



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 4, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Jack Penner (Chairman of the Committee on Economic Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present the Third Report of the Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as its Third Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, April 2, 1991, at 8 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Development Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989.

Mr. Ted Chiswell, General Manager, and Mr. Marcel Taillieu, Chairperson, provided such information as was requested with respect to the Annual Report and business of the Manitoba Development Corporation.

Your committee has considered the Annual Report of the Manitoba Development Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989, and has adopted the same as presented.

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

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in presenting to honourable members the Annual Report of the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba for the fiscal year 1989-90.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the final report 1988-89 and 1989-90 for the Workplace Innovation Centre.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling the Provincial Auditor's Report of Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd. for the year ending March 31, 1989.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, today I was pleased and proud to officially open the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, a world-class health research institute which is already providing results.

At that opening and the breakfast this morning, I was pleased that the critic for the official opposition was able to take time off from her busy schedule to join in the announcement and to meet some of the advisory board members.

The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation was established as a partnership between the University of Manitoba and Manitoba Health with funding from the Health Services Development Fund of \$3.5 million over three years. It would not be possible to establish a centre like this anywhere else in Canada. Nowhere does there exist the kind of data base or the research expertise we have right here in Manitoba.

Manitoba is the envy of the health policy research community. Thanks to the diligent work of internationally recognized scientists such as doctors Noralou and Les Roos, we have a unique system which, based on 18 years of validated claims information, can answer complex and sophisticated health service and policy research questions.

Researchers at the centre are currently collaborating with several universities including Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Maryland, Duke University in North Carolina, Dartmouth University in New Hampshire.

* (1335)

As an example of how important the research can be, let me illustrate with one study recently completed by Dr. Les Roos. Dr. Roos compared

the outcome of surgical care in New England with similar outcomes in Manitoba, New England having an international reputation for excellence in surgical care, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. Roos' report indicates that Manitoba survival rates compare favourably with those of New England but, more significantly, Manitoba can provide superior care and treatment in surgery for less than half the cost of New England's surgery. This is why many American states are suddenly very interested in how we do things in Manitoba. This is also why the centre is so important as a leading knowledge-based industry.

I would like to emphasize the importance of knowledge-based industries as a means for Manitoba and Canada to compete and to prosper. The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation is an excellent example of this type of knowledge-based industry that we can and will be establishing in the province of Manitoba.

Although Manitoba has provided \$3.5 million to initiate the centre, one of its goals is to become self-sufficient financially within three years. This will be achieved by securing contracts in the health industry for technical trials and clinical research. This in turn will provide employment for researchers and their staff as well as a focus around which to attract knowledge-based industries to Manitoba.

This will be the preferred location, because we will offer the essential information technology, data bases and skilled and experience researchers.

We want to refocus the system of health care to ensure we do things right the first time, Mr. Speaker. The centre is even now providing my ministry with information needed to improve efficiency and quality health care services.

Across Canada and North America all jurisdictions are concerned with the cost of health care and how we as taxpayers will provide for the health care needs in the future. Everyone is seeking for the answers to providing good quality care and universal access without bankrupting the system.

This places an emphasis on our ability as health care planners to make sound policy and funding decisions today. The centre can give us an opportunity to lead the world and to be first in innovative, effective health policy.

The centre will look at strategic management issues such as alternate ways of funding hospitals

and forecasting the impact of new technologies before they are implemented. In addition, the centre will assist us to develop our healthy public policy, Mr. Speaker, and let me illustrate.

There is growing recognition that the determinants of health go beyond the health care system and expenditures on health. As an example, in 1987 Japan was credited with the highest life expectancy of any nation in the world, some 78.9 years of expected life for an average Japanese citizen. This is quite a change from 1947, when Japan's life expectancy at birth was 50 years, one of the lowest of the industrialized nations, just 40-some years ago.

Japan did not achieve this position with massive spending in health care. In fact, Japan spends amongst the least per capita of the major industrial nations and ranks seventh behind the United States, Canada, Sweden, France, Germany and Holland. In contrast, the United States spends over \$2,000 per capita, which is the highest in the world, for each man, woman and child and yet has one of the lowest life expectancies in the western industrialized world.

*(1340)

In the broadest sense, the determinants of health are found in the prosperity of a nation. Major risks to health are found in socioeconomic factors such as unemployment, unsuitable housing, lack of social supports and geographic isolation. To counteract these risks, we will have to go beyond the health care system, even beyond the traditional role of government. We are going to have to change the way we do business, through healthy public policy and through strategic management.

That is where the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation comes in. One of the first projects for the centre, known as the Manitoba Population Health Data Base, is a joint venture of the centre, Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. This Manitoba Population Health Data Base research venture will help us link service delivery with health outcomes. In other words, for the first time in Canada and perhaps the world, our system will have the kind of sound research and strategic management information available so that we can begin to refocus our policies, our programs and our services away from our present illness system toward health care in the truest sense of the word.

Mr. Speaker, we have attracted people who enjoy international reputations, because they want to be part of this exciting venture. The 16 members of the centre's board are people like Dr. Morris Barer of the University of British Columbia; Dr. Philip Lee, who is director for the Institute of Health Policy Studies at the University of California and, I might add, a former Assistant Secretary of Health to the President of the United States; Dr. Fraser Mustard, who is President of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research in Toronto; and Dr. John Wennberg, who is the Director of the Centre of the Evaluative Clinical Sciences at Dartmouth Medical School in New Hampshire.

As well, there is substantial representation from Manitoba's business, research and university communities. We are pleased to have as co-chairs of the centre Dr. Noralou Roos, Professor of the Department of Community Health Services at the University of Manitoba, and my Deputy Minister, Mr. Frank Maynard.

Others who have accepted our invitation to serve on the board from the University of Manitoba are Dr. Nick Anthonisen, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine; Dr. Arnold Naimark, President of the University of Manitoba; Dr. John Hamerton, head of the Department of Human Genetics; Dr. Brian Postl, head of Community Health Sciences; and Dr. Leslie Roos, Director of the Manitoba Research Data Bank. Anna Hunt-Binkley is a former nurse now practising law in Brandon and is serving on the board bringing an interesting discipline to the board. Arthur Mauro is President, Chief Executive Officer for Investors Group and is Chairman of the Board of St. Boniface Hospital. Tannis Richardson, an active member of a number of community services and health care service organizations; Michael Bessey, Secretary of Treasury Board; and the province's Deputy Minister of Finance, Charlie Curtis.

Mr. Speaker, we in Manitoba will be able to achieve the lead nationally and indeed internationally in developing a sound, research-based health policy. This is a remarkable opportunity for economic growth in the province of Manitoba and, more importantly, for better health services for all Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): First let me say that I was very pleased on behalf of the New

Democratic Party this morning to be present at the official opening of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation. It is indeed an important development in the province of Manitoba and a historic development for the country of Canada. This centre promises to be a leading example and a pioneer in the necessary reform work that must be done for our health care system, and I have every confidence in the work of this centre and in the members represented on the board.

In particular, I want to single out the long years of work put in by Noralou and Les Roos and to say on behalf of everyone on our side and, I am sure, on behalf of all members in this House that we look forward to the work that they will generate over the next three years.

Of course, I want to mention and give some marks where credit is due to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and to this government for embarking in this direction, for initiating, participating in the establishment of this centre but, in so doing, I think it is also important for all of us to recognize the work of one who came before the present Minister of Health, and that of course is Wilson Parasiuk, who really began in this province the whole work toward health care reform and made some very important inroads in this whole area.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that there is nothing more important than a proper mechanism for evaluating our health care policies and programs. As the minister has said and has been said by others, it is absolutely deplorable, in our opinion, that in this field, probably unlike any other field, tests are used, products are applied, examinations are made for which we do not know the results, for which we do not know if they are effective or not.

In fact, probably one of the most well-known authors in this field, Michael Rachli, said this many, many years ago, and I quote from him for the moment. He states in his book, *Second Opinion*: "Unfortunately, epidemiological research is grossly underused in medicine. Most Canadians would be shocked to learn that most medical therapies have never been rigorously evaluated. As many as 80 percent of all treatments, including surgeries, have never been scientifically tested to prove their worth. Medical history is littered with abandoned therapies that were once common practice but are now utterly discredited."

* (1345)

He also states that: "Good intentions cannot compensate for ill-informed decision-making." I hope that philosophy and the initiative taken by this government with regard to the establishment of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation will carry over and permeate every other decision that must be made in the health care field. It makes no sense for this government to embark one day on an evaluation process in terms of our medical system, our health care system and, at the same time, be working at disentangling medicare and eroding our most treasured national program, that of medicare.

So I hope that out of this initiative today there is a signal from the government that they are absolutely and firmly committed to preserving universal health care and will soon show this House and all Manitobans how they are prepared to stand up for universal, quality, accessible healthcare throughout Canada.

I also hope that the minister takes some lessons from this centre when he talks about healthy public policy. He has been wont to talk about healthy policy for some time now, and I hope that he realizes what that means is getting truly at the roots of poor health today in Manitoba and in Canada.

In fact, I think this government has to come to the realization that right now their public policy, the public policy of this administration, is not healthy. It is in fact sick. It is very, very sick indeed, because healthy public policy has to be tied to full employment, to the eradication of poverty, to the elimination of abuse, to healthy, wholesome family relationships.

Mr. Speaker, every single policy of this government as a whole is leading to very sick symptoms in our society today. We have, under this government, the highest unemployment rate in recent history. We have greater poverty than ever before. We have a larger and larger incidence of abuse, of homeless children, of food banks, and the examples go on and on.

If there is one lesson out of this for the present minister and indeed the whole government, it is that healthy policy must be something that all of their departments and their policies and their programs address, and I hope that the Minister of Health will talk to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and

all of his other colleagues to ensure that this government truly is concerned about a healthy public policy.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me make one other comment. This initiative today falls under the Health Services Development Fund, a fund established I believe at least a couple of years ago out of lottery dollars. While this project has been approved, there are many others on that list that are waiting approval. I learned only two weeks ago that one program in particular, the back injury prevention program in Manitoba was given approval from this minister about a year ago to proceed with their project under the Health Services Development Fund, and were only told last week that the money would start flowing.

Related to that, it has come to my attention that the very important project sponsored by the Society for Depression and Manic Depression of Manitoba Inc. received a confirmation of support for their project from the Minister of Health himself on September 6, 1990, and to this day are waiting for dollars to flow, are waiting for final approval. That is well over eight months for this minister to meet his commitment.

I would ask the Minister of Health to make a commitment today to ensure that all of the projects, all dozen or so of the projects that he has approved, start immediate implementation by flowing the money as he has promised. Then truly will we be able to see some concerted efforts on the part of healthy public policy and health care reform.

* (1350)

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying that I think this is one of the best things that has happened for the last three years.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, as a member of the opposition, we must appreciate the things when they are done in the right way. This Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) will be remembered for two things. One will be the mental health policy with their moving in the right direction. The second will be the centre.

Mr. Speaker, by establishing this centre, the minister has sent a very strong message that we in Manitoba are very serious about medical research. The world knows that Manitoba has made a very special contribution. One of the examples is the Rh lab institute, which has done tremendous work and

saved millions of children in the world in the past and the future.

I think by establishing such a centre when we are all facing a major problem in this country—we are spending 33 percent to 34 percent of our provincial budget on health care. The expenditure has gone out of control. We need new ways, and I think this centre would provide us new ways to provide the new, innovative community-based and other health care.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we are in the middle of this continent in this area, and Manitoba could become one of the major health industries. I think this centre would go a great way to help that aspect.

