home there requires a deep pocket. You would think such an elite system would be called private. Meanwhile, schools called private take kids who live anywhere. Of course, they have to charge tuition to survive, yet most make it on half the average cost of public schools and still give scholarships to many low income pupils. Somehow they also keep the tuition down, in fact, they are a bargain. This helps explain why they often have so many low income children. Roman Catholic schools of California, for example,

have a higher proportion of the minority children statewide than do the public schools. Maybe private schools should be called public. But private schools can subsidize only a fraction of those who apply. Hence, most families have no choice but to enroll their children in the schools to which they are assigned by an impersonal system of law. The system does segregate children by income class, workers here, owners there.

"Quality, why worry? The kids all go to school. The problem is that choice affects quality in education as it does in art, sex, and anything else worthwhile. Children who attend public and private schools picked by their parents simply do better. They learn; they enjoy learning; they mature gracefully; they are more tolerant of individual differences and this pattern holds irrespective of family income. Private schools in the slums turn out educated children. At the same time, children from the same social class turn stupid and hostile in government schools, enjoying twice the financial resources. They go there by compulsion. They tune out, drop out, are thrown out, or become professional truants. What they rarely do is flunk out. On the contrary, they graduate before it is discovered that they cannot read.

Some are splendid, especially those in neighbourhoods inhabited by affluent families, but there is something seriously wanting in any school with a captive audience. Its managers have little reason to serve their clients; they have every reason to serve themselves. Public schools are the quiescental self-serving monopoly, unlike the local utility, they won't even disconnect and go away. You can rip out the phone but you can't take your kid out of the school. The school is not your servant but your master. It has no incentive to win you because it already has you. The cure is obvious. The have nots will be educated when they enjoy the liberty and responsibility that works for the wealthy. Call it vouchers, call it what you will, but America desperately needs a system of family choice.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that certainly could lead to a debate. A lot of people would disagree with them but I think that you must agree with some of them.

Mr. Speaker, the main concern is that they will receive too much. All of a sudden they might be the best schools. I happen to think that they are better schools because they talk, you know, in education, it's not necessarily just something that will help you make a living. It's the materialistic society that we have now that see big dollar signs and that's the main thing. But what will it do if it doesn't prepare you to face life, to face the hardship and the problems that we have today? I think that for some, and I'm certainly not trying to impose my conscience on anybody, but for me and my children I'm not afraid of having talked about the Creator and talk of God. We've heard so much about neutral schools. They must be neutral schools to serve everybody. Mr. Speaker, there is no such thing as a neutral school. The agnostic, the non-believers, do not want to talk about God; they get exactly what they want and it's not neutral at all. It's not neutral at all. There is no such thing as a neutral school.

We talked about these poor people in public schools now. On one hand we're saying we'll raise it at 80 percent of the cost, the province should pay 80 percent of the cost. Where were the same people

that are talking about injustice now; where have they been this last hundred years when the private schools had to pay everything and they had inferior facilities, inferior equipment, inferior teachers who might probably have had certain qualities that we felt was very important but did not have the education mainly, that might have been pupil teaching because they couldn't afford the others, you know, keep them low. We were saying all along, you've got the freedom, you can go ahead and educate your people the way you want. This is why I am surprised by some of my colleagues who are opposing this, who are saying it isn't fair when they've always talked about equality of opportunity for everybody.

My friend from Inkster made a comparison of somebody that did not want to go to the University of Manitoba, went to Harvard. That's a very poor comparison. You didn't have to leave the province, the comparison was somebody who didn't want to go to University of Manitoba, went to either St. Boniface College or St. Paul's College or St. Johns. That was a comparison. I'm not that concerned about the finishing school, but the majority of schools that we're talking about are not rich people. In fact, it's the opposite and they accept people from all walks of life, and you see a lot of poor people. That, Mr. Speaker, is the situation the way I see it. Mr. Speaker, there certainly was a big injustice going for a long time.

Now there is no way that I'm going to chastise the government on this. In fact, if they remember, it is my amendment, that because of my friend here had it declared out of order, but it was, in effect, the amendment that I tried to bring last year, and I felt that it was the only way. If you're going to say there's going to be grants, then, if a level of government — and I think there is one area in this thing that we agree — if a level of government says that, yes, a grant can be made, well, you don't then farm out the responsibility to somebody else who might, in effect, not be in favour of this grant. So you take your responsibility and that is what this government is doing this year, and that is why, although I see a lot of things wrong in this bill, that I intend to vote for it to show that to me it is a question of importance.

There's another thing that the Member for Inkster said that kind of left me puzzled. I think he said, I'll believe in private schools if nobody spends more money. He could have said that five years, ten years, fifteen years ago, put everybody on the same level and I would want nothing better than that, but nobody worried about them then. I don't think, Mr. Speaker, this is realistic. If that was the case I'd say, I don't want anybody to have more education; therefore you'd never be a lawyer and earn a hell of a lot more money than I do. There is no way — or a doctor or somebody else.

Somebody said that it was a disaster: One of the schools received some money so therefore they were going to build their gymnasium. Well you know, it's just like their contribution would have built a gymnasium. That money would have paid for education, and I don't think there is anything wrong with that. In society, I think that society has to pay a certain level to make sure that everybody gets a good education. The same thing in the health services. Health should be considered the same, Mr.

Speaker. But I can't say, not more than I can tell my honourable friend from Inkster, well all right, you can't spend more than 5 on political parties this year. You know, it's their life and they'll spend all kinds of money. Others to their church, others to their different social groups, others to clubs and you can't change that. We're not . . . I was going to say we're not in a Communist country; that doesn't even work in a Communist country. —(Interjection)— They have the freedom, and that's exactly what I'm fighting for, for freedom to follow the dictate of my conscience. That is exactly what I want, not having somebody else tell me, no, you can't talk of God in your school.

I'm not telling him what he should do or should not do. —(Interjection)— Oh no, there's no law. There's certainly law in the public schools. —(Interjection)— Well that's different. That's exactly what I'm talking about; that's why, because it's different that I don't want my kids there, not because they are bad schools; some of them are probably much better qualified teachers but that happens to be something that is important to me and other people such as I. That is all. —(Interjection)— I have the freedom; we're going to go back to the freedom. I have the freedom to buy that bottle of rye, once I've paid for your bottle of scotch. Well, that to me is not freedom and it wasn't freedom to you when you talked about the health care and so on. It wasn't the freedom when you said that they had the same right.

Mr. Speaker, my position on that is quite clear. I could go on forever and never change the Member for Inkster, not more than he can go on forever and change me. We know that and we respect each other's views on that. We disagree and we'll keep on fighting.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to keep a few minutes because there is something that is equally as important to me and if I congratulated the Minister and the government so far on the area that I covered, I don't feel that I'm going to be as generous on the next one and now I'm talking about the language of instruction. You know, Mr. Speaker, we've talked about leadership, we've talked of the situation in Quebec and we had a Premier of this province that said that he doesn't want to enshrine language rights in a bill of rights or in constitution because it is up to the province. Well, then, Sir, he should show leadership and he's not doing a damned bit of that. He's not doing a damned bit of that. We could have no leadership at all here and we would still be much better than you because you're getting adverse leadership, that's what you're getting. —(Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, if they want to speak, I'm ready to sit down but I'll leave my time; I don't intend that anybody will rob me of that time today, especially as you are here — no, it was the real Speaker that recognized me. Well, that's something in itself. I had an achievement today, Mr. Speaker. This is a real achievement. I guess everybody else was sitting down.

