



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

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

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIB
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	ND
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	ND
CARR, James	Crescentwood	LIB
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIB
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	ND
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	LIB
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	ND
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	ND
DOER, Gary	Concordia	ND
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ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
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EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	ND
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
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MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	ND
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
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MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
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PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	ND
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	ND
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	ND
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	ND
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	ND
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	ND

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 6, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRA YERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review of Manitoba Health.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon 44 students from the Souris School, Grade 5, and they are under the direction of Glen Wallmann. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Bill 69

Consultations

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): This government continues to attempt to stamp out democratic freedoms in this province. It continues to trample on the rights of workers and professionals in Manitoba. First, it tries to stamp out free collective bargaining with Bill 70. Now, it brings in legislation trying to break unions.

Mr. Speaker, pushing people down, stamping out democratic institutions, ignoring majority decisions is not the way to encourage productivity and co-operation, something which has never before been so needed in this province today.

This province has now alienated just about every group, every sector of our health care system. Ten thousand nurses are still bitter from the confrontation tactics of this government in their last labour dispute. Some 8,000 health care workers are covered by Bill 70 and do not have free collective bargaining. Operating engineers have been denied

final offer selection, and now doctors have been told their majority decisions do not count.

I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), where is the partnership that this government and his Minister of Health talk so vehemently about? Where is the co-operative spirit that is so necessary to get on with dealing with health care reform, given the fact that we have only a few short years left before federal funds dry up and we will be truly in a health care crisis?

* (1335)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am not certain whether I should be standing to adjourn debate or to answer a question that was not posed.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend the New Democratic Health critic, I presume, must be referring to her press release when she talks about nondefensive democracy in Bill 69, which is repealing an act passed by the previous NDP administration, which in its democratic undertaking compelled all doctors of Manitoba to pay dues. If all doctors who refused to pay those compulsory dues failed to do so, they were compelled to pay a \$1,000 fine. That was democracy for the doctors NDP style.

We opposed that when that legislation was brought in by the NDP. We said it was not appropriate to try and unionize the doctors of Manitoba through the back door, and we still oppose it. That, Sir, is why I informed the MMA, with bargaining issues behind us, we would be repealing that piece of legislation, which we opposed for very principled and obvious reasons in 1985, because we believed at that time, without an opt-out provision, the democratic rights of doctors to free association were violated by that legislation. It was not democracy in action when brought in by the NDP.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, what this minister is saying, that majority decisions done on a democratic basis do not count, that the right to organize collectively and to speak with one voice does not count—no wonder workers and Manitobans are saying bring back Sterling Lyon.

Labour Relations Government Strategy

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): I do not believe this government would ever break an agreement or an understanding or a pact with a private sector corporation or one of its corporate friends. When it comes to workers, professionals and public servants in this province, it is prepared to trample all over their rights and democratic freedoms.

I want to ask the Minister of Health, since he for ideological reasons believes so strongly in ignoring the majority decisions of democratically elected organizations, where will this stop? Who else is on the list of this government? When will it end, this trampling of democratic rights and freedoms?

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

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I have to correct my honourable friend on a couple of pieces of incorrect information.

First of all, my honourable friend might consult with the doctors of Manitoba before she calls them public servants. Doctors consider themselves to be independent practitioners, not public servants as she indicated in the preamble to her question.

The second area I would like to correct my honourable friend is that, in 1985, after a first unsuccessful vote to achieve the majority my honourable friend talks about, of doctors who supported this legislation, the legislation was brought in by the NDP government that she was part of after 699 doctors out of a total of 2,258 eligible to vote supported the concept—hardly the majority my honourable friend talks about.

Bill 69 Inequities

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, together Bill 69 and Bill 70 spell trouble for our health care system at a time when we should be grappling with the overall issues of health care reform and a looming health care crisis.

I want to ask this minister how they justify entrenching inequities in our health care system. How we can have a system where some emergency medical doctors are covered, some are not, some pathologists are covered, some are not? A

personal care home that signed a deal two weeks before the arbitrary deadline—

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

* (1340)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, I think, in some of the preamble, is alleging that the MMA ostensibly representing the physicians of Manitoba, with the passage of Bill 69, will no longer support, work and co-operate with government in reform initiatives.

Point of Order

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, if the minister had been listening, he would have heard me ask a specific question around—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member to state her point.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: . . . by both Bill 69 and Bill 70 which entrenches inequities in our health care system. This is a very serious—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Orchard: As I was trying to indicate to my honourable friend, if that is the position that she is taking in having a press conference with the president-elect of the MMA, with passage of Bill 69, that she and the doctors accordingly represented by MMA will not be part of the reform agenda and changes in the health care system, I think both she and the president-elect are wrong, because there is nothing in this legislation, Bill 69, which prevents the physicians of Manitoba to pay their dues to the MMA, if in fact the MMA is representing them, participating with reform of government and using the dues in an appropriate and responsible fashion.

Nothing denies that opportunity to doctors of Manitoba, and I know that the vast majority of doctors of Manitoba want this government to continue with its agenda of change and reform for the patients' sake, Mr. Speaker.