I would encourage the Minister of Health that we always recognize all the individuals who have contributed in special ways in all the fields, but in medical research we have never done that. I would encourage the minister to recognize all the individuals who have contributed in the area of research for the last number of years, so that we encourage them, because we are the people in the community who are benefiting from their good research and their excellent work. I would hope that the minister would follow that direction and continue on the positive moves he has initiated.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of all members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Woodlawn Elementary School forty-eight Grade 5 students. They are under the direction of Marjorie Block. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Free Trade Agreement Impact Agriculture Industry

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, every day, every week further news is given to western Canada, Manitoba about the deteriorating situation facing our farmers in western Canada, and the agricultural economy of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, whether it is the payment program announced last week, the inadequate long-term

program of GRIP that has been announced a couple of weeks before that, the decline in prices, the changes in transportation policies, on and on and on, we are continuing to see situations develop that indeed has been a crisis in our province for a number of years and is continuing to grow as a crisis, something everybody in this House acknowledges and everybody has spoken on before.

Mr. Speaker, again, consistent with the predictions that were made under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and consistent with many of our concerns about the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, we now see a further problem in terms of U.S. grain products being shipped to Canada, a further effect on the prices of our domestic wheat, our domestic flour, a further erosion of the sales that we will have in our country to even our own citizens.

I would ask the Premier: In light of his support of the Free Trade Agreement, the Mulroney Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, what action has he taken as Premier, as head of government, about this very, very crucial crisis in our farm and agricultural economy of this province?

* (1355)

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): The member, I am sure, is referring to the potential opening of the border to U.S. wheat coming up to this country. Clearly, if that wheat does come up here, it has to have an end-use certificate, so it does not enter our system and use our low-cost transportation or deteriorate the quality of Canadian grain.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member of the success we have had as Canadians shipping in the United States since 1988. For durum, we started in 1988 shipping 168,000 tons per year. Now we are shipping 270,000 tons. For oats, it has gone from 372,000 tons to 566,000 tons per year that we have shipped to the United States. For canola, a crop that we are doing very well in terms of marketing in the United States, 11,000 tons in 1988, now 50,000 tons. We have increased our exports to the United States while the Free Trade Agreement has been in place. The future of western Canadian agriculture is built to access that market.

We have superior quality. I do not care what commodity you name, whether it is wheat, oats, barley, flax, canola, pork or beef, we have superior

quality products. We are selling into their market. We need open-border access. Their products, if they are going to come up here, have to have an end-use certificate, and they have to be approved by the Canadian Grain Commission.

I do not fear that we cannot compete with them or they will deteriorate our ability to get a fair price from our millers in this country.

Free Trade Agreement Impact Agriculture Industry

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, again I would ask the Premier.

Western Canada was considered at one point, as I recall, the breadbasket of the world. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation under the Canada-U.S.A. Free Trade Agreement where western Canada and Manitoba are in risk of being the breadbasket of even our own country.

We have said for a long time that Canada is different to the United States. We have different weather. We have different transportation policies. We have different, obviously, population realities. Those things should be taken into consideration, and we should not have this kind of Free Trade Agreement with Canada and the United States that the Premier supported with his colleague Brian Mulroney in the 1988 federal election.

I would ask the Premier now whether he will join with a number of other farm groups calling on an end to this Canada-U.S.A. Free Trade Agreement—we are losing on both ends; we see the U.S. even appealing the hogs decision—and whether he will join a number of other groups calling on an end so that we can have a made-in-Canada sovereign policy on our agricultural community, as most countries do in the world.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, speaking of politics, I just acknowledge that this is the first question on agriculture this session that the Leader of the Opposition has asked, and he is doing it because of course he is grandstanding to a group of farmers who are welcome in attendance here today, but they will not be fooled by his newfound interest in agriculture.

The fact of the matter is, in a recent report that was put out by the Canada West Foundation, a group that I might say was quoted by the Leader of the Opposition just yesterday in this House, they said, and I quote: Canadian grains sales from each

of the prairie provinces are significantly higher than pre-Free Trade Agreement because of demand by U.S. millers for wheat with high protein and superior milling qualities.

I might say as well in confirmation of that, the following information was imparted, that while total Canadian agricultural exports declined by 11 percent in the last year, primarily due to the drop in wheat prices, the agricultural trade with the United States went up by 13 percent. There have been 54 plant expansions in the agri-food processing industry and 50 new plants since the establishment of the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S.

* (1400)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, our critic on Industry, Trade and Technology has tabled in the House the deficit of payments that are clearly eroding Manitoba's situation on many sectors. The Premier should go to the halls and communities across this province. There are farm auctions, there is crisis going on in every community in this province. Do not give us the statistics. Look at the human tragedy that is going on.

I would ask the Premier: What action is his government going to take to stop the flow of U.S. agricultural products into central Canada, which will continue the decline in prices and exports and imports of our products in Manitoba and continue to devastate the food processing industry, which has also been devastated under the Canada-U.S.A. Free Trade Agreement?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has not listened to the facts that were put on the table. While there has been a total decline in Canadian agricultural exports worldwide of 11 percent in the past year, there was an increase of 13 percent in agricultural trade with the United States, 54 plant expansions, 50 new plants since the Free Trade Agreement for agri-food production in this province.

A report of the Canada West Foundation which he quoted just yesterday in this House says that Canadian grain sales from each of the prairie provinces are significantly higher than the pre-Free Trade Agreement sales because of demand by U.S. millers for wheat with high protein and superior milling qualities.

What the Leader of the Opposition is not aware of is that there is a world crisis in agriculture because of export subsidy wars that are being fueled by the

treasuries, of course, of the European Community. That is the problem with agriculture and pricing today, Mr. Speaker, and he can do all he wants to try and get some cheap politics. He had better try and understand the issue before he stands up here and grandstands.

GRIP Program Meeting Request

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, now this Premier wants the Americans to take our domestic markets as well. That is what he says is his policy in this province. Over the last number of months, contrary to what this Premier said, we have asked many questions on agriculture from this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and our Premier. We have raised our concerns with regard to the growing farm crisis in Manitoba and across western Canada and the government's failure to deal with it, and that is the case. There is clearly growing concern among farmers from across this province that they are being placed in a catch-22 situation with no alternative but to sign up for GRIP with the pressure that this government is placing upon them.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, will the minister advise this House and the farmers who have come from great distances, hundreds of miles, to this Legislature here today why he has refused to meet with them or even to return their phone calls until they have demonstrated here today that they mean business and they are not going to put up with this callous treatment from this minister?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, over the past number of months, we have met with many farm groups, organizations. We have just had about 150 meetings across rural Manitoba to meet with farmers to explain the GRIP program, to hear their concerns and, as recently as two weeks ago, I made a proposal to the federal government to deal with the issue that these producers have raised today that has come to me from various angles out of the southwest over the past two to three weeks.

The federal minister has been asked by this government, by this minister to allow those producers to have area average coverage as an option in 1991. I still have not gotten a response from that partner in the federal-provincial relationship we have in delivering GRIP.

The GRIP program in Manitoba is at least equal to every other province in Canada, and we have the superior management option available to producers plus a 5 percent discount on GRIP fees if they sign up for crop insurance, plus we also want to offer the option of area average to those producers. We are waiting for the response of the federal government to get that done.

We have done all we can to be able to deliver the program to deal with a crisis which, clearly, there is a crisis. It is a crisis because of an international grain trade war and a drought. They both are going on right now and have been going on for some number of years. We have a crisis and we are trying to deal with it with using a lot of tax dollars.

We want the consumer who is buying this product wherever in the world to pay a fair price for it. We cannot force that to happen. So this program, in an intervening period of time, has to be able to deal with the crisis until the world structure of grain price recovers to a respectable degree.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this minister has been a complete failure in dealing with this issue. He knows very well that in view of the fact the area average will not even—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I sit and I wait for you to stand and bring the member to order in the sense that he is abusing the rules. The rules of our House call members on their subsequent questions after their first questions to not use a preamble, to move to their supplementary question. This member now for the last two weeks has chosen to not follow the rules of the House, and I ask you to bring him to order, please.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): First of all, on the point of order, the government House leader should be careful in the way he phrases points of order not to question your authority as Speaker, Mr. Speaker. That is not acceptable to members of this House. This government may have a majority, but it cannot dictate to you, Sir, how this House operates.

The second point I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the member in his point of order should reflect

on the particular matter at hand, not references to two weeks of behaviour, because we want to talk about what has been happening in this House the last weeks. We are seeing an increasingly arrogant and insensitive government that is abusing the rules of this House and has no right to lecture members of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker: I would remind all honourable members, seeing as how the point has been raised, that a supplementary question should not require a preamble, but I would also like to remind all honourable members that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, should deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

Minimum Acreage Coverage

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the area average coverage will not provide a profit, will not even cover the cost of production, will this minister now put in place a minimum acreage coverage or payment to ensure that the costs of production of producers are at least covered under this program?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the farm community members that I met with this morning requested area average coverage on the basis of risk area too. We proposed that two weeks ago to the federal minister, and we are waiting for his response.

I think there is also some good news that I do have from the federal minister, in that he is guaranteeing that he will deliver a third line of defence money for 1991, and he is certainly looking at 1992. In a variety of ways, it will meet the cash shortfall that the farm community experienced in the spring of 1991 while they wait for the GRIP program to kick in in terms of support, which will basically occur in 1992.

We are also looking at an interim payment in the GRIP program in the fall of 1991. The combined package that will be coming forward not too far down the road from the federal-provincial governments will go a long way to help the farm community to deal with the reality that wheat is worth \$2 a bushel on the world market, and we are covering them for \$4.15.

That is a considerable level of support. It will translate to many millions of dollars of support to western Canada, which is gravely needed at this time.

* (1410)

Bank Intervention

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, this minister is not dealing with the inequities in the program. -(interjection)- What are you so paranoid about? Are you sensitive about this?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate.

Mr. Plohman: The minister knows that the banks are also applying pressure to the producers to sign up in order to get their operating loans. They need them now, because they want to get on the land.

Will the minister now contact the bank and meet with the senior officials and indicate to them that that is not acceptable practice, and he will not put up with that?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, this member stood up here yesterday and asked that we cancel GRIP, that we do not allow it. Now he is saying that the banks need it for support for the farmers to get their credit. I wonder, which way is he going?

We know very clearly that the farmers need the support that GRIP will allow, some security for 1991 and the years ahead so that they can stabilize themselves in terms of getting their credit. We know that, and that is why we are delivering the program, and that is why the farm community requested this program, to show some predictability in the future instead of continuous ad hoc programs, which may or may not occur, year after year, depending on the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, we have responded to the farm community, and there will be millions of dollars of support. We hope that the world situation resolves itself so this is not needed forever and a day.

GRIP Program Bank Intervention

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, all of the hot air in this building is not going to solve the agricultural problems.

With the serious problems being faced by the farm community, they need time and they need consideration. The question put by the critic for the opposition was a very simple one, and I think the farmers are entitled to an answer.

Will the Minister of Agriculture contact the banks in this province to ensure that they are not putting

pressure on farmers to sign GRIP in order to get operating loans? That is unfair intimidation.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I met with members of the banking community about three weeks ago, and they did not indicate to me that they were putting pressure on them to sign GRIP. The bankers indicated that they needed some degree of security for loans to be put in place, and that is why they said, we think the GRIP program will help the farmers be able to solidify their lines of credit. They clearly did not indicate to me that they were going to demand GRIP for the farmers to sign up in order to get their operating loans or their cash requirements for this year but, obviously, it will help the farmer in terms of stabilizing his situation, in terms of giving the guarantee that he can repay his loans.

GRIP offers that. There is no question about it. That is one of the reasons it was put in place and one of the reasons it needs to be in place in the spring of 1991, because the marketplace is going to return \$2 a bushel a week or less, and that is unacceptable. We cannot live with that. It is as unjust as it is. That is the real world.

Mrs. Carstairs: Perhaps the minister asked the bankers the wrong question, so let me ask the minister, because farmers are phoning our offices and telling us that banks are in fact insisting that they sign up for GRIP in order to get their operating loans, would he also ask the same question to his staff people at MACC who are also asking farmers questions about their participation in GRIP? While there has not been a specific example given to me of a quid pro quo, there is again the sense of intimidation felt by a young farmer who goes before MACC, and the first question that they are asked is: Now tell us, are you going to participate in GRIP?