Mr. Speaker, the concern that I have is on the French bill, for instance, everything is left now for the people. They have certain rights but by any actions that cause a group, many rednecks to say, just a minute, and to oppose it, and the government is not doing anything about it. All right, we were instrumental with Bill No. 113 and things are changing. For instance, why is it that the bill says

that if you have so many children and so on in a class that you must petition to have that and, only then; that it should be done but if it's not done that you should petition and then the Minister will act. Why doesn't the Minister act immediately? Why create a situation that there will be a fight in that area? Why? Why isn't the law there? The Minister can rely on the law, get the law for the reason of his action and go ahead with that and then, Mr. Speaker — Oh, it's easy to find out, you don't have to petition because all the schools do find out — isn't it about time that we define a school French schools.

When Bill No. 113 was brought in it said if there are so many children that want French as a teaching language and so on, they will be grouped in a class. Well, the intent was very clear. If you would carry that another step forward, if there were enough classes, you would have a school because there is another chapter that said, if 51 percent or 75 percent, I think, of the people take French as a teaching language, as opposed to English, well the administration of that school will be in French and the same thing for English.

It is such an important thing today and what are we doing? After years of saying, it's up to the school division. We have the best example in the Seine River. The school board said this is what we want. The Minister will not even try to meet with these people, with the parents, and it's true. When did the Minister, the Minister himself . . . The Minister has been elected, the policy is up to him and I don't like the idea of a Deputy Minister coming in and making policy decisions. That's exactly what's happening in that department and of course in the French. When they talk they bring all kinds of strawmen and talk about the question of members of schools. You know where these people are going now? They are going to St. Boniface College and it's busting at the seams. There are about 300 people more than there should be in that school and they come from Ile des Chenes and those areas. What about when it is time to build another school? That is not figured out.

Mr. Speaker, money is an important thing but is it the only factor? Where else except on the Seine River requested school where everybody agreed that they should have that school, where else is money, all of a sudden, the main factor? Especially after there has been so much injustice done through this language bill that was brought in in 1890 and there was so much assimilation, you'd think that a province of people trying to do justice to somebody that has been persecuted for that number of years — and that word is not too strong, Mr. Speaker.

Now there's an advisory committee to the Minister — that's going to be changed — an advisory committee and that only the Minister can refer things to it. It's been dormant for the last few years and they haven't done anything, so now they are going to change it. If it's going to be an advisory committee, why couldn't the school division bring in and say, all right, we want you to look at this? Don't report back to the school division, report to the Minister but let somebody in the field that has problems bring it up to that advisory committee. That advisory committee was set up. There was one English and there was one French and then, to try to get the people together instead of promoting this divisiveness that we seem to like so much in this province, that these

committees would come together and try to make recommendations, and when they get together they iron things out. You know that anything that has been requested by the French educators has been backed by the Teachers Society, nearly everything, and the same thing with the trustees.

So, Mr. Speaker, I vote for this bill. I'm not bolting the party at all, I made it plain; I want to emphasize the fact that there are other people. It should not be considered that this . . . It's unfortunate that there are not two different bills and you saw last year, when this bill was brought in, some of the members of this party supported it but I choose to vote against it because, for me, it is probably the first priority, as I said, something that led me to lend my name to try to get a CP elected. I want to emphasize that and I want to make sure . . . I figure that this is an injustice to me. It is the most important part of the bill, and the second most important bill is the part that's not there on French and I intend to bring in some amendment during committee. I hope that the Minister and the government will keep an open mind and try to, if they are ready to rectify an injustice that's been done for so many years in one area, I hope that they'll be big enough to do the same thing somewhere else. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. BEN HANUSCHAK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in debate on Bill No. 31 to offer my support to the position as expressed by my colleagues, the Honourable Members for Rossmere and St. Vital. But at the outset, I, too, want to make a similar comment to that made by the Member for St. Vital that because of the similarity between the Education Administration bill and the Public Schools bill that from time to time one can not avoid making cross-reference to the two bills because, in the final analysis, both deal with the same matter and namely the education program in our schools.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that there were two bills bearing the same title brought to this House last year and referred to a committee for intersessional study, which it did not really study but it did receive representations from the public and, in pursuant to the representations from the public, the two bills before us have been brought forth.

There were two other significant changes that are contained in the legislation before us today, namely, the two sections which I found most offensive and to which I made repeated reference, asked delegation after delegation to express their views on. Some of the delegations did express their views on those two sections and others did not. One was the manner of appointment of the, at that time called the — Now the Minister isn't in the House so I couldn't ask him for his assistance — the education administration officer, I think he was called at that time, which is really, you know, a resurrection of the old position of school inspector.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the old bill provided for his appointment by Order-in-Council, which as I had indicated, would mean that instead of the appointment of those supervisory personnel being made by the Civil Service Commission in the

normal fashion on the basis of their qualifications and experience, the appointment would have been made in the Cabinet room. Then of course, that raised the question in my mind as to who, in fact, will be making the recommendations for appointment. Which leads to the next question, who in fact will be the Minister of Education, the Minister bearing that title or the Minister in charge of the pork barrel? Because I'm sure that Minister has a line-up of prospective appointees for positions of that kind, defeated Conservative candidates and the like.

Well, you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister did make a commitment and I commend him for that. He did make a commitment during the committee hearings last fall that that section will be changed, that the appointment of the education administrative consultants will not be made by Order-in-Council but in the normal process by the Civil Service Commission, and I'm glad to see that change brought about. I was a bit concerned because I did take up a fair amount of the committee's time last October on that point, so at least, to that extent, my efforts were not in vain and this change was brought about.

The other matter that was of equally great concern to me, not only concern but worry, and that was the Minister waving the flag in the previous legislation that he wanted the right to impose a deterrent fee in our public school education program; that he wanted the right to impose a fee, to impose a monetary barrier to keep children from school, which really would be the effect of it. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that there was a provision within the bill which would have given the Minister the right to make regulations governing the operation of public schools — and I'm paraphrasing and I'm only taking out the relevant section of the relevant phraseology of that portion of the bill, that it would have given the Minister the right to make regulations governing the imposition of fees in our public schools, the imposition of fees in our public schools. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I refer to that as giving the Minister the right to impose a deterrent fee. Because the result of that, if the Minister were to act upon it, would be that the Minister would have the right to impose a fee and those who could afford to pay would be admitted into the public schools; those who could not afford to pay would be denied admission to an education.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that I did ask at that time many groups for their views on that particular section. Some of the more vocal spokesmen in the field of education, namely, the Trustees Association, the Teachers Society, neither came prepared to express an opinion on that section but both groups did, if one were to read Hansard, leave the impression that they were not in favour of the Minister moving in that direction. So, again, I do commend the Minister for having deleted that portion, the reference to giving himself the power to impose a tuition fee. You will also recall that it gave him a fair amount of leeway, giving the right to make regulations governing the imposition of fees on students, classes of students, programs and so forth. This worried me, Mr. Speaker, because, even though the Minister did try to assure us last fall — I think he used words something to the effect that no Minister in his right mind would impose a tuition fee — he says it hasn't been done for years and surely it

wouldn't be done in the years to come. Mr. Speaker, perhaps later in debate I am sure that I will have the opportunity to refer to this matter again. But I did note a couple of months ago the President of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, in speaking at a meeting in Carman, Mr. Murray, I believe the President elect's name is, did serve notice that in his opinion — and he was speaking in his capacity as president of a school trustees association — did serve notice to the people present there that he can see the day coming when school divisions will have to impose user fees. So, I am still somewhat worried about this particular matter, despite the fact that the Minister has removed reference to it from the legislation that we're presently dealing with but, in view of the fact, that the President of the School Trustees Association sees the likelihood of user fees on the horizon, it has me worried. In fact, he did go on to say at that particular meeting and, as I've indicated to you, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there will be many other occasions in the course of the debate, perhaps not in this reading but on subsequent occasions.

I will quote chapter and verse from the newspaper report of the meeting to which I am referring which occurred — I'm sorry, it wasn't all that long ago, I think it was early May or April, shortly after Mr. Murray was elected to office which occurred during the third week of March. The President of the School Trustees Association did give examples of user fees presently creeping into the school system, namely, fees for high-cost programs. One example that he gave was a music program in the Midland School Division. I guess the orchestra, the band program and there is a user fee being imposed upon students there. So those parents who are in a financial position to pay whatever the fee, as demanded by the school authorities, are able to enrol their sons and daughters in the music program in that school division. Those who can't afford it are denied that opportunity. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the user fee concept gradually becoming entrenched in our public school system. So even though, as I've mentioned earlier, the present legislation presently before us makes no reference to it but this, in fact, is happening. This, in fact, is happening.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that during the committee hearings last fall, there was one group that appeared before the committee and they understood that section very very well, they understood the implications of it very well and that was the League for the Physically Handicapped. Other groups, when I questioned them on that particular notion expressed within the legislation, they were a bit puzzled and confused. They said they didn't quite understand what it meant; they hadn't really studied it; they hadn't really formulated an opinion on it. But the League for the Physically Handicapped, they understood what that section meant because they understand that whatever the bill says about opening the door to a broader range of special needs programs, etc., and make it mandatory that special needs programs be provided, they saw within those few words, in the one section that gives the Minister the right to impose a fee, that if it comes to a crunch the Minister will say to the school divisions, "Okay, you have no funds to provide a program for the physically handicapped, to

provide properly designed desks, to provide properly designed and accessible washroom facilities, books, larger type, whatever, charge the users the user fee, charge them a user fee." They saw that danger but as I've said, Mr. Speaker, even though it is not specifically stated in the bill before us, but this practice is gradually taking root and that, indeed, worries me. Given the philosophy of this government I cannot see this Minister going to a school board and say, "Hey, you fellows, you know, are charging a user fee. Can you not find some way of making your education program universally accessible to all, regardless of their financial means". He won't say that. He won't say that because this government does favour the imposition of user fees; we know that. This government favours the imposition of user fees for health services and it will favour the imposition of user fees for education services, Mr. Speaker. I mean, after all, given their philosophy, how could they make fish of one and fowl of the other. So if deterrent fees are quite acceptable in the delivery of health services, then why not in the area of the delivery of education services? —(Interjection)—

Now, the Honourable Member for Minnedosa is speaking from his seat again as he usually does, most frequently does because he seldom stands on his feet to speak, again is talking about using scare tactics. You will recall the election or two ago, who was using scare tactics, who was scaring the people: You re-elect the New Democratic Party to government, they will close your churches. The member remembers that and his seat-mate remembers that. His seat-mate remembers that very very well of that scare tactic being spread in his riding. So he remembers it, he remembers it. So, who was talking about using scare tactics? —(Interjections)— Look at all these — oh, my goodness, you know, look at all the backbenchers. Yes, look at them all. Oh, look there's another one chirping over there. Well, well, like, you know, we have a whole lot of them over there that are masters of chirping away from their seats but they wouldn't stand up on their two feet and state their position. —(Interjection)— Now the Member for Minnedosa is talking about bird seed reports. He ought to speak to the expert on bird programs and that's his colleague who is in the process of introducing that program. It's not this side of the House but his side that made a big production out of it.

But getting back, Mr. Speaker, to the bill before us. The Minister takes great pride in the special needs portion of the bill that now it's going to become mandatory that every school division provide an education program for every child of school age. Mr. Speaker, let me take you back a few years. You will recall about five, six years ago we brought in what's commonly being referred to as special needs legislation and that was one section amongst others contained within that bill. That bill was proclaimed, given Royal Assent, with the exception of the special needs section. I did indicate, at the time of introducing the bill for second reading, that this special needs section will not receive Royal Assent for the reasons which I then proceeded to give. I indicated that I'm incorporating that section into the bill to indicate to the people of Manitoba our good faith, our bona fides, our desire to move in the

direction of developing a program, a special needs program and to develop a program that would enable all school divisions to meet the special needs of the pupils within their jurisdiction. So, therefore, to indicate that we do intend to move that way that section was included in the bill but I said it is not receiving Royal Assent because I recognize that neither the school divisions nor the teachers were prepared to implement it right there and then. No. 1, neither the funding was available, nor did we know the extent of the funding that would be required to offer a complete range of special needs services. No. 2, the school divisions were not ready at that time to implement the special needs section, nor were the teachers prepared at that time to play an effective professional role in the delivery of a special needs program. So we said, we're serving the people of Manitoba and the trustees and the teachers notice that we intend to move in this direction. At that time you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that we put our money where our mouth was and where it is; we put in additional funds to enable the school divisions to do the necessary research work to develop a special needs program. And it was indicated at that time that after the preliminary research then steps would be taken toward providing a foundation for the building of the program; that was the direction in which we had intended we were going to move. I said at that time that when the ground work is laid and we're ready to implement a special needs program, the legislation will receive Royal Assent and it will become meaningful and effective law. Of course, October 11, 1977, rolled around, so, this party took office. Now the Minister is simply taking a reverse position; now he's standing up and he's saying here's my special needs legislation. I am reasonably certain it's going to pass and, upon being passed, it is going to be proclaimed and it will receive Royal Assent and it will become law. But one thing, Mr. Speaker, you will recall, from our consideration of his estimates, he did not put his money where his mouth is or where he would want the people of Manitoba to believe that his mouth is. He did not put money there because there are not funds in his estimates to develop a special needs program adequately and fully to meet the needs, the special needs, of the pupils of Manitoba. The funds are not there. Mr. Speaker, that section of the bill, it reads beautifully. I'm sure that it does raise the hopes of many people in the province but if they take a look at the estimates book then all their hopes and dreams will be deflated because they will find that what the law says that this government will provide, the bucks aren't there to match the legislation. So that disturbs me and concerns me, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to take a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, to indicate to you my position on the section referred to by my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Boniface, and that is the portion of the bill dealing with the matter of aid to private schools. Now, over the years I have expressed opposition to anything that would lead to the creation of an elitist system in education. I expressed opposition to gilding the lily, as it were, as it may relate to education; to offering public funds to schools that may have other sources of revenue, and then the public support that they receive amounts to icing on the cake, as it were. But