I would like this minister to tell his staff very clearly that no such conclusions will be drawn by MACC.

Mr. Findlay: I am not just sure where this member is coming from because, clearly, GRIP does give greater security to the farmer to be able to stabilize his income situation so he can be able to meet his cash flow requirements in terms of repaying his debt. If a farmer goes in and asks for \$80 or \$100 or \$120 an acre coverage but his market value of his crop is only \$60, it is only natural to discuss the ability to secure that line of credit with a higher level of coverage. That issue has to be discussed. It is one of the reasons that GRIP has been put in place,

to give farmers a greater sense of risk protection from the low price that exists in the world market.

Mrs. Carstairs: This minister obviously does not understand what intimidation feels like. An intimidation is when a brand new program, of which you are supposed to have a choice, has that choice eliminated when you appear before a bank and the bank says, sorry, you do not have a choice because otherwise you are not getting an operating loan.

Will this minister ensure that choice is returned to the farmers of the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I as a farmer feel greatly intimidated if I know my cost of production is \$120 an acre and the marketplace is only going to give me \$60. Then I am really intimidated because I know I am losing \$2 for every one I invest. The GRIP program is designed to give that degree of risk protection, that security for the farm community. So it is only natural they would analyze the program from that point of view, both the farmer and the borrower.

GRIP Program Voluntary Sign-up

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, for months the federal Minister of Agriculture and indeed this Minister of Agriculture have been making statements designed to pressure farmers into signing up for GRIP even though they will continue to lose money. They are told that the ad hoc programs will no longer be in place and any deficiency payment will be tied to GRIP. Along with that, rural municipalities are having the operating grants cut, and this as well puts additional pressure on farmers.

Will the minister now state clearly that he will have no part of forcing farmers into signing up for GRIP, and will he fight to have all deficiency payments now and in the future paid to all farmers, not only those who join GRIP?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, at no time was any farmer told that he had to sign up for GRIP. It has been voluntary from Day One. It has been designed under pressure from the farm community for a more predictable, stable, risk protection mechanism in the future.

Crop insurance gives yield protection. GRIP gives price insurance. That has been the way it has been from the beginning, and it has been voluntary, voluntary right from the beginning.

The idea of third line of defence, I have advocated to the federal minister we need a third line of defence for the spring of 1991 and more likely for 1992 also. We have advocated that is absolutely necessary for the farm community and they have offered to pay that entire amount.

I have been criticized on the other side of the House because I allow offloading—allow us to pay federal bills. Well, in this case, the federal government is going to pay the entire bill. We have asked them to give consideration to maximizing the ability to make that payment in Manitoba. They have indicated that they are going to do that. Whether they tie it to GRIP or not remains to be seen, or whether they require a portion of it.

Mr. Speaker, many producers have said that it is necessary to have stability that the two be tied together.

Minimum Acreage Payment

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Will the minister commit to a minimum payment based on the figures put out by his department and by Ag Canada so that all farmers will have a chance to get a fair payment and not feel disenfranchised by the program and farmers will not be set up against each other as they were with the drought payment when different areas were not being treated equally? Will they have a fair chance at a payment?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, farmers will have the option of voluntarily signing up for GRIP. We have approved a program with superior management. We have increased the premium by 5 percent if they sign up for crop insurance also. -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, that member says that they should have a minimum level of income. Well, the second line of defence is GRIP. The third line of defence I have already mentioned will be added on top of that. What the entire package is—I am fairly confident that entire package will equal cost of production.

The members that came in from the farm community today indicated that it was \$125 an acre. I think that is a reasonable figure. It will be achievable under the combination of programs that will be available for the farm community to deal with the crisis that is in front of them today.

They also indicated to me that they want some targeted support to southwest Manitoba. That

member from Swan River was against targeted support to the drought program of 1990.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, all we wanted was fairness in that program.

* (1420)

Municipal Operating Grants Reduction

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Minister of Rural Development.

Will the minister stand up for the people of rural development and reverse the decision to cut municipal operating grants, which is just another example of this government offloading onto the backs of the rural people, the people who can least afford it at this time, and will result in more rural communities going down the drain?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous administration, which in fact was going to cap the transfer payments from the province to the municipal corporations, we removed that cap as a provincial government. It is not a matter of reducing in any way to the municipal corporations; it is a matter of a shortfall of funds from the income tax that this province receives that is normally passed on to the corporations by formula. So there is no cutback. It is a straight pass through of funds to the municipal corporations by formula. It is not a cutback. It is just a matter of using the resources that we have available to us by formula and paying them out.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased at every chance to stand to say that this government has cut the education taxes for farmers off of farm land, something that it took years for that government to realize was a necessity. -(interjection)- In fact, we are quoted against it in the budget last year. So I can tell you there are many farmers on this side who clearly appreciate the difficulties that rural Manitobans are facing and will continue to work on their behalf.

Education System Federal Funding

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, to hear the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Derkach) talk, one would not realize that the university facilities are in a state of disrepair, that

tuition fees are rising and the programs are in jeopardy of being cut.

This morning at his announcement the minister indicated there was a freeze on federal transfer payments, yet the federal government in its propaganda has indicated a 3.7 percent increase to the province from the federal government.

Which Tory is telling the truth, Mr. Speaker? Can the Minister of Education indicate that? Was it a freeze or increase from the federal government?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I can understand that the member is leading up to a question which would indicate that we should be funding universities at even a greater level than we are today, and I would like to indicate that today I announced a 3.3 percent increase to universities for this year. At a time when transfer payments and the growth in revenues to this province are at zero, we have still been able to afford 3.3 percent to the universities.

When we have farmers with us today who are facing a serious situation, who cannot afford any more taxes, I think it is quite significant that we were able to come up with 3.3 percent in overall funding to our universities.

Universities Funding

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, there are sons and daughters who attend Brandon University facing a tuition increase of 20 percent. Why has this government gone back on its promise to increase funding to universities at inflation or better?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): It is too bad that the member for Kildonan has not kept up with the news. When we ran for election in our last mandate, yes, indeed, we did promise university or education funding at the level of inflation.

In this last mandate that we were given, we said that we would afford to give universities as much as we were able to, given the financial circumstances. I remind members of this House that the revenue growth in this province has been zero percent. We are facing the interest costs on our debt in excess of \$400 million, and yet we have the member for Kildonan crying for more money to our universities at a time when we cannot afford to increase taxes to the people of this province.

Education System Federal Funding

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I am going to table a document where the Premier alluded to the fact that he would adhere to the 1988 increase, and I am prepared to table that. So they have gone back on their 1990 commitment as well.

Mr. Speaker, what is it? Is it a 3.7 percent increase from the federal government, or is it a zero percent increase?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had read the budget that I brought down last October, on page 3 of the appendices where all the financial details are presented, he would see under health and higher education cash transfer a decrease in cash of \$3 million, a percentage decrease of slightly under half of 1 percent.

Mr. Speaker, those are the numbers which the member was asked to vote on in this House and, indeed, he was the one who had to pass judgment on the numbers as presented in the budget. These are the real numbers.

Personal Care Homes Patient Charges

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Yesterday we noted in this House that seniors who have such low incomes that they receive supplemental benefits through 55-Plus were to be hit by this government through deindexing. That represented this government's attack on well elderly. Today we learned they are also prepared to attack the sick elderly.

Can the Premier give us a reasonable explanation why the charges to panelled patients in hospitals and those in personal care homes increased by 9.7 percent, significantly higher than inflation, from February '91 to February '92?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the costs of personal care home charges and obviously panelled patients for personal care homes have gone up consistently throughout the period of decades. I know all throughout the decade of the '80s under the former administration and beyond that as the costs of personal care, the costs of beds went up, their portion went up. They still pay a very

small portion of the total cost, a very small fraction of the total cost of their personal care.

Mr. Speaker, you know, in order to maintain health care, in order to continue to supply beds, increased numbers of beds in this province for personal care as this administration has done and is continuing to be committed to do, we have to look for ways in which we can make reasonable charges. These are charges that are considered to be applicable because of the fact that these people have incomes. They have pension incomes and other incomes, obviously, that can be applied to this, and they have been done by successive administrations.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, we have a different view to personal care for the people of Manitoba than the Leader of the Liberal Party had when she said that she would turf out 40 percent of those who were in personal care homes. We believe that that is the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has indicated that he is taking the money away from the seniors living below the poverty line so he can give it to the health care system.

Can the Premier tell the House and the seniors of Manitoba what specific new health initiative he is proposing with the \$450,000 he is taking from the poor seniors?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, these are people who are full time in these institutions. So all of their needs—their shelter, their food, their maintenance, everything—are taken care of and they still have income from their pensions left over beyond. That is the case. So these are not people living below the poverty line. These are people whose total needs are looked after by virtue of the costs of keeping them in shelter, in food and obviously all other maintenance needs, medicine and so on. So the member for St. Boniface is totally misrepresenting it.

I repeat, we are doing the things to maintain people in personal care beds, unlike his Leader who wanted to turf out 40 percent of those who are in personal care homes—she said she would throw out of personal care homes. That is the wrong policy, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier talked about choices and priorities. Why did the Premier choose as a priority to take money away from the seniors living below the poverty line and give money to Jim Moore and Norm Isler?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, regrettably the member for St. Boniface is trivializing a very important issue. The care of our elderly in hospitals and personal care beds is very, very important to us. We are putting all of our abilities to play to ensure that we can maintain these people in a high-quality standard of care in personal care homes and in hospital beds. That is why these people are having their total needs looked after including their shelter, including their food, including their maintenance, including their drugs and still have money left over from their pension incomes, because we care about them. We are making sure these facilities are available to them at a cost that does leave them with some money left over as well.

* (1430)

BUNTEP Program Norway House Indian Band

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education. For several years now the BUNTEP program has been operational and has proven to be an extremely beneficial program toward achieving goals of human resource development, particularly for northern people.

The community of Norway House currently has a program with an enrollment of some 27 students. This program is in jeopardy now, because it appears that the pre-election commitment that was made by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is not being fulfilled.

My question is: Will the Minister of Education now assure this House that this commitment that was made to the Norway House Indian Band for funding be fulfilled?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the member started out with a question on the BUNTEP program and, indeed, I have to agree that the BUNTEP program has been an important one in this province for the development of human resources among the Native and northern communities.

Many of the graduates from the BUNTEP program are now working in the Manitoba education system and are contributing very successfully, very highly to the educational needs of students.

I can indicate that on previous occasions we have made it very clear that our commitment to the BUNTEP program is very clear. It is a program

which involves not only the province but indeed the federal government and, indeed, our commitment is solid and has always been there.

Continuation

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): The announcement of a 3.3 percent increase to universities today, does that ensure that the BUNTEP program will continue and be strengthened?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, 3.3 percent to universities at a time when provincial revenues are at zero is an indication that there is a commitment not only to one specific program within the educational system but indeed to all post-secondary education in this province.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when our revenues are flat, at a time when our provincial people, who pay the taxes, are strapped to the limit, I think 3.3 percent indicates our commitment not only to BUNTEP but indeed to all post-secondary education in this province.

Government Commitment

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): My question, my final supplementary is again directed to the Minister of Education. Will the provincial government stop hiding behind federal negotiations and clearly make a commitment to continue to fund BUNTEP at least at last year's level for the next academic year?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): I do not know where the member has been and what he has been listening to, but on many occasions I have stood in my place and indicated very clearly that our commitment to the BUNTEP program, to all the ACCESS programs, is indeed there.

Mr. Speaker, we have not cut back on our commitment to those programs. Indeed, we have increased our commitment by \$2.6 million last year to ensure that students would have access to those very important programs.

I remind the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) that it was this government that was able to conclude an agreement for the Bachelor of Nursing program in Keewatin Community College, a program that his government, when they were in power, could not come to a conclusion for.