given those facts, six years ago in March of 1974 in speaking at the graduation exercises of St. Paul's High School, I did expand and elaborate on that and, in a nutshell, what I said at that time is that if our public school system can deliver programs and cater to meeting a variety of educational needs — in other words, we have technical schools; we have academic schools; we have schools for the deaf; we have a variety of technical schools; we have schools which offer a combination of an academic and technical program, the first of which was a pioneer in Manitoba, Tech-Voc High School, and now there are others, some of our regional secondary high schools throughout the province — and what I said is that if we can have a school system which caters to a variety of educational needs, vocational needs of students, then why can we not, under the same umbrella within the same system, provide education programs which would meet the cultural and the religious needs of the pupils enrolled therein?

Then I went on to describe a system within which we could offer that broad range of programs, all of which would be publicly supported, the doors of all of which would be opened to all pupils of school age resident within the province of Manitoba and any pupil wishing to avail himself of one program or another would be free to enroll, without running the risk of being charged a user or deterrent fee, and gain the benefits of the programs therein offered.

So that being the case and that being my position, Mr. Speaker, I would find it difficult to oppose the principle of assisting schools which offer programs which differ somewhat from the programs offered in our public schools system. So if there's a parent who chooses to enroll his son or daughter in a private school because of some differences within the education program therein, then I feel he has that right. In fact, I would like to see him have the opportunity to do the same thing within our public school system. I would like to see our public school program being broad enough to embrace that entire range of types of educational programs.

In the meantime, even if we don't reach our ultimate goal, our ultimate objective, but if at least we are taking a step or two toward meeting that objective, then I can't oppose that, my hope being that the day will come when the entire range of education programs, the sum total of all education programs within the province of Manitoba that are available today in the public and the private system, that they will be available within the public system and we'll find a way of providing that range of programs within our public system.

In other words — and I don't think that I'm being overly simplistic about the whole thing — if we can offer academic programs and technical programs and put a broad range of technical and vocational programs, so then why can't that range be extended an extra step to include cultural and religious programs for those who wish to obtain them?

On the principle, insofar as a principle of public funding for all types of education programs, for whatever type there might be a demand in the province, I can't oppose the public funding of all programs of that kind, nor could I oppose any move in that direction. But as I've indicated to you, Mr. Speaker, this section or that portion is only a small portion of the bill, a relatively small portion of the

bill. There are many other portions of the bill which far out-weigh this one and over-shadow the ones that I've been referring to that I'm concerned about and, putting all on a balance, I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, that I will not be able to support this bill.

As I mentioned, putting all on a balance, another portion of the bill that disturbs me is the portion dealing with the question of languages of instruction. You will note, Mr. Speaker, in reading the bill, that the Minister now intends to change the advisory committee structure which exists under the present legislation because this bill is not legislation as at this point in time. At the present time, we have a French Language Advisory Committee, we have the English Language Advisory Committee and then — I've forgotten the correct term for the combined committee of both — there's the combined one.

Now this bill provides for the appointment of one language of instruction advisory committee instead of the previous structure. What worries me, Mr. Speaker, is that, having done that, then it would make it appear that this government places all languages of instruction into the same basket, as it were; it gives them the same degree of recognition, official languages of the country and those which are not the official languages of the country. Mr. Speaker, I want to make this point very very clear, I want to make it crystal clear and I would hope that the Minister would understand and that others would, I am not opposed to the legislation which provides for the use of languages other than the official languages as languages of instruction within our public schools system. But, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I do feel that a distinction has to be made between the official languages and those which are not.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER, Morris McGregor (Virden): The hour of 4:30 having arrived, the Honourable Member for Burrows will have 12 minutes left. We are now in Private Members' Hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

RES. NO. 29 — HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre . . . Pardon? —(Interjection)— I thought this had already been done, Mr. Speaker. I spoke to you earlier about this.

MR. SPEAKER: I understood the member had introduced the resolution earlier and I probably ill-advised her.

MRS. WESTBURY: Yes, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I asked if my seconder had to be here at this stage and I was going to phone him to try to get him here.

MR. J. WALLY MCKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I'll be the seconder of the motion.

MRS. WESTBURY: Thank you. I'm really impressed. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the seconder for his courtesy in doing that.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Roblin:

WHEREAS the government has recognized the need for shelter allowances for those who pay an excessive amount of their income on housing;

WHEREAS Winnipeg has one of the Canada's highest rental affordability problems with over one-third of Inner City households being affected;

WHEREAS the government has wisely and compassionately seen fit to provide shelter allowances to the elderly;

WHEREAS single parent families suffering from affordability problems outnumber the elderly, with 57 percent of single parent homeowners and 50 percent of renters being affected;

WHEREAS the need for low cost housing has contributed to transitory ghetto-like neighbourhoods in some sections of Winnipeg;

WHEREAS rent controls are being removed even though affordability problems for renters increased in Winnipeg at a rate nearly three times the national average in the past decade;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the government give consideration to:

(1) providing lower cost housing for low income families by increasing the availability and affordability of existing housing;

(2) retaining some form of rent controls taking into consideration necessary expenditures for maintenance and repair of buildings;

(3) providing shelter allowances to those low income families paying more than 25 percent of their income for housing.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, that was a confusing way to introduce a motion, I'm sorry. I'm sorry for the confusion.

Mr. Speaker, we've waited anxiously, I think, for a word from this government that some sort of protection would be provided to tenants after the rent controls are removed, and the time is getting very close. I'm most grateful for the opportunity to speak to this matter before we go into Speed-up, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that the members will give their serious consideration to the problems that are presenting themselves to some of the tenants on lower incomes. I will give a very few details later on, on some of the difficulties that are presenting themselves to tenants with the removal of rent controls.

Referring to the resolution and to the third Whereas, I have to say that while I don't consider shelter allowances to be the overall cure for affordability of houses, they have to continue as the government has recognized, to be regarded as one of the approaches to assist certain groups, to assist those people who cannot cope with the rising costs of housing, Mr. Speaker.

Public housing for the elderly has demonstrated the government's ability to provide lower cost housing, particularly in the inner city. While I disagree with the way in which this is being provided, it has been demonstrated that it is possible to provide lower cost housing but over half of Winnipeg's elderly renters still face affordability problems.

My resolution, of course, was presented to the Clerk's Department before the budget recommendations came forward and hence the reference to the single parent families. However, that could easily be removed, it has no effect on the resolution part of the motion itself.

Mr. Chairperson, I want to know, what about shelter allowances, say, for the disabled, for the partially disabled, those people who are maybe able to work but certainly are not in higher income brackets or even medium income brackets, most of them? I suggest that they should be included in shelter allowances along with provision of sufficient low-cost housing, and I went into that last night so I won't refer to it again. I had not expected, of course, the discussion on housing to come so closely to the discussion on this resolution. Working people, especially the disabled, and especially those between the ages of 50 and 64, are not covered under existing shelter programs. They are very often paid at the minimum wage, Mr. Speaker. Many of them have never been able to afford to purchase a home so now they're at the mercy of their landlords. You know, I'm not against landlords, I very rarely believe in being against anyone just because they're part of a certain group, but nevertheless, the fact is that there are some landlords who do take advantage of their tenants, unfortunately. The landlords of course themselves are at the mercy of rising costs, Mr. Speaker.

The native population in Winnipeg is growing rapidly with most native programs moving into the inner city where the supposed attraction is the provision of low-cost housing and low shelter costs. Consequently we're having a — I dislike this word but I don't know of a better one — a ghetto symptom again, of natives, concentrated in small areas instead of perhaps more desirably being scattered throughout the city and becoming integrated, as surely they expected when they moved to the urban area, to become integrated within the city and to have equal opportunities with all of the other people who live in the urban environment. The demolition of 2,000 units of low cost housing in the innercity has also tightened up the market for low income renters and increasing affordability problems, of course.

Mr. Speaker, older apartment buildings, in the main, are owned by individuals through private or family-held companies. Infrequently they are controlled through corporations but usually the older apartments are in family holdings or in private holdings. The potential ownership group is shrinking. There is a reduced desirability for ownership of these properties because of their age and the decline of the surrounding neighbourhoods in the core area of downtown. Owners of the older apartment blocks are not permitted to claim depreciation loss in order to reduce other income for income tax purposes. There is a difficulty in obtaining financing. The existence of

rent controls without allowing for the necessary cost of repairs has worsened the situation because landlords have to carry the capital cost of the upgrading requirements of the city. At the present time there are no programs available at any level of government to assist landlords financially in making the improvements required by apartment upgrading bylaws. The present-day code requirements in fact are considerably stricter, as members know, than those that were in effect when the older apartments were built and the cost of upgrading, in many cases, is high in relation to the value of the buildings. The basic premise of the upgrading program has been, of course, to prevent multiple deaths from major apartment fires, as all of those who served on City Council at the same time as I did will remember how concerned all city councillors were when there was a sequence of major fires in the city. The major emphasis, of course, was on physical alterations designed to prevent the spread of smoke.

Now I've referred already to the fact that this low income housing is disappearing from the scene because of all of these economic factors. Once the losses of low income housing occur replacement housing of course has to be constructed at some time or another. This has not been happening in the innercity, unfortunately, but at some time we will be faced with replacement of this low income housing and it is becoming obvious that the private sector does not concern itself with the provision of low-cost housing. It's the governments, all levels of government, that have to get involved with the provision of low-cost housing. So the onus for construction and funding of new replacement housing will continue to rest with government, Mr. Speaker, and for that reason government should concern itself with restoration and preservation of older apartment blocks. There is still a major private input there and if Resolutions 1 and 2 in my resolution are adopted, I believe, the attraction will return to the private sector to again become involved in acquisition of older housing and restoration and renovation of the older housing.

Speaking to No. 2 of the resolution part, I have a couple of letters here from people, not from my constituency, who have wanted to let me know, and expect me to let the House know, what's happening to them, about their fears, with the removal of rent controls. Here's a lady from the north end writing, and I just want to read from her letter because it's very expressive of the way people are feeling, "I saw last week in the Free Press that on June 30th, 1980, they are going to take off rent controls. I wrote a letter to Premier Lyon in February, 1978, not to take rent controls off because then the landlords will raise up the rent as much as they please. Mr. Lyon's wrote me back that they will keep a close look. But now again for sure they want to take it off, so it's going to be a slump in the city, because middle and low income people won't be able to afford, like myself. The most I could pay is 219 or 229 per month, then grocery, transportation, hydro, phone, medication, church and clothing. I won't even be able to go out to see something.

The second letter came from a gentleman in St. Vital, and as a matter of fact the letter was addressed to the Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs, with a copy to me. He says, "I live in an

apartment building, have been for the last eight years. Since 1973, the rents have been going up year by year. Were it not for the controls we have had, I believe the rents would not be out of sight. This year, 1980, the block owners are rubbing their hands with glee. The rent control is coming off and they have lost no time in raising the rent to those who have leases due the 1st of July or August. My neighbour here next door to me has had her leases and rent increased by 50.00. That in one crack is outrageous. Mine will be coming up in October of this year and I fully expect to be hit with a real generous rise. I am asking myself what justification the government has in taking off the rent controls. We all know that we are still in the famous period of inflation which keeps going up from week to week, we find that out in the stores. What will the next rent increase do to the inflation I leave you to figure out. I don't know whether he received a reply to that or not.

I had a phone call just the other day from a lady in my own constituency. I will lose this particular area in redistribution, it will go into the new River Heights constituency. This lady is now paying 186 a month for rent in an older apartment building. In her new lease which comes up in October, she's having an increase of 89 a month. That's nearly 50 percent, something like 48 percent, Mr. Speaker. The lady was crying on the phone to me. She said, "Mrs. Westbury, what am I going to do?". In the 12 years she's lived there, any decorating that's been done she has done herself, it has not been paid for by the landlord. There's been a change of owner and now she's getting nearly a 50 percent increase in her rent. She sent a message. She said, "Tell Mr. Lyon if he doesn't protect the person on fixed income I'll never again vote P.C." Apparently she did vote P.C., but she still knew who to phone when she was in trouble, Mr. Speaker. —(Interjection)— Somebody said, "Smart lady", well, she's smart enough to know who not to vote for next time around, I guess.

Mr. Speaker, the tenants in this city are really nervous about the removal of rent controls and I'm not only talking about the very poor or even about the marginally poor, included in this group of people who are really nervous about removal of rent controls are middle-aged and older employed and never married people who have established themselves in rental accommodation which, at time of moving into that accommodation, they expected to be their homes for the rest of their lives, for as long as they were able to live independently. They have made provision for their senior years. Now they're afraid that every time their rental agreement comes up they are going to be forced to move because of escalating costs. Every time they're forced to move it's going to be into gradually worsening accommodation, each time a little worse, because of what inflation is doing. They don't believe us when we tell them that the government will monitor rent increases. They say, "How is that going to help me? By the time they've monitored them and get around to thinking maybe we should do something again, you know, we'll be gone". They don't have faith in the appeal procedure because they've experienced an appeal system and they believe that in the end, through the appeal system, they are at the mercy of the friends of the landlords.

Also on part 2 of the resolution, recommending taking into consideration necessary expenditure for maintenance and repair of buildings. I want to point out again, as I did earlier, that the owners of the older apartment blocks are at a disadvantage vis-a-vis the new apartment block owners because they're not eligible to use the depreciation allowances to offset other incomes. It seems to me that this government should be pressing the federal government to introduce these changes. I know that everyone thinks I'm the only contact anyone has with the federal government and of course that's nonsense. It's not my job to do the government's work and the Minister's work, and they have conferences with the federal government and they should be representing the people of Manitoba at the federal level, to the federal people.