Victims Assistance Committee Federal Victim Surcharge Control

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). When the government released its Discussion Paper on Victims Assistance some two years ago, it spoke of the federal surcharge coming into place, which generates approximately \$375,000 a year. It was anticipated and contemplated that that money would be added to the Victims Assistance Fund to be allocated by the Victims Assistance Committee. In fact, however, we learned by Order-in-Council, dated March 20 of this year and signed by the minister, that this \$375,000 will not come under control of the committee but will come under his and his control alone.

My question to the minister is: Why is the government persisting in politicizing this fund, which is for victims and has been put in place for victims and victims alone, and why will he not leave that money in the hands of the community-based committee it was supposed to be under, which includes victims themselves?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The federal victims surcharge on Criminal Code offences is a separate fund from the fund that is contemplated by The Justice for Victims of Crime Act here in Manitoba. The honourable member is mixing the two or appears to want to do that and has used the word "politicize" with respect to the funding for victims services out of that fund.

I would not think the Victims Services unit and the people served by the Victims Services unit of the City of Winnipeg think it is a politicized fund. I do not think the victims who are served by the Victims Assistance unit attached to the Brandon City Police Department think that the Victims Assistance Fund has been politicized.

I do not think the victims who are served at the Thompson Crisis Centre and the myriad of other grant assistance made available by the Victims Assistance Fund, I do not think the victims involved and served by those various agencies believe that the Victims Assistance Fund has been politicized.

Mr. Edwards: Every one of those grants the minister has just cited came out of the committee's work. This minister has now taken half that fund and put it into his department, Mr. Speaker, and he knows that was not contemplated and he knows—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate. The honourable member for St. James, put your question, please.

Mr. Edwards: I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Mr. Speaker. Will he keep his word, as outlined in his discussion paper of two years ago, and will he remain true to the principles of the act which was put in place many years ago and put all of these funds under the control of the committee, the community-based committee, which included victims themselves? Does he think he knows better than they how to allocate these funds?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member reminds me of a couple of sessions ago when he could not stand to his feet without bringing wrong information to the House, and he has certainly done that again today when he said that one-half of the Victims Assistance Fund is being used by my department. He is dead wrong about that, Mr. Speaker.

I am really interested in the honourable member's suggestion that now he wants us to go back to the discussion paper of two years ago, which he rejected out of hand and which most other victims services agencies also rejected. I clearly have difficulty understanding this honourable member.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have a ruling for the House.

On Wednesday, March 20, 1991, I took under advisement a matter of privilege raised by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). Some honourable members provided advice to the Chair at that time and I wish to thank them.

The matter raised by the honourable member for Flin Flon was somewhat related to another matter of privilege brought forward the same day. Again, it arose from the doors of this building being locked by security staff. The honourable member, in his submission, argued that one of his duties as an MLA is to be able to meet with individuals, as he sees fit, to perform his legitimate duties as a critic and as a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. The facts, as he stated them, were that at approximately 2 p.m. on March 20 he exited the Legislative Building, encountered a group of students at the east door who had been part of a demonstration

occurring at the front of the building, and invited 10 of them to his office.

The honourable member did not expressly say so in his comments, but I am reading into his complaint that he was unable to bring those students into the building. The honourable member then moved a motion, and I quote: "that the government immediately unbar the doors to this Legislature and allow members of the public access to this, the most important public building in our democratic society; and that the government immediately acknowledge the right and the inherent right of members of this Assembly to have access to the public in their meetings at a time of their choosing to discuss issues of their choice."

The government House leader stated that the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) was not denied access to the building and that the member had been told by the security guard that he could bring two or three persons into the building to meet with him. The government House leader argued that no member has a right to put in jeopardy the security of this building. The House leader of the second opposition party suggested that the Speaker attempt to have the three political parties resolve the matter of who is allowed into the building and what number of people are allowed into the Legislative Building.

The opposition House leader cited Citation 131 of Beauchesne's (6th Edition), and I quote: "The public are permitted to go to the offices of Members on invitation, to have access to the general galleries, and may take guided tours." He argued that the provincial government is denying access to the public who had received specific invitations to attend to the offices of members of the Legislature, and further, he asked that the Speaker provide a clear statement on jurisdiction of access to this building.

In my ruling on the matter of privilege put forward by the opposition House leader, I have given honourable members a statement on the current situation respecting jurisdiction in this building and have suggested a method to attempt to resolve some of the recently raised questions on the matter. I again reference the May 29, 1980, ruling of Madam Speaker Sauvé when a member of Parliament raised a matter of privilege because constituents were refused access by security staff to that member's office; she ruled that the complaint was

not a question of privilege, but rather that the member had raised a matter of security.

In conclusion, the honourable member has not demonstrated that the events described were part of a proceeding in Parliament or how his ability to carry out his parliamentary responsibilities were interfered with.

I must therefore rule his motion out of order as a matter of privilege.

* (1440)

I would reiterate my statement of principle from the ruling yesterday on the other matter of privilege, that there is no inherent right for any person under any circumstances to enter this or any other public building. In practice, persons are not routinely denied access to this building. I am of the opinion that the situation on March 20, 1991, was a difficult one and that as a result security staff made the decision to restrict entry to the building. I was not present at the time the incident occurred, so I am in no position to give an opinion as to whether that decision was the correct one or not.

As I have already indicated to the House, I will convene an early meeting with the three House leaders as well as the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) to consider how to resolve this issue. This building is a focal point for protests, and we must come to some agreement on how best to balance the desire of all of us to have reasonable and proper public access to this place, yet at the same time to protect the safety of the public and that of the persons who work here. We also need to address the fact that if the Department of Government Services makes a decision to restrict access to the building, it does impact on the attendance in our galleries.

It is my intention to return to the House with a statement once all party discussions have been held and conclusions reached about the matters of the security and of access to the Legislative Building.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that under Rule 27, the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the crisis in agriculture.

Motion presented.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make this motion because I sincerely believe, along with many others in Manitoba, that we are facing a crisis in rural Manitoba of unprecedented proportions.

We have a crisis at many levels in agriculture, all of which are interrelated. I hope that the members opposite will take this matter very seriously and will share our concerns that the crisis is not being addressed adequately in this province and across the country.

First there is an income crisis, Mr. Speaker, which is tied very directly with the trade crisis and with the farm debt crisis. What has brought this to an emergency situation and emergency proportions is the continuing crisis of government inaction, of government offloading and of government insensitivity to the real issues facing producers out in the rural countryside of Manitoba.

This debate, Mr. Speaker, cannot wait. As we have seen through the GRIP program, the details which have been announced, it will not deal with the income needs of farmers. Instead, it penalizes those in the deepest difficulty in this province due to no fault of their own.

For example, we heard this morning that farmers producing the same amount of grain, yielding the same amount of grain per acre in various areas of this province will effectively receive anywhere from \$3 to nearly \$6 a bushel for that grain that they produce.

The April 30 deadline is only three to four weeks away for the sign-up for GRIP and farmers have a gun to their heads. The banks, as we have heard from producers, are withholding operating credit. Farmers must get on their land immediately. Many of them are ready to go very shortly in some areas of this province, even this week.

The governments and this minister say if you do not sign up you will not receive a desperately needed deficiency payment in this province, and not only now, Mr. Speaker, no deficiency payment -(interjection)- yes, they have said that; they have not disassociated themselves with that position. In fact, they are tying this to future deficiency payments in future years. If they are not part of the program, they are out.

So what are farmers to do? They know that the program is not going to meet their income needs. It will only ensure that they will continue to lose money unless major improvements are made to this

program. The changes are needed now. The farmers need this opportunity now, this emergency debate in this Legislature, so that the message can be brought home to this government to pressure the government to come to its senses now. I say, Mr. Speaker, that there are not other opportunities for us to deal with this urgent and pressing issue in this House at this particular time, this impending catastrophe.

We were prepared to deal with the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture this week in this House, but the government has refused to deal with Estimates in this particular week in this House. Additionally, the trade crisis highlighted by the international trade wars and the unfair trade agreement that has taken place between Canada and the United States and referenced by my Leader here today, has been brought to a head with the announcement just today that even our own domestic markets will now not be exclusively available to Canadian producers.

The crisis deepens, Mr. Speaker. The debt load faced by most young farmers has become unbearable, and because of the income inadequacies, because of the trade wars, because of the high interest rates, because of natural disasters, we have a debt crisis that is forcing farmers out of business.

What brings this situation to the brink of disaster is this government's and the federal government's failure to deal not only with the income and trade crisis facing our province, but also and equally important, their failure to deal with the debt crisis. This failure merely ensures that stabilization dollars, even from a good stabilization program covering the cost of production, would go to the banks to pay interest, because they have not dealt with the debt crisis in this province. They would go to the banks to pay interest.

What is most alarming is that this minister in this House and his colleagues across the way seem to be oblivious to this. They seem to think they are dealing with the crisis. They seem to think they are dealing with the problem, and we know from their answers in this House today and answers at other times in this House, Mr. Speaker, that they have not.

I ask for all members to support this emergency debate so that we can share information and take action, that this government will take action so that the efforts of the farmers who are here today, and

their families, will not be in vain. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Second Opposition will also have five minutes.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as you are more aware than any of us, there are two conditions under which such an emergency debate can take place. One, that you be given notice, and I understand that my colleagues have certainly done that in the appropriate fashion. The second thing is that there be no other reasonable opportunity in which we can debate this matter. We are finished with the Throne Speech Debate and, unfortunately, the government does not have its budget ready, so we are not into budget debate. We have passed Interim Supply because the government desperately needed the supply and that was provided to them. We have a situation—(interjection)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Finance minister is getting quite so exercised about, but the reality is that we do not have, as we would have in a normal year, the budget before us. As a result—it does not matter whether we knew or we did not know—the result is that we do not have—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable government House leader will have an opportunity to put his remarks on the record.

* (1450)

Mrs. Carstairs: We do not have the opportunity to debate the budget, which is such a wide-ranging opportunity under its normal development that we could debate the farm crisis that is affecting us here in the province of Manitoba.

This is our opportunity. There is nothing before us today that is so urgent that it needs to be moved forward, but what is urgent is addressing some very critical problems facing our farm community. There are voices which need to be heard, voices which, if they have been heard to date, have certainly not been listened to.

We cannot get answers from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). I tried over and over again in Interim Supply to get answers on how much money they had spent on the debt assistance program, and he refused to give the figures. We do not know—and I am glad the honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) pointed it out—what is

going to be the impact if the continuing stalemate between labour and management continues at Manitoba Sugar, and that impacts, of course, on our sugar beet growers.

We do know that there is a sense—whether it is real or whether it is not—a sense of intimidation being felt by the farmers with respect to signing up for GRIP. Now I have taken a different position, as my party has taken a different position, from the official opposition on GRIP. We have supported it from the very beginning. We have raised some serious questions. Some of those questions have not yet been answered.

We are getting even more questions raised by the farmers of this province that I think it is absolutely critical, Mr. Speaker, that we put those positions clearly before the House today and hear from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and hear from his colleagues because perhaps the Minister of Agriculture is under some siege too. Perhaps he has not been getting the support that he should be getting from other members of the Treasury bench in order to provide the kind of adequate sums of money required to support our farmers in the situation which they are facing at the present time.

We have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker. There is no pressing matter before us other than this pressing matter. I would urge the government House leader to recommend to you that in the spirit of co-operation and in the spirit of recognizing that our farm community, through no fault of their own, is in this state of crisis, that we agree to hold this wide-open public debate on the farm crisis in the province and in the nation.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, let me say firstly the government takes the issue very seriously. There is a crisis in agriculture in our province, in our country. Nobody is more aware of it in this House than members of the government side. We acknowledge the terrible hurt that \$2 wheat that comes into existence, and by all accounts it will, of the tremendous negative impact that will have on our farm community.