On item 3, . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes.

MRS. WESTBURY: Thank you. I won't need as long as that. While my party supports the SAFER Shelter Program as far as it goes, I want to say that we believe that it should be applied on the basis of need, not occupation or age or the number of adults in the family. It's discriminatory as it now is applied, Mr. Speaker, and my party and I, supporting my party, believe that the SAFER Program should be applied to those in the greatest need, beginning of course with those in the greatest need, and if the government decides they can spend so much money on a SAFER Program, they should start with those in the greatest need and gradually extend it as the finances become available. Our position is that the present program is discriminatory to some extent in that it puts certain categories of people above other categories of people, Mr. Speaker.

The resolution calls — this is in conclusion — the resolution calls, in other words, for incentives to landlords to maintain and preserve low-cost, older housing stock, for retention of rents controls, providing for necessary — that word was put in there advisedly, I believe — necessary maintenance and repairs, remembering that private enterprise, generally speaking, is the provider of older low-cost housing and government has to provide new low-cost housing and, thirdly, for a fair SAFER program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. GARY FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to debate the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge and I have some difficulty with it because certainly many of the concerns which the member has expressed during her discussion earlier are concerns that certainly our government has and certainly evidence is contained in the budget of our intent to do some positive things to resolve those concerns and overcome them. As well, of course, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, his department has certainly indicated that they are going to be monitoring the rent decontrol situation and are prepared to take whatever action is necessary in order to overcome any inconsistencies

and any problems that arise from the decontrol procedure.

I wonder though if the member would table the letters that she has read from, so that the Minister can follow-up on them and ensure that those people are adequately considered and looked after and that their concerns are taken care of by the monitoring process, and his department can have all the evidence that they need to pursue that. That, I'm sure, would be of assistance to the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I have some difficulty in addressing the resolution because, as I say, although I believe the general intent in the areas of concern are ones that we all share on this side of the House, the member has provided a rather serious lack of information and evidence to support the various clauses in the preamble to the resolution. The preamble contains some direct figures — Items such as single parent families suffering from affordability problems; outnumber the elderly with 57 percent of the single parent homeowners and 50 percent of the renters being affected and, further on, problems for renters increased in Winnipeg at a rate of nearly three times the national average in the past decade — but she provided no source for those statistics and no evidence that indeed there is any valid study that brings those forward. In fact, they are at odds with the information which our Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation has on those particular areas and I'm just wondering whether we're looking at a well-intentioned, sort of political proposition that's backed up merely by generalities and a lot of theoretical, hypothetical situations of being concerned as to what would happen if low-income housing disappeared — affordable, low-income housing — what would happen, without really indicating that there is some evidence that that has indeed happened, or is indeed happening at a faster rate than it should.

I also have some concerns about the member's position with respect to the recent budget. She said that her party supported SAFER and other items in the budget, but she didn't support the budget, and I just wonder as to the sincerity of her position in this particular item.

As well, there seems to be a general lack of understanding as to the workings of the marketplace, the supply and demand situation and how that affects those who are in rental accommodation and how that affects the concerns. I suppose that is not a situation that should be surprising. I think the member has probably had little experience in the free-market side of things or in the housing development in the private sector side, and the motion was probably drafted by some academics who've done some research on the topic and provided the information to the member. But nevertheless, I think it would be important for her to give us some evidence of the statistical background or the facts and figures behind these very very distinct clauses in the preamble that she's put forward and, unfortunately, she has left us very little to debate.

So, in response to that, I can only say that the contention that affordability problems for renters increased in Winnipeg at a rate nearly three times the national average is highly questionable. With no source or method shown for the extrapolation, I

would have to question it as being a valid statement. I think that the figures we have available through our Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation certainly belie that assumption that she's made. According to the Consumer Price Index, rents increased an average of 3.9 percent in 1979 in Winnipeg, less than the allowable under rent controls, considerably less, and that compares to a general inflation rate in Winnipeg of 9.9 percent. At the same time, weekly average earnings, according to the Industrial Composite Wage Index increased 7.6 percent. All of these are 1979 figures and I say that the evidence of a 3.9 percent increase in Winnipeg in rents certainly doesn't seem to support the assumption she has made.

The official CMHC vacancy rates, as at April 1980, for accommodation were 4.8 percent, the highest in Canada for any major centre. Vacancy rates, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, ranging between 3 and 4 percent are usually considered to represent a very reasonable equilibrium in terms of the supply/demand pressures in the marketplace and, in evidence of that, the fact that Winnipeg had the highest vacancy rate of all the major centres in Canada. I'll read some of them: Calgary 1 percent vacancy rate; Edmonton 2.8 percent; Halifax 2.6 percent; Hamilton 1.6 percent; Montreal 3.5 percent; Ottawa 3.7 percent; Quebec 2 percent; Regina 2 percent; St. Johns 3.1 percent; Saskatoon 2.2 percent; Toronto 1 percent; Vancouver 0.1 percent; Victoria 0.1 percent; Winnipeg 4.8 percent, substantially higher. And the evidence we have available from Statistics Canada, CMHC and all the others who are in this field, Mr. Speaker, in no way supports the preamble to the member's motion.

As a matter of fact, unserviced family housing applications at the Winnipeg Regional Housing Authority were 50 percent lower at the end of May this year, compared to last year. Unserved senior citizen applications were down 28 percent, reflecting a much greater availability of affordable housing accommodation to the low-income households in the market. All the above indicators, certainly to our information, indicate a very healthy housing market from the standpoint of shelter consumers, both in terms of availability and affordability of accommodation.

Nonetheless, the government has embarked on an expansion of benefits, both in terms of the amounts of assistance and the client groups eligible under the Shelter Allowance Program. As we indicated, single parent families identified by the social planning council as being the neediest group in Winnipeg are particularly intended to benefit from the new SAFER programs announced in our budget. The retention of the rent controls system is hardly necessary, given the existing market situation and the expansion of shelter assistance benefits. A rent monitoring system will certainly continue to be in place, if and when supply measures; that is the need to construct new low-income housing is warranted, and I might indicate that even in our present government-operated low-income housing we have a 2 percent vacancy rate. So even in that housing which we are providing as a government, we have a fairly substantial vacancy rate.

So when market conditions indicate that there is a need for us to step in and provide additional housing

under the government umbrella, there's no question, I think, that our government will proceed on that basis. But the fact that rent controls are coming off does not automatically mean that all of the rents are going to go at major rates and that people wholesale are going to be thrown out of their accommodation because they are no longer affordable to them. On the contrary, in response to the examples which the Member for Fort Rouge has read into the record, I have had discussions with landlords who are extremely concerned. They're in a situation where they don't believe that they can increase their rents at all this year because of the fact that without any rent controls the situation seemed to be in the past that rent controls almost legitimized increases. Because the rent controls allowed for certain increases, they passed them through and that became a justification for them. But now, with rent controls off and with the high vacancy rate, many of them believe that they will not be able to put any increase through this year, despite the fact that they may have in fact incurred substantial increases in their own operating costs. But that is a situation that is governed by the marketplace, by the over-supply of housing and it's a risk that they take, as investors. It's something there going to have to adjust to.