No issue in recent time has consumed more caucus discussion than the GRIP program, absolutely none, Mr. Speaker. Nobody has to suggest other than maybe myself that the member from the southwest, from Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) has led that discussion within our caucus,

gravely concerned as to the impact of GRIP and what levels of support it provides for his constituents, and also other members of the government side. No one is more aware of the difficulty in deciding whether to enroll in the GRIP program than members of this side, nearly a dozen of them who are going to have to in this context of the next month or less, make a decision as to whether or not they enroll in that program.

Members of this side of the House are fully cognizant of how this GRIP program has evolved, fully cognizant of how it is that it continues to evolve, fully cognizant of the uncertainties around that evolution. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), his federal counterparts and other spokesmen have all addressed the latest developments and the guidelines of the program, and yet I understand why members of the farm community, those in the House today and those not here today still are unsure as to which is the better course to follow.

I can tell the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) who wanted to know whether or not certain members of us were enrolling, I say to him I do not know because I do not know in my own case on my own farm what I am going to do with the program. Mr. Speaker, farm income support is a critical, critical matter that will be debated over and over again in the opportunities that are provided to all the members of the Legislature.

There were eight days of Throne Speech Debate that were just finished. I did not sit through all of it, but I can tell you when the crisis was just as acute then as it is today, agriculture did not get more than 2 percent or 3 percent of all the time. I say that collectively.

The budget will be bringing down within the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, a significant line representing the premium that will be afforded to the GRIP program.

An Honourable Member: When?

Mr. Manness: When? Mr. Speaker, I will be making an announcement in the House yesterday as to when the budget is coming down—tomorrow. I will be making an announcement tomorrow.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, the Budget Debate that will ensue within two weeks, grievances,

resolutions, concurrences, an Interim Supply Bill 2 which undoubtedly will be brought in, will afford an opportunity to discuss this crucial, crucial matter, and we welcome that debate.

I am also cognizant that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) has spent over an hour in meeting with a group of farmers assembled here today in the gallery addressing and laying before the group all of the latest matters dealing from the government's point of view all of the issues around GRIP.

The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) says we have no other pressing business, that is not correct. I want to introduce the Legislative Assembly Management bill which will attempt to hold down our salaries, which will attempt to hold back the increase in salaries, so indeed there will be more money in the Consolidated Revenue Fund to which to address problems. I am addressing urgency, but the opposition requests—

Some Honourable Members: Time is up.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Manness: I am just about finished, Mr. Speaker, it will take me one more minute—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the House allow the honourable government House leader an extra minute?

An Honourable Member: No, let us go on with the debate.

Mr. Speaker: No?

An Honourable Member: Support the debate.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable—order, please. Is there leave or not to allow the honourable government House leader a minute?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. The honourable government House leader's time has expired.

I would like to thank all honourable members for the advice on whether the motion proposed by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is in order. There are two conditions to be satisfied for this matter to proceed.

First, the honourable member for Dauphin did provide the required notice of this matter of urgent public importance in accordance to our subrule 27(1).

The second condition required in order for the matter of urgent public importance to be debated today is that there must be evidence that the

ordinary opportunities for debate will not allow the matter in question to be considered soon enough and that the matter raised must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if the issue is not debated this day. These requirements are contained in Citations 389 and 390 of the 6th Edition of Beauchesne's.

* (1500)

I believe that the honourable member does have other opportunities available to him to debate the matter. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has indicated to us that the House will be debating the budget before the end of this month, and honourable members will have the opportunity to debate questions related to agriculture at that time. He may also use his right to a grievance once we have commenced the Estimates.

In addition, I am not satisfied that the public interest will suffer if the issue is not given immediate attention. I appreciate the concerns of the honourable member, but I do not believe that this is a genuine emergency needing immediate and urgent consideration. I must rule the motion for the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) out of order because there are other opportunities for debate and because the public interest will not, in my opinion, suffer if this issue is not debated today.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, we challenge the rule.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour will please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

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

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

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

Yeas

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, Manness, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld,

Orchard, Penner, Praznik, Reimer, Render, Rose, Stefanson, Sveinson, Vodrey.

Nays

Alcock, Ashton, Barrett, Carr, Carstairs, Cerilli, Cheema, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Edwards, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Harper, Hickes, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Maloway, Martindale, Plohman, Reid, Santos, Storie, Wasylcia-Leis, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 28, Nays 27.

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

* (1520)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would ask you at this time to call Bill 12 followed by Bill 8, followed by Bill 33, and then Bill 3—that is, Bills 12, 8, 33, 5, 6 and then Bill 3.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 12—The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 12, The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le recouvrement des petites créances à la Cour du Banc de la Reine, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I present for the consideration of this House, Bill 12, The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act.

Some of the newer members of the House may not recall that one of the first bills that I had the honour of bringing forward as Minister of Justice was a series of amendments to the existing Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Act. Those amendments were inspired by the commitment of this government to making the courts more accessible to all Manitobans and fostering quick and inexpensive settlement of legal issues. It is a fact

that the high cost of litigation can seriously affect the ability of Manitobans to bring forward their claims and to have them fairly adjudicated.

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

After that bill became law, the government felt that it would be appropriate when the new provisions had been in force for more than a year to review that experience, both to see how well the new procedures were working and also to identify changes in the legislation and procedures that could make the Small Claims Court more effective.

That committee consisted of three judges of the Court of Queen's Bench, the director of the Court of Queen's Bench, the Assistant Deputy Attorney General for Justice and counsel from the office of Legislative Counsel. The committee will be issuing a report towards the end of June, we expect.

Many of the recommendations in the report will be administrative in nature, but the committee has already identified some parts of the law that do require change. Rather than wait for the report to be finalized in June, which would have put legislation off until next year, the government felt that these changes should be brought forward now.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am well aware that clause by clause consideration of the bill is reserved for committee. However, I must point out that the bill begins with an objects and purposes clause. The committee recommended that such a clause was particularly important in a piece of legislation that is aimed at encouraging the general public to bring their legal claims forward. That objects and purposes clause calls for the determination of claims in a simple manner, as expeditiously, informally and inexpensively as possible.

I would ask all honourable members of the House to judge this bill by that standard, and I am confident that when they have had the opportunity to consider the bill as a whole it will receive the support of all of the members of the House. For example, there are certain actions which the committee felt were inappropriate in the Small Claims Court, such as significant personal injury claims and certain complicated claims dealing with such matters as interpretation of wills.

I ask honourable members to consider carefully the principle that certain actions by their very nature require the full formality of a court hearing and should not be subject to a summary determination

under Small Claims procedures. Of course, officials of my department and I will be pleased, at the committee stage, to explain why we believe specific actions should not be considered in Small Claims Court.

As well, I draw the attention of honourable members to an important principle which we are introducing in the legislation, one which we believe will significantly reduce the abuse of the Small Claims procedure by certain defendants. Specifically, until now any party aggrieved by a decision has been entitled to appeal that decision and to force a new trial. I submit that this is a significant weakness in the legislation that has been found by the committee, and we should ensure that any person who wants to contest a claim does so at the initial trial.

Honourable members, I believe, will agree with the government that there must be some onus on a defendant who did not contest a claim to justify launching an appeal. When members examine the bill in detail in committee, we will discuss the ways which we believe are appropriate for forcing defendants to take their responsibility under this act seriously. We propose requiring them to get leave from a judge before being entitled to launch that appeal.

There are some other matters in the bill dealing with costs and with the role of the hearing officer, and I suggest these matters are more technical matters and should be discussed at the committee. My department is currently preparing a spreadsheet showing the old provisions of the act and the provisions which Bill 12 proposes to substitute for them and explaining in detail the differences, which I hope will be helpful to honourable members in their examination and consideration of this bill. I am going to provide that spreadsheet to opposition critics prior to the bill going to committee.

With those brief remarks, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to recommend to honourable members Bill 12, and I would ask for their diligent consideration and their support. Thank you.

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the matter, Bill 12, The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act, be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* (1530)

Bill 8—The Vital Statistics Amendment Act

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), that Bill 8, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to introduce for second reading, Bill 8, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act. This bill reflects changes which are necessary to make The Vital Statistics Act consistent with the new Fatality Inquiries Act which was proclaimed on May 14, 1990.

What we have in this act is the needed changes to harmonize some of the differences that existed between these two acts. There are three areas of The Vital Statistics Act that we must change to harmonize it with the new Fatality Inquiries Act which had been passed in May of 1990.

These three changes are necessary because there are additional cases that are to be reported to the medical examiner, and again we must harmonize these differences so that The Vital Statistics Act reflects the changes that were put in place in the new Fatality Inquiries Act.

Also there are changes in regard to the completion of medical certificates for deaths within 48 hours. These must be reported and again we would bring this into harmony with The Fatality Inquiries Act.

The third area deals with the actual documentation or registration of a death where no body is found. The Fatality Inquiries Act, when it was passed, spoke to that issue, and again we would bring this into harmony.

I know that all members recognize the importance and the significance of the Vital Statistics department in the recording of births and deaths and the absolute necessity that the correct information is compiled. This is a branch of the department, of course, which receives little recognition from people here in the Legislature and in society, but one that performs an extremely important function.

An Honourable Member: One might say vital.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, it is a vital service, a matter of life and death, you might say, and the need for an extremely exact professional staff in the recording of this information is so important. One probably as an MLA needs to only think of perhaps inquiries that have come forward to them as an MLA where this information is required and often required in very quick order. I am sure that members will have found that a very professional staff exists in the Vital Statistics Branch who are there as a service to provide that information to citizens of this province.

They have, of course, recorded the births, the deaths and the personal circumstances of individuals within this province, and often when that information is required, it is very important that it be absolutely accurate. In the few cases that I have been involved in, and I am sure other members have been involved in, one can see the importance that that information is brought forward in a timely manner, and that it is available in very exact ways.

There are, of course, changes that the Vital Statistics Branch looks forward to making in coming years. As all members are aware, the computer era is upon us, and this is an extremely important area where we can update the capabilities of the Vital Statistics Branch to collect and store this data and be able to provide even more immediate service to citizens of Manitoba. I know in discussions with my critics, they are well aware that this is a direction that we hope to go in the near future so that this service, wherever the office is located, can be provided to Manitobans with some degree of dispatch.

Getting back to the actual amendments, The Fatality Inquiries Act which I referenced before mandates the Chief Medical Examiner to inquire or investigate certain types of deaths and request attending physicians to file medical certificates of death. In turn, The Vital Statistics Act mandates the Vital Statistics Branch to register all deaths and receive medical certificates of death.

The Fatality Inquiries Act requires the attending physician to complete a medical certificate of death within 48 hours of the death and prior to the disposition of a body. Bill 8 amendments are necessary because The Vital Statistics Act previously contained no requirement to comply with this specific time provision. These are the first two of the three changes that we will make in The Vital Statistics Act to bring it into line with The Fatality Inquiries Act.

The Fatality Inquiries Act, of course, was updated in 1990 and recognized with greater clarity and more detail the new references that were placed in the description of the deceased in Manitoba that are recorded both by The Fatality Inquiries Act and The Vital Statistics Act so that there is a greater ability under those two acts to identify the exact cause of death.

The second change that I have referenced is the time limit. The previous act gave the medical examiner some 14 days to issue the permit of burial. Now this Fatality Inquiries Act has required a medical certificate of death to be completed within 48 hours. Again, there is an attempt here to harmonize these two acts in reference to the cause of death and the actual time period in which that is reported.

The Fatality Inquiries Act also specifies certain cases where deaths must be reported to the Chief Medical Examiner. The number of cases with this requirement has been expanded from nine to 22. This includes all children's deaths, deaths as a result of poisoning, contagious diseases, employment and pregnancy. Bill 8 amends The Vital Statistics Act to reflect these additional cases.

In certain instances The Fatality Inquiries Act provides for the issuance of a medical certificate of death where a body has not been recovered. Issuance of this certificate is sufficient proof for Vital Statistics to register the death. Bill 8 amendments are consistent with that provision. Previously, there would be some time lag whereby the death was not reported such as in cases of drownings, plane crashes or others where relatives who require proof of death for legal purposes have been required to make application to the courts for an order pursuant to The Presumption of Death Act.