It certainly isn't the intention of our government, Mr. Speaker, in attempting to solve these problems, to interfere or compete with the private sector in the construction of rental accommodation to Manitobans when the private sector vacancy rate is so high and even the public sector vacancy rate, as I mentioned, is 2 percent. The availability of rental units certainly appears to be the best in Canada of all of our major urban centres.

The other point that the member has referred to is the particular problems of the inner city, the disadvantaged; in many cases she referred to native people. She referred in rather emotionally-charged words to the ghetto, which she said was happening in the inner city as a result of housing problems. Frankly, again the figures that are available to our government department indicate that inner city vacancy rates, which are usually significantly lower than overall private sector vacancy rates, are not so much different. Winnipeg's inner city vacancy rate is 4.1 percent as of April 1980, which is just slightly lower than the 4.8 percent overall city vacancy rate. Availability of rental units in the inner city and Winnipeg, as a whole, doesn't seem to be the critical problem that she has indicated. The high availability of vacant apartments in the market results in quite a wide-ranging choice.

It would seem to me if there is going to be any problem that is going to have to be monitored, it would be in a closed market situation, in a particular area where there are people who are not easily mobile and are perhaps locked into certain areas of accommodation because of a variety of personal and social problems. But those are ones, as I say, that the Minister and his department will undoubtedly look after and be very closely monitoring. Legislation to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act, as a matter of fact, will soon be brought forward to confirm this monitoring process of rent increases, after the conclusion of rent controls.

It's unclear to me as well, Mr. Speaker, both from the resolution and from the information or lack of

information which the member provided as to the real concern as to whether it's affordable rental accommodation or it's housing stock to be purchased in certain areas. She made various references to federal laws which impact on the depreciation of rental accommodation; she made other references to the changes that were made in civic legislation in the municipal codes for requiring upgrading of rental accommodation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member has five minutes.

MR. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that she, as a member, supported those municipal codes which made it much more difficult on rental accommodation which required substantial inputs of funding to upgrade the rental accommodation that was provided throughout the city but mostly those that were affected were in the inner city. I'm not sure as to what the intent or the impact on what we do provincially is, by those federal and municipal jurisdictions that have, in her view, caused part of the problem.

In 1979 the Social Planning Council report on housing conditions in Winnipeg indicated that most housing affordability problems exist with families who earn less than 10,000 per annum in total. The 1980 budget which we introduced just last month and a number of the programs which were included provide direct assistance to these low income and single parent families. As well, of course, the Child Related Income Support Program of 30 per child per month plus the 500 exemption per child will also have some impact on those needy families and certainly will give them an opportunity to afford the housing which is available, obviously, by the vacancy rates.

The Tax Credit Reform proposals contained in our budget improved the income definition so assistance is directed to Manitobans in real need. She said she wasn't convinced of that but in fact during the Budget Debate many members opposite criticized the government because all of these programs now became strictly income-related and some of the members opposite had some problem with that philosophy. These programs will provide significant and real benefits in terms of increased disposable income, enhanced security for low income families and the reforms, I think, that are contained in the White Paper represent substantial improvements in shelter and income assistance to those Manitobans who need it most.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would just say that I can't support the motion although I support many of the concerns that the member has voiced but it seems to me that the motion is not supported by any factual evidence of the statistics that she provides and seems to be a shotgun approach, which the member criticized me for adopting in our discussion of the historic buildings conservation resolution. So I say, Mr. Speaker, unless and until the member can provide more evidence to support her resolution, I don't think that it should be supported. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. BRIAN CORRIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish to enter this debate only with some reservations and restrictions, Mr. Speaker. It's not my intention to deal with all of the things that the Member for Fort Rouge and all of the things that the Member for River Heights have discussed but, Mr. Speaker, I think with respect to a certain portion of the resolution in the second Resolved, I think that the Member for Fort Rouge made a good point and I think that the Member for River Heights is simply being too resistant in his effort to understand and appreciate the significance of the argument that the Member for Fort Rouge made.

The Member for Fort Rouge, Mr. Speaker, spoke to us about the people who have communicated with her and asked her what can be done in the face of the decontrol of rents in this province. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you and I can tell the Member for River Heights that the Member for Fort Rouge is not the only one who is receiving numerous calls and letters with respect to this subject matter. I can advise the House, Mr. Speaker, that I, too, today alone in the course of four-and-a-half hours in my office this morning, received some four telephone calls. So, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that this is a very serious matter and I would advise the Member for River Heights that members whose constituents are hard-pressed by inflation and cost of living increases are viewing the present departure of rent controls with some trepidation. This is a matter for grave concern for people who are living on budgets that are fairly close to the bone and essentially only providing the necessities of life.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to corroborate the statistical information provided by the Member for Fort Rouge. It may be true, as the government member has suggested, that these figures are not in any book but I can assure them that they're not fabricated by academics either. I can assure them that this morning I was told by a gentleman that his rent will increase in some three months time by 28 percent. I was told by a young woman that her rent on this very avenue, Broadway, would increase by some 15-1/2 percent in three months time. Another gentleman told me that his rent on Grant Avenue would increase by some, I believe it was 23 to 24 percent, and so on and so forth. I know that the Member for Transcona has advised this House that he has received several calls in this regard. Mr. Speaker, it's a matter of some grave concern.

I'm not suggesting that everybody will be adversely impacted by rent decontrol but I'm certainly going to take and share the position taken by the Member for Fort Rouge with respect to the need that there be concern for the people that will be prejudicially and adversely affected by this particular measure. Particularly, Mr. Speaker, when we confront a situation where the government seems to be taking a position that is somewhat irresponsible with respect to decontrol measures. We know now, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the publication and distribution of a bill before this House, that rent decontrol will not be the subject of general monitoring. We know that there will be no mechanism by which a private citizen, an affected tenant, can apply to any board that will review the full scope of rent increases to be imposed by landlords within the next 90 to 100 days.

Mr. Speaker, we are now confronting a situation where, as a result of the government's unwillingness to provide a defence mechanism for the tenant, that ordinary people, tenants throughout the city of Winnipeg, will be forced to rely on government intervention if there is to be any effective measures taken to roll back excessive rent increases.

The bill, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, provides that the Minister can intercede and can appoint an arbitration board to review unjustifiable or potentially unjustifiable rent increases. But, Mr. Speaker, as we are all well aware, the Minister responsible for this particular piece of legislation and this program has been abidingly resistant to take any activist position with respect to the provisions of that legislation. So, Mr. Speaker, in our impression the government decontrol measures, as they are so-called described, are simply inappropriate and do not represent a potent mechanism for the defence of the tenant. Rather, Mr. Speaker, they're just window-dressing; they are a sop which are intended to give the impression that the government is willing to take some action on behalf of affected tenants.

Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Fort Rouge suggests that we have to retain some form of rent control in order to protect families who cannot afford to be without that protective mechanism, I think she makes a good case. It seems to me that it's common sense that if a tenant who is essentially working poor, a person on the minimum wage, is looking at an increase of rent in the order of 25 to 30 percent, that this is certainly untenable. It's, I think, a by-product of inescapable logic that such increases will certainly have a very harsh impact on such persons and families. Most certainly, Mr. Speaker, we can expect that those people can justifiably look to government for some protection in those circumstances. Mr. Speaker, that is what the Member for Fort Rouge was talking about.

Mr. Speaker, the only way, of course, that we would have an adequate source of information was if the government was willing to take an activist position and monitor all these rent increases in some sort of effective and consistent and businesslike manner. But, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, and I think we can all be assured, that under the administration of the current government and most certainly under the guidance of the present Minister responsible for this legislation, that is very unlikely to happen, very unlikely indeed, Mr. Speaker. By virtue of the rent decontrol legislation, that is the only way, as I said before, that it can happen. There can be no monitoring unless that government Minister decides to take action. We have not seen any indication, Mr. Speaker, that the will of that particular Minister can be so galvanized as to motivate him to be protective of the interests of the private citizen, the consumer of rental housing.

Mr. Speaker, on that basis I would suggest to you that the Member for River Heights remarks, as directed to the question of the retention of rent-control, are inappropriate and deficient. They fail to recognize the very real problem that has been presented to the Legislature by the Member for Fort Rouge and should be, Mr. Speaker, the subject of penetrating scrutiny. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's not enough to suggest that these rather ineffectual and certainly to prove ineffective measures as has been

taken by the government in Bill 83 presented today for the first time to members of this Assembly, will be anything but a very very mild palliative. Mr. Speaker, on that basis I can suggest that it is not a palliative that is required by the tenants of this city but rather some effective measure that reflects a true concern for the welfare and well-being of those people by the government.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. J. FRANK JOHNSTON (Sturgeon Creek):

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to have the opportunity to speak briefly on this resolution and I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the resolution is one that has been done by this government. I just caught the ends of the Honourable Member for Wellington, who says that our approach to the solving the problems of the housing in the city of Winnipeg or the province of Manitoba, is, I don't think he said band-aid but I think that's the reference that he's made to it, yet he doesn't seem to realize and the Member for Fort Rouge doesn't seem to realize that the program that the province of Manitoba has put forward, as far as the SAFER Program is concerned, in expanding it to low income families — and I'm sure it's been commented on before I got into the House — is one that the expansion of it is almost a first as far as the province of Canada is concerned, the support of low income families through this program.

The members opposite don't seem to realize that the approach that has got to be taken at the present time, as far as this shelter is concerned in this province, is not one of injecting large amounts of money into the construction of housing at the present time. We are in a position to have our housing industry go from a situation of peaks and valleys, Mr. Speaker, but into a situation where we can have a very good shelter program as far as that's concerned. I heard the comment that it doesn't mention it but it does refer to support or shelter and the shelter situation in the province of Manitoba at the present time, with the vacancy rate we have at the present time, Mr. Speaker, is such that even the previous government indicated that, when vacancy rates got over 3.5 within the province of Manitoba, that they probably wouldn't want to see the government being into more construction. I mention the construction part of it because I was here, Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Fort Rouge was speaking earlier. I believe I heard her say that the government was the one that was going to have to be the one that injected large funds into the housing area, and the government should inject large funds into the shelter area, not the construction but shelter for people, and that the people, with vacancy rates the way it is within the province, should have the choice to live where they want to live because there's a lot of housing out there at the present time that can be used, as I said, Mr. Speaker.

But you see, Mr. Speaker, what really concerns me about the resolution and what makes me really not able to understand — and I'm probably sure that this has been mentioned before — that you have a member who, during her election campaign, spoke on the expansion of the SAFER Program. She actually said the SAFER Program was her idea, or

the Liberal Party's idea that they had a resolution for it, and she also said that it should be expanded. Mr. Speaker, it was expanded in this House. It was expanded by the government, after a lot of thought, to low-income families and, yet, the Member for Fort Rouge voted against it. Voted against the budget, Mr. Speaker, where the budget expanded the program to low-income families. The one thing that she campaigned on all of the time. Mr. Speaker, you see, the Member for Gladstone, I might say, had a point. If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. The member can get up last night and be sarcastic with me, throw jibes at me, have a lot of fun all the time but, Mr. Speaker, as I told her once before, it rolls off my back where she's concerned.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, the member brings in a resolution to this House that infers that we should have a shelter program expanded to low-income families, and in campaign suggested our first program was discriminating against them because we only did it for senior citizens, and then votes against the budget. Mr. Speaker, I've read the resolution and it's very obvious what the resolution says. Then she took her figures, the figures that she presents as far as the resolution is concerned are not accurate. They are not accurate, Mr. Speaker. We've had the figures checked out as far as this resolution is concerned and they are not accurate. I don't know where she gets her figures but she's quite welcome, the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, Mr. Speaker, is very welcome, to come up and visit with our statistical people at MHRC any time she wants to; she can sit down with the Director of Research any time she wants to; she can send her executive assistant any time she wants to, to sit down and go over the figures that she presented. I can assure her the figures that she presented in her resolution are not accurate at all.

So, the business of just placing a resolution on the Order Paper for the sake of putting it on, for the sake of wanting to speak on something, especially when it's been done, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that really isn't the purpose of this Legislature. The purpose of the Legislature is to vote for what you believe in and the member obviously, by voting against the budget, doesn't believe in the resolution that she put forward, Mr. Speaker. The vacancy rates, as I mentioned earlier, in Manitoba are 4.9, as I mentioned, or close to 5 percent and I can assure you that the whole program, as I said before — I don't mind repeating it, Mr. Speaker — is one that's a leader as far as Manitoba is concerned. I just would like to say that the Member for Fort Rouge has been continually critical of the programs that have been put forward by this government. Mr. Speaker, the government, whether she likes it or not, wants to try to have something, obviously, that the Member for Fort Rouge is in favour of and the Member for Fort Rouge doesn't seem to want to sit down with the people, discuss with them what they think of the shelter program and put it forward in a manner that would be presentable, as far as the resolution is concerned in this House. So, Mr. Speaker, her own research department that she puts forward daily asks questions about MHRC, or not daily, Mr. Speaker, daily asks questions about the welfare of the people in the downtown area as far as grocery is concerned, makes inferences that the

Minister has no heart and doesn't care about the people or the senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, on that basis I would say that my particular interest in senior citizens has probably been proven, proven by the administration of the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation which is interested in the people of the whole of Manitoba. I really, quite frankly, think that the interests have to be considered over the whole of Manitoba and we have shown it. The resolution that says, all of the items listed — and the member when she started to speak, she said I know that the government has done this but this part of the resolution doesn't really refer to the operative part of the resolution and all of those things were said. All of those things were said by the member in the first part of her speech and yet she goes along, Mr. Speaker, and tries, through the resolution to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. The hour being 5:30 p.m., when this item next comes up, the Honourable Minister will have 10 minutes.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., the House is accordingly adjourned and stands adjourned until 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. (Thursday)