* (1540)

The new provision under The Fatality Inquiries Act allows the Chief Medical Examiner, at the conclusion of an investigation, to issue a medical certificate of death. This provision requires Vital Statistics to accept the Chief Medical Examiner's report as sufficient proof of death to allow the necessary death registration forms to be completed and the certificates issued.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 8, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, will come into force on July 1, 1991, or on Royal Assent, whichever is later. The amendments that I have outlined make these

two important acts consistent in the reporting and registering of deaths in Manitoba.

I know that opposition critics, while they may have some questions of clarity, will be anxious to see this act move through and become law and participate in the committee stage so that we can harmonize The Vital Statistics Amendment Act with The Fatality Inquiries Act. I anticipate when we move that to committee and have our discussions there, that we can quickly bring it back to the House and have it proclaimed in due course.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that debate on Bill 8, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 33—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 33, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Manness: Madam Deputy Speaker, when the government made a presentation to legislators on January 21 of this year and laid out the fiscal standing of the province at that time, one of the three major planks trying to work towards a reduced level of deficit was in the whole wage side of government.

Government at that time made the point, hopefully successfully, to legislators and to the media and indeed all who were wanting to listen in to that process, that it was time for those of us who took our livelihood in the sense of remuneration and salary from the public purse to restrain our requests.

That, and other considerations, was the reason that members of all sides, from all parties of this House, engaged in discussions at Legislative Assembly Management Commission as to how it is that we could save significant amounts of money within the whole vote under legislation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I stand in my place to say today that all members brought forward sincere

efforts in attempts to try and find a certain sum of money that we could present to the people of this province as a reduced demand on the public purse. We all came forward with various elements of where we thought reductions might occur, and we spent several hours, for the most part in trying to work out a package acceptable to all.

We failed in reaching a consensus as to the balance of those elements that should come forward in a bill that would reflect a global amount in reduction in keeping with, I believe, the desires of all parties.

The government, therefore, had no alternative, given the urgency of time, not only with respect to the beginning of a new fiscal year but, secondly, with respect to a print number that had to come forward in the budget, had no alternative but to bring forward a bill that addressed certain elements that had been discussed, although not totally agreed to by all. Nevertheless, I want the record to show that all members representing the three parties attempted to work toward a global reduction figure.

Bill 33, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, provides for the following: firstly, MLAs' indemnities and allowance. The bill rolls back the automatic COLA, cost of living allowance, industrial wage increase effective April 1, 1991, thereby freeing the indemnity and allowance at last year's levels. Without further legislation, the automatic increase will apply on the frozen base as of April 1, 1992.

Secondly, the bill would reduce both constituency and access allowance by \$10,000, bringing them in total to approximately \$25,500 or \$25,600. I cannot remember specifically the figure.

Thirdly, the bill would reduce MLAs' entitlement in mailings and printings from three to two per fiscal year.

Fourthly, the bill will set up two presumptions against purchase and retention of equipment except as both may be provided by Legislative Assembly Management Commission rules. It also deems that transfer of property from an MLA to the Legislative Assembly upon an MLA being defeated or retiring.

The bill provides that LAMC may make rules prescribing the types of expenses for which constituency and access allowances may be used, determining records that must be kept and filed relating to property and services purchased by MLAs using the constituency and access allowance

and prescribing terms and conditions on which MLAs, on ceasing to be MLAs, may acquire property acquired using constituency and access allowance. The bill further provides that LAMC may make rules governing the public disclosure of constituency and access allowance.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to basically address the principles. First of all, I think the comments that I made with respect to salaries and indemnities and also allowances are very straightforward. The property purchased issue is contained within this bill. What is basically attempted is that we sense that Legislatures would like to hopefully create a presumption against any purchases by MLAs except as provided in the rules made by our own Legislative Management Commission. This bill and the provisions within it, in effect directs LAMC to make rules prescribing terms and conditions because in the essence of such rules no purchases could be made using the constituency and access allowance. In essence, Madam Deputy Speaker, it deems that all property purchased by an MLA to become the property of the Legislative Assembly on the day that MLA ceases to be an MLA.

* (1550)

Madam Deputy Speaker, it provides—hopefully, this bill will direct LAMC, with specific authority, to make rules relating to the use of the constituency and access allowance. Much of this has been done already and we are not talking about rewriting all the rules. We are talking purely about capital items. We are talking purely of the manner in which who in essence owns them and on the essence of when they revert to the government and under what terms and conditions.

What we have said is, if members in the House will accept those broad principles, the parties that make up LAMC will ultimately put to that principle the rules and conditions under which the property ceases—ceases—the property ceases—I am talking about capital property for the fourth time—in which capital property ceases to become the ownership of the individual MLA who was no longer a representative of the people.

In general, the principles are laid out in the bill while the detailed rules are to be left to be developed through the consensus at LAMC. In our view, it does not make sense to unilaterally impose detailed procedures in legislation, particularly without

consulting all MLAs. Someone asked, well, why do we not impose a blanket prohibition on capital purchases and allow in essence the government to own all of our capital. We chose not to follow that approach because while the LAMC rules would undoubtedly restrict capital purchase, a blanket prohibition would have been impractical, especially for smaller purchases and for rural MLAs who may not be able to access rental services, for instance, for fax or xerox machines.

Secondly, some might ask why do we not have the assembly purchase all the equipment. In our view, this would require an expensive new bureaucracy and by implication impose a duty on the Assembly to repair and service this equipment which would be expensive in remote areas. This leaves the ownership with MLAs while they are MLAs. Someone asked, why deem a transfer to the Assembly from a defeated or a retiring MLA? In our view, and I am sure in the view of all, hopefully this property is paid for by the taxpayer and should return to the Assembly. The provisions provide this specific authority for LAMC to make rules governing the repurchase of the equipment by MLAs, so that the Assembly does not end up saddled with a store of obsolete equipment.

This rule is to provide for buy back at a depreciated rate for instance, and that is what we are contemplating. Hopefully, LAMC also will see the wisdom of not bringing all of this old capital equipment back and throwing it into the basement, Madam Deputy Speaker, but seeing it reflected in an ownership basis now owned by the government at a depreciated rate, but yet giving retired and defeated MLAs first opportunity to purchase that equipment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, some would ask why the bill did not provide for retroactive recovery of property purchased earlier by MLAs. Again, the fairness issue, in the absence of any prohibition in existence at the time this equipment was purchased, in our view it would be unfair to try and recover this property. There is also a practical problem. Quite frankly we do not have good records as to who owns what equipment. It would probably cost more to try and trace what the ownership is than the value of recovery.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is in essence the bill. I hear rumours around to the effect that there may be amendments dealing with a certain minister's salary and/or the Premier's salary. I say

to members opposite who may want to, for the record, know the history of what it is that ministers receive, I want to indicate to you that the 1975 salary level was in effect since 1967. Decreases in level in '83 and '84 and '85 were to offset increases in MLA's salaries paid to ministers, so the current level has been in place essentially since 1980-81.

The Premier's salary in '75-76 was \$16,600 in addition to his allowance, remaining at that level until 1980-81 when it increased to \$26,600, remaining at that level until 1983-84 when it was reduced to \$24,692, further reduced in '84-85 to \$24,100, staying at that level through '85-86, and then in '86-87 increasing again to \$26,600 and staying at that level to the present.

Ministers, Madam Deputy Speaker, received beyond their MLA stipend \$15,600 from 1975-76 until 1978-80. They were then increased to \$20,600 in 1980-81, remaining at that level until 1982-83, subsequently reduced in '83-84 to \$18,692, further reduced the year following to \$18,100, maintained at that level through '85-86, and since 1986-87 have been at the level of \$20,600.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope that members of the Assembly see the wisdom in supporting this bill. I believe that people in all of society are looking for leadership from each and every one of us and are asking us to do our fair share given the reality and the difficulty—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Manness: Madam Deputy Speaker, these issues of dealing with one's own remuneration and one's own allowance are sensitive at the best of times. I would ask all the members to treat the discussion that will ensue on this bill in a fashion that is in keeping with parliamentary tradition.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to indicate from the outset that in terms of what has happened the last number of days, we were rather disappointed with the efforts yesterday of the government House leader (Mr. Manness) to suggest anything other than what has been the case with this particular matter in terms of whether the LAMC, or in terms of the debate that we are going to see today and that was what the government House leader himself references, and honest as are on the part of all MLAs, to look at the expenditures of not just MLAs but of the Legislative Assembly.

I consider it unfortunate because today we are debating this bill in the normal process that we would. I want to indicate to the government House leader as well that we are quite prepared to go into committee to deal with it—Committee of the Whole.

We make no apologies to the so-called Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Downey) for wishing an emergency debate today. I can indicate, we would have been willing to debate the concerns of farmers and to deal with his bill today, something that this government was unwilling to do, Madam Deputy Speaker. -(interjection)-

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

* (1600)

Mr. Ashton: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to indicate that, to the government House leader, we will indeed have amendments that will take the principles of this bill and take them, I think, into an area that most Manitobans would consider be far fairer than the package that this government has developed. I want to indicate—and this has been communicated to the government, let them not try and suggest anything else—that in terms of a number of the main components of this bill, we are on record as indicating that we do not have any difficulties with those components.

In fact, in terms of the capital allowances, I believe the opposition Leaders were the first to respond to the Provincial Auditor's suggestion that there be a much better system in dealing with capital purchases, something we have not had in the past. The government House leader, while he talked about the sense of fairness that was approached in this particular bill, should note for the record that this bill, while we have indicated our support, was not developed by LAMC in terms of consensus largely because in the final analysis the government itself was not willing to recognize that there was a different set of resources available to cabinet ministers as compared to members of the Legislature.

We had proposed and we will be proposing in the form of amendments, changes, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the constituency allowances that are paid to cabinet ministers. I think we have to recognize that MLAs have \$27,000-odd to service constituents. Cabinet ministers have the same \$27,000 -(interjection)-

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ashton: —but then in addition have paid political staff to deal with constituency concerns, so

I am surprised, with this particular bill, that the government, which is talking about sacrifice, is not leading the way in reducing the amount of resources it has from its constituency allowances.

We have double jeopardy, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this province, which results in cabinet ministers having up to \$110,000 of resources to serve their constituents and MLAs having \$27,000. Indeed, we will be proposing amendments on that. We note that there are other areas that were not considered as well -(interjection)-

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ashton: —in terms of the whole issue of double-dipping in terms of pensions. We have a number of people who are employed by the provincial government in positions by Order-in-Council, who continue to receive pensions on a basis, Madam Deputy Speaker—and we will be proposing those particular items.

Let there be no question that, in terms of some of the basic principles of the bill, we support that, but we are extremely disappointed that the government chose, because of its majority on LAMC, not to seek a consensus and rejected specifically a number of proposals that we have made, and we will make now in committee, that would save the taxpayers a considerable amount more and would put the onus on the government to not just talk about cosmetic changes but to make some real changes in the resources available to ministers.

As I said, they would not consider that in LAMC. They have not sought a consensus, which we were willing to provide in terms of those types of issues. That is the way we will deal with it in committee. In fact, I want to reiterate, we are ready to deal with it immediately after, I am sure, the comments from the Liberal House leader. We are ready to go into committee right now to deal with it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to speak on Bill 33. It is a bill which we support in the Liberal Party, but there is a problem with Bill 33 in the sense that there are many things that could have been done, and which I will elaborate upon, that I believe could have made Bill 33 a much fairer, a more equitable bill for all of the members inside this Chamber.

The opposition House leader has said that he wants to see it go into committee today. We, too, want to see it go into committee today, and we are

willing to waive private members' hour and leave into the evening so in fact this bill can pass today.

How things have changed! So much for consensus and negotiations. It has been more of, this is what is going to happen, this is what you are going to have, and whatever you say, is not going to change our minds. It is an approach of confrontation from a minority government to a majority government, and it is because of the majority government, that we are seeing the arrogance of this government.

We had the shortest session in history just in the last session, because we were able to sit down and negotiate in good faith. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am by no stretch of the imagination a member of this Chamber that has been here for a great number of years. My experience is somewhat limited, but I have consulted with numerous individuals, and LAMC in the past has always operated on a consensus.

An Honourable Member: That is when I was there.

Mr. Lamoureux: That is when the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) was there, as he said. He is quite right. Madam Deputy Speaker, we are no longer operating on a consensus. When the minister went in our LAMC meeting, he quoted in his opening remarks, we tried to work out a package for all. Madam Deputy Speaker, at the onset of the discussions, myself and the NDP House leader felt that in fact that was what was happening, that we were negotiating in good faith. We all put forward proposals that not only met the original objective of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), we exceeded it.

The Minister of Finance wanted us to have a \$400,000 saving on this particular area. We, at the end of the day, came up with \$550,000 in savings and had we looked and done it in a more fair and equitable fashion, we would have saved over a million dollars for this department, but the Minister of Finance and his government did not want to be fair to all parties in this Chamber. The Minister of Finance wanted to shaft the two opposition parties.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about where we would have saved the money. We had a proposal of access cuts to the ministers, who have executive assistants and special assistants, no reason whatsoever why they could not have been cut back, the additional \$15,000. I will go further

than that. The Speaker has assistants and so does the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) and so the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) and they, too, should be losing the \$15,000 straight off the board from their access. That would have saved an additional \$315,000.

In terms of the caucus offices, we want to talk about inequities. We have six staff people to serve a third party. -(interjection)- The Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) says we only have seven members. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, they have 12 people serving 11 backbenchers. At the very least, that could be cut back by four and if you take the average income, you are saving over \$100,000.

Let us look at the caucus budget. We have \$3,000 that is given to each and every MLA, over and above, for all caucus offices. The ministers do not use the caucus offices and the Speaker and—

An Honourable Member: Says who?

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says who. I had asked the Speaker if he uses the Conservative caucus office. His response was no, and the Minister of Finance says, yes. He speaks for himself. Well, I am sure I am not going to convince every minister to stand up and say no, I do not use it. I am sure that is not going to happen. The truth of the matter is, they have secretaries, the receptionist, they have executive assistants, special assistants inside their own department.

An Honourable Member: How is your health, Kevin?

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) asked, how is my health, and I am grateful to let him know my doctor has said, Kevin, to get rid of stress, make sure you express yourself. I am expressing myself.

We could have saved more. That added up to \$54,000. If you take a look at those three items, it would have come up to \$469,000. You add that to the \$550,000, that brings us to well over a million dollars. That is the type of bill that we should be passing today, not what the government is trying to put forward in order to try and limit the official opposition and the second opposition in this Chamber. That is what this government is doing. Do not let the arguments of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), and no doubt he has told all of his caucus colleagues, do not let those arguments blind you.

* (1610)

As I pointed out, Bill 33 is a good bill. It is unfortunate that it did not go further. We could have seen well over a million dollars being shaved and all of the MLAs would have had adequate services. We, just very briefly in a couple of minutes, the MLA freeze on our pay is something that the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), in my absence, was the first one to come across and say, MLAs' salaries should be frozen. Show by example, Madam Deputy Speaker. The access, a 10 percent cut, I had even suggested that we could have even gone a tad higher.

The general mailings, we are cutting from three general mailings to two general mailings. What is going to happen as a direct result? More direct mail is going to go out. It costs more for direct mail than it does for a general mail, but we are a minority on this particular issue.

In terms of the capital, as the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has pointed out, the opposition parties, we are the first ones that were out of the gate on this issue. We said, yes, in fact something does need to be done. We can look at Revenue Canada's depreciation value with a buyback for the MLAs, first buyback for something of this nature. This bill has more responsibilities of the setting of the rules going back to LAMC. What worries me is what has happened in the last few meetings of LAMC. LAMC has not worked on a consensus basis for the last four or five meetings.

An Honourable Member: How come?

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) says, how come? He should ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Maybe what is needed, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Highways should come back to LAMC. We need you on LAMC. We need someone who is going to ensure that there is going to be a consensus. If we can be assured that LAMC will rule by consensus, that there will not be anything forced down on us, then I would have reason to believe that things will be somewhat optimistic for the future. I do not have that.

As the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says, we too will be moving amendments. One of the amendments is in regard to the ministers' salaries, which we will co-operate with the New Democratic Party on, which we both support. The only other amendment that I feel is very important is an

amendment in the fashion of MLAs' salaries. MLAs should not be setting their own salary. It is long overdue. We will be moving an amendment to try and rectify that problem, because this government had an opportunity in this piece of legislation to try and alleviate that concern. We will be responsible. We will do our best at introducing an amendment. I hope the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson)—because it will not take very many to support that particular amendment, one in which MLAs will not be setting their own salaries, and that is the way it should be. Thank you very much. Let us hope it goes into committee now.

Mr. Manness: It is a privilege to stand and close debate. I thank both the opposition parties for expeditiously providing their remarks on the second reading of the bill. Certainly we look forward to moving into Committee of the Whole and giving greater discussion, greater enunciation on the points of principle as presented in the bill. The members indicate that they are looking forward to bringing forward amendments. I have talked to certain numbers of our colleagues and maybe we too may want to also consider some more amendments. Seeing we are in that point, Madam Deputy Speaker, we look forward to moving into Committee of the Whole.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 33. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. Manness: Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that the House now move into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 33.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill 33, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 33—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

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

Does the honourable Minister of Finance have an opening statement?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Madam Chair, it is a privilege to once again stand and address a very important bill, that being 33, a bill that obviously, in the view of the government at least, provides for what the people of this province would like to see, and that is government and all legislators take the lead in attempting to hold at some level its rate of its own pay.

What is happening here in Manitoba is not novel. The New Brunswick budget came out yesterday. Reference was made to the rolling back of MLA and cabinet minister salary increases. We have a situation in other provinces where MLAs and again cabinet ministers are taking freezes. Madam Chairman, this was the thrust of all the discussion and the negotiation that took place between parties.

* (1620)

We sensed that if the government of the day was going to ask the civil servants of this province to accept over the next two years a wage package calling for a freeze in the first year and a 2 percent increase in the next year that it was only fitting that all of us as legislators impose upon ourselves that same degree of restraint. That is the essence of the discussions that took place.

We are all mindful, if we want to admit it, of the explosion of constituency allowance support that we have enjoyed over the last number of years, reached by consensus of LAMC, reached to the time, yes, when there was minority government, reached to the time, yes, when of course the common factor, the common denominator was whatever the highest number cost. That is how concurrence, indeed consensus was reached.

Madam Chairman, I take some exception to the comments put on the floor particularly by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) who seems to suggest that the government was not fair, that the government somehow wanted to maintain the support that it had in, I take it, the cabinet offices and within the ministerial offices.

Let me say for the record what this government has now is what it inherited from the former government except a number of political positions have been removed—a large number. If the members want to take the debate down to that level we will go out and find those numbers as to how many political positions have been removed.

Madam Chairman, the members are saying that they have found ways of saving more money. That is interesting, that should be heard. I would say to the members opposite, there are also other elements of increases that this government, through myself as a representative on LAMC, presented at LAMC as to whether there could be further reductions, and I suppose members opposite would want to hear those also. They would want to hear -(interjection)-

Well, the member says he has heard them already. I do not believe this Chamber has heard them already. If we are getting into a bidding war as to who can provide greater savings, I say this may be well and good and the taxpayer of Manitoba may be happier by the moment. So, I mean, let us be mindful of what is occurring. -(interjection)-

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) talks about my lack of sleep. I cannot deny that I have not had a lot of sleep, or that I have had a lot of sleep lately because I have not. Part of it is the GRIP program that the member talks about. While he is up stirring farmers from the southwest to come in here today, I am agonizing myself deciding how to handle the GRIP program on my own farm.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairman: Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Manness: So Madam Chairman, the member for Dauphin can talk all he wants about sleep or lack of sleep, but the reality is that what we have before us is Bill 33. It is a serious issue. The government takes it as a serious issue. The government is trying not to play partisan politics with it, never has. The first comments in the hallway were not made by the government. -(interjection)-

The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says we put out a press release. Maybe he wants to take issue with the press release. Maybe he wants to talk about the partisan nature of the press release, or if he wants to be honest he will indicate that the press release draws no favour for the government.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairman: Order, please. I would suggest to all honourable members that they will indeed have their opportunity to speak. The honourable Minister of Finance is in debate.

Mr. Manness: Well, I hear the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) mumbling under his breath, talking something about the lowest level of

whatever, I do not know. He is babbling galore these days, but, Madam Chairman, in reality this is a very serious piece of legislation and it should be treated as such by all members. To the extent that members of this House have the right and indeed the opportunity to bring forward amendments, certainly the government will consider them and weigh them and all the rationale behind them and ultimately will cast vote either in support or in opposition, as is their right. I look forward to the representations of all members on this very important bill. Thank you.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): The Minister, in introducing this into committee, suggested and spent a considerable amount of time discussing and justifying the salaries, the extra remuneration that cabinet ministers receive and spent some considerable time, once we moved into committee, talking about salaries and the government's decision to attempt to freeze or have no increase in the salaries of civil servants.

I think, as my colleagues have said, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and I, as a member of LAMC, want it very clearly on the record that the issue was not the question of salaries. The member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) from her seat suggests that somehow that is the issue that is creating concern on this side. That is not the case. Certainly, we recommended that the government follow the example that the Pawley cabinet followed, the Executive Council followed, in 1983 when we not only froze our salaries, but decreased our salaries, took in effect a \$2,000 cut in salary.

I am waiting for that kind of leadership, if that is the real issue here, from that side of the government. I asked the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). I asked the representative from the Conservative Party on LAMC to show that kind of leadership. They earn approximately 50 percent more than the average MLA and, if there is any place that needs to be showing leadership, it is the minister. They have rejected that course and are proposing in this legislation a freeze on salaries for a year. That is acceptable. It has been communicated to the minister that it is acceptable.

We understand the circumstances that the farmers were experiencing today and we are here to listen to debate on their issues. We understand that families are suffering and that we are in a fortunate position in the sense that we earn a

reasonable salary. A freeze is not going to kill us, and we acknowledge that.

Madam Chairperson, the fact of the matter is that when the Minister of Finance talks about the explosion in constituency allowances, that minister voted for that explosion. That minister was part of LAMC at the time of that explosion. That minister took part in the discussions when it was agreed upon that moving from \$10,000 to, at that time, \$25,000 put us in the same league as other Legislatures across this country. The minister gave leave in two hours to make sure that those particular amendments could be approved.

We have to acknowledge that what the constituency allowance does—and at that time it was a constituency allowance increase for members of the opposition. It gives members some bit of equality with members of government, some bit of equality because, until that time, members of the opposition in particular, members of the Legislature, could not have constituency offices, could not afford even to hire people on a part-time basis to help them serve the growing needs of their constituents. That is what is at issue.

Madam Chairperson, I also resent the fact that this bill is here without the consensus that has been a part of LAMC since the inception of LAMC. We have worked in a consensus way and, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) came to my colleague the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and asked for co-operation in finding a way to reduce the budget of LAMC by \$400,000, I was the first at the table to say, that seems possible, we can do that.

* (1630)

Madam Chairperson, the minister has acknowledged, the members of LAMC, those who attended, will acknowledge that we on the committee did offer up services, found ways of reducing costs for LAMC that amounted to more than the target that was first expressed by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and their lead representative on LAMC. We found a way to reduce the costs of this Legislature, of running this Legislature, in a way that would have saved the government more than their target amount.

What it came down to, in my opinion, was the government's determination to reduce our ability as MLAs to be effective MLAs and effective opposition. This is a government that is reeling from its own

incompetence. When we presented a package that would have reduced the LAMC budget by more than the target, the minister refused to accept it. The minister has also dealt with the members of the committee and the other two caucuses in what I perceive to be shabby, certainly. Whether it is in bad faith or not, I leave the minister in his own mind to judge. This bill does not reflect the same issues that the minister presented to us at the last meeting of LAMC; it is a change. There was no consensus on the package, and there was no consensus on this piece of legislation.

Having said that, there are many parts of this we can support. Many parts of the LAMC package that we presented, we had agreement on, and they included the freeze on salary, included the reduction of a frank, included the reduction of some of the caucus expenditures. One of the issues that we could not agree on was the reduction in constituency allowances. Madam Chairperson, we believe that there are additional ways to reduce the costs of the LAMC.

There are several other matters that I think would be useful for us to deal with while we are at amending The Legislative Assembly Management Commission Act. I have two that I would like to propose to this committee at the present time. I would like to deal with these, with your permission, as part of the Committee of the Whole. We are prepared to introduce amendments. In light of the fact that we all want to find ways of protecting the interests of the public, one of the interests that has been talked about significantly by this government, by our government, the opposition, by the other third party opposition, by the public, is the question of patronage and advantage that people in political life are sometimes perceived to have.

We are going to introduce an amendment that has commonly been called in the recent past the double-dipping amendment. What it proposes to do is to take away the perception that elected members, when they retire, somehow are able to, not only receive a pension from the Legislature, where that is possible, but also receive plum political appointments.

Therefore, Madam Chairperson, I move, seconded by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans),

THAT the following section be added after section 4 of Bill 33:

Section 75.1 added

4.1 The following is added after section 75:

Discontinuance of pensions for certain persons

75.1 A pension payable under this Part shall be discontinued during any period that the person otherwise entitled to it is receiving remuneration

- (a) as a member of the Senate or House of Commons of the Parliament of Canada;
- (b) as a judge appointed on a full-time basis by the Government of Manitoba or another government; or
- (c) in respect of a full-time appointment made under an order-in-council of the Government of Manitoba or any other government;

and the pension shall not be payable until the person is no longer receiving the remuneration.

(French version)

Il est proposé que le projet de loi soit modifié par adjonction, après l'article 4, de ce qui suit:

Adjonction de l'article 75.1

4.1 Il est ajouté, après l'article 75, ce qui suit:

Interruption du paiement de la pension

75.1 La pension visée à la présente partie cesse d'être payée pendant toute période au cours de laquelle la personne qui y a par ailleurs droit reçoit une rémunération:

- a) en tant que membre du Sénat ou de la Chambre des communes du Parlement du Canada;
- b) en tant que juge à temps plein nommé par un gouvernement, y compris le gouvernement du Manitoba;
- c) à l'égard d'une nomination à temps plein faite en vertu d'un décret pris par un gouvernement, y compris le gouvernement du Manitoba.

Madam Chairperson, the intent of that amendment is to take away the perception that somehow Order-in-Council appointments, political, what are perceived as patronage appointments—i.e., those that go to senators—be not construed as an opportunity for an individual to take advantage twice of public responsibility and public duty.

Madam Chairperson, I think this amendment is fair in that it refers to some specific, clearly influential, well-paid positions, and finally it refers, by referring to the Order-in-Council appointments,

to those appointments which are by themselves and in and of themselves of a political nature, the appointment in particular of members of the Legislature—and there have been some in the recent past—to full-time jobs as head of Crown agencies, Crown corporations, political advisers and staff and so forth.

Madam Chairperson, this is an amendment that I think is responsible and which will be the -(interjection)- no, the government of Manitoba, that is all we can effect. I think that this is a fair amendment, and I look forward to members opposite's comments before we vote on this amendment.

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The motion before the House is an amendment which is out of order according to Beauchesne 698.(1) "An amendment is out of order if it is irrelevant to the bill, beyond its scope or governed by or dependent upon amendments already negated." (8)(b) "An amendment may not amend sections from the original Act unless they are specifically being amended in a clause of the bill before the committee. Debates. December 15, 1977, p. 1909."

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I challenge your ruling.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Chair, I seek your advice as to procedure. A rule is a rule. Are you saying that a vote of this House can turn over the rules of this House? Is that what you saying? I mean your ruling has not been made in a judgmental factor.

Your ruling has been made on the basis of hard, enshrined rules of Parliament, and I ask whether or not your ruling, even though your ruling can be overturned, whether the rule that of course denies members as you so aptly point out, that they can bring forward amendments to a bill the substance of which does not address an element of the act.

I say to you it must certainly be out of order.

* (1640)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The question before the committee is that the ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour?

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Chairman: All those opposed?

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Chairman: In my opinion, I believe the Yeas have it.

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays.

Madam Chairman: Call in the members.

Order, please. The question before the committee is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour of the ruling, please rise.

* (1710)

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

Madam Chairman: All those opposed, please rise.

Mr. Clerk: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Madam Chair, may I restart that?

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The Clerk has requested that the count be restarted. All those opposed, please rise.

Mr. Clerk: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairman, our rules are quite clear—

Madam Chairman: The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is not permitted to rise on a point of order during the course of a vote.

Mr. Ashton: It relates to the vote. The vote has not been completed correctly. Madam Chairman, the vote was called. There are a number of members of the Legislature who were in their seats when the vote was called—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Clerk: Yeas 27, Nays 20.

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

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: On a point of order, Madam Chairperson, as I indicated just previously, our rules are quite clear in terms of divisions that every member present and in his seat shall vote. There are a number of members who were present in their

seats when the vote was taken, and subsequently changed seats. Well, for members of the House they may recall cases in which people have, when they came in for the vote, been in different seats than is the case. In this particular case there were seven members in this House who were in their chairs—

Madam Chairman: Order, please; order, please. Would the honourable member for Thompson please come to order.

Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson does not have a point of order. When I called the question, I asked the honourable members to rise, and Rule 10.(2) on page 7 clearly states: "No member shall enter or leave the House during the stating of the question, or leave the House after the final statement of the question until the division has been fully taken and the result of the vote announced." It does not make any reference to the changing of seats.

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The hour being after 5 p.m., it is time for private members' hour.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being after 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 33, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

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

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I realize we are in private members' hour time, but I am wondering if I could make one announcement of House business and, secondly, if I could appeal to members of the House to waive private members' hour so that we might go back into Committee of the Whole to continue the consideration of Bill 33.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, with respect to business, I should announce that the Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources that was to sit tonight is no longer necessary that that committee do so, because I understand Manitoba Hydro Annual Reports were considered in totality last night; therefore, that standing committee will be cancelled for tonight's sitting.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, would you petition the House and determine whether or not there is a will to waive private members' hour and go back into Committee of the Whole?

Mr. Speaker: To the honourable government House leader, we do not generally go into Committee of the Whole twice in the same sitting. The honourable minister would need leave to go back into Committee of the Whole.

Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. Is it agreed to go back into Committee of the Whole? Is it the will of the House?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: That is agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report Bill 33.

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

* (1720)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 33—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. I call the Committee of the Whole together to continue to consider Bill 33.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): We were giving opening remarks; I have still not given my opening remarks. I know we had second reading, so I did want to express myself on a few concerns that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) brought up in response to what I had said during my second reading remarks

and then move into what I believe is a very positive amendment.

The Minister of Finance suggested that, after hearing my proposals that would have seen cuts to the extent where we would have saved the government of Manitoba over a million dollars, was something he did not necessarily want to enter into because he feared a bidding war. The bidding war is not what we are looking for.

What we are asking the government to do is to recognize the facts; to recognize the resources; the government in particular. The ministers have, as opposed to the backbenchers of the Conservative caucus and the two opposition parties. That is really what we were asking the minister to do. It is not a question of a bidding war—who can outbid whom.

I take exception to the comments when he accused myself of playing politics. To make sure that we have the right facts on the record, let us go back to the LAMC meetings where the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) said \$400,000 is what he was looking to save from the budget. It has been referred to, from the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and myself in the second reading, all of us, all three parties, acknowledged the responsibility to ensure that we act responsible, and that we provide good ideas and options. We in fact did just that. We exceeded the \$400,000 quite easily and we could have done, as I have pointed out, a lot more.

The member also made reference to the explosion of our access accounts. There was a lot of give-and-take during the discussions, in which he participated in LAMC. I notice he did not make reference to any of the comments or things he had said during that time that justified the creation of the \$25,000 access accounts at the time.

Madam Chairperson, I was encouraged to hear the minister say that the government will consider other amendments. I believe that would go a long way in establishing the trust that has been lost and the confidence that has been lost in LAMC. I can only hope and trust that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is being straightforward with us this time and will, in fact, respond in a positive fashion to some of the amendments that are going to be suggested from the two opposition parties.

Madam Chairperson, that leads me into what I had touched upon very briefly during second reading and that is in regard to MLA's salaries. I

stated at the time that it is not proper for MLAs to set their own salaries, that in fact something has to be done. We have been pushing on this issue for a number of years already. What we believe, we have taken a look at what has happened and occurred over in the province of Newfoundland. They have legislation in place in which after each election a committee is struck to report back to the Chamber within 60 days. That is how much the MLAs would be receiving.

Madam Chairperson, I would like this Chamber to adopt an amendment that would see that happen in the province of Manitoba and actually expand upon what Newfoundland has done. We are looking at a committee, a committee where we see the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench, the president of the MFL, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce or a designate from the three of those particular branches, set up this independent committee and report back to the Legislature immediately following an election. That would be binding. As I say, I did comment on this fairly extensively during the second reading. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the NDP House leader (Mr. Ashton) were here for it.

So, without further ado, I did want to move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs),

THAT Bill 33 be amended by adding the following after section 3:

Section 60.1 added

3.1 The following is added after section 60:

Compensation committee established

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

Composition of compensation committee

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

- (a) the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench or a designate of the Chief Justice;

- (b) the president of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce or a designate of the president; and

- (c) the president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour or a designate of the president.

Report to be tabled in Legislative Assembly

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

Implementation of report

60.1(4) On receiving the report of the compensation committee, the Legislative Assembly shall implement the report and, if required, shall amend this Act accordingly.

(French version)

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

Adjonction de l'article 60.1

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

Constitution d'un comité chargé de la rémunération

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

Composition

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

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

Dépôt du rapport

60.1(3) Au plus tard 30 jours après la présentation du rapport, le commissaire président de la Commission de régie de l'Assemblée législative le dépose à l'Assemblée législative immédiatement

ou, si elle ne siège pas, dans les 30 premiers jour de séance ultérieurs.

Suite donnée au rapport

60.1(4) L'Assemblée législative donne suite au rapport du comité chargé de la rémunération et, au besoin, modifie la présente loi en conséquence.

Madam Chairperson, I believe this amendment goes a long way in taking the responsibility out of the hands of the politicians, as it should be, of setting salaries, and I would encourage all members of this Chamber to support this amendment.

* (1730)

Madam Chairman: Order, please. I have reviewed the proposed amendment and deem it as out of order on the grounds that it contravenes Beauchesne's 698.(1), because it goes beyond the scope of the bill before the committee. It seeks to amend a part of the act which is not addressed by the bill as provided, Beauchesne 698.(8(a), and further because of the financial implications, would have to be recommended by a message of the Lieutenant-Governor under Rule 53.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, with respect, I have to challenge your ruling.

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. The question before the House is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Chairman: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I request a recorded vote. Yeas and Nays.

Madam Chairman: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Call in the members.

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

* (1800)

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

Yeas 27, Nays 27.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 27, Nays 27.

Madam Chairman: Order, please.

When required, to exercise a casting vote, a presiding officer must consider several principles. Among these is the concept that when no other options are available, the Chair should vote for the retention of the status quo. Therefore, to retain the status quo and so that a final and conclusive judgment will not be made solely by the presiding officer of this House, I am supporting the motion.

The hour being after 6 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being after 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Thursday, April 4, 1991

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