CFB Shilo All-Party Committee

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Last week on May 31, in answer to a question, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) downplayed the role of the Prime Minister's office respecting Shilo's future, yet it was clear from our meeting with Mary Collins, the Associate Minister of Defence, that it would be a political decision ultimately.

In view of the Minister of National Defence, Marcel Masse's refusal to meet with an all-party delegation while he is in Winnipeg, will the Premier of this province now agree to organize an all-party delegation including other leaders, appropriate MLAs, municipal officials, union officials, to meet with the Prime Minister?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): As I have indicated before, this government is firmly committed to do everything possible to retain the base at Shilo for the economic opportunities that it provides for our province and for the great contribution it makes to our province. We have always been supportive of that, unlike the former NDP administration who gave them a hard time about renewing their lease for that base, whose Premier refused to meet with senior officers of any military organization and base in this province. We have always been supportive of those bases and maintaining their presence in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I was delighted and very supportive of the fact that the member for Brandon West, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), set up the meeting with Associate Minister of Defence, Mary Collins, earlier this week and invited members of the opposition—the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr)—and the mayor of Brandon.

I spoke with the mayor of Brandon with respect to strategy and future things that need to be done, and I will say to this member and this House that we will continue to find and seek every avenue to not only gain the attention of the federal government on this issue, but to convince them that closing the base is not in the best interests of Canada and certainly would be to the detriment of Manitoba and Westman.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I want to debate this, but I want to assure the Premier that I have always been supportive of the Shilo base and the renewal, and I

was involved in renewing the lease over ten years ago. -(interjection)- Yes.

Military Personnel Relocation

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I assume in that letter that the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assume in that response that there will be, at some appropriate time, an all-party delegation headed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) and the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) to go to Ottawa with the other appropriate people.

I have been advised, Mr. Speaker, that there are plans now in place in the National Defence headquarters to move Canadian military personnel from Shilo to Suffield, Alberta, which incidentally would incur a great deal of a substantial cost given the fact that Suffield does not have the suitable facilities.

Has the Premier or perhaps the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) any knowledge of this potential move to Suffield?

* (1345)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would imagine that, before they made any kind of move, they would be doing analyses that involved a whole series of options. We believe in our mind that there are not viable options to utilizing Shilo, particularly for its use for artillery range and heavy equipment. We believe that Shilo is the best option, and we will do everything possible to convince the federal government of that.

Government Strategy

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): In view of Don Mazankowski's record in taking jobs out of Manitoba and getting them into Alberta, can the Premier advise us today whether his government has any other concrete plans? I know he said "we will do everything possible," but do you have any concrete plans to now mobilize the public opinion in this province to fight now, because we are going to have to fight now to retain the Shilo base and to prevent the move to Suffield?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have said that we will do whatever is within our power to

fight that, and we will develop plans in consultation with the people of the area.

I am glad that the member for Brandon East is supportive of keeping that military base in Shilo. I hope he is not just speaking for himself, as his party in the 1980s—in fact, at that time, the Minister of Natural Resources delayed for a full year the signing of a lease at Shilo and gave the federal government and Department of National Defence a hard time over the location of that military base there and the signing of a lease, Mr. Speaker.

I would hope that he speaks for more than just himself and that he has some support among his colleagues this time around, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Hydro Power Projections

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act.

When the government approved the Conawapa dam project, it did so on the basis of Manitoba's need for new power by the year 2000. As recently as April 29 in the Legislature, the minister said: "It is still our best projection, our best advice, that the power from Conawapa will be needed by Manitoba consumers by the year 2001. It is on that basis that we are going forward with the construction of the Conawapa dam."

My question to the minister is: Does he have any preliminary estimates from Manitoba Hydro that the year 2000 or the year 2001 are not appropriate but somewhere much further down the road?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Hydro prepares estimates each and every year on long-term projections for need of power, and Manitoba Hydro is in the process of preparing an estimate as we speak. I have received from Manitoba Hydro a preliminary estimate. On the basis of preliminary estimates, I would not like to discuss the projections.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, the minister does not want to discuss the projection, but the projection of the year 2000 or the year 2001 was used on the basis of Manitoba's argument, the basis of cabinet approval, the basis of the arguments given to the Public Utilities Board by Manitoba Hydro. If those projections are now wrong, then it undercuts the entire proposal of the Conawapa dam project, and

we would appreciate it if the minister was more specific about the preliminary projections for Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Speaker, I have said they are preliminary projections, and on the basis of those projections, it does appear that the demand for electricity is softening. We do not know at this point in time whether that softening of demand is because of the conservation undertaken by Manitoba Hydro or whether the recession has resulted in a softening of demand.

As I get more information, I will bring it forward.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, if the demand is getting softer, then the entire justification for building Conawapa has been blown away. If we do not need the power from Conawapa in the year 2000 or the year 2001, why are we about to borrow \$6 billion for the taxpayers in Manitoba?

* (1350)

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether I can argue with the member for Crescentwood over whether or not we should borrow the money. I think at this point in time we are going ahead with this project.

As far as we know, the latest projections we have are that we still will need the power by the year 2001. I have said, and I have to stress, it is a very preliminary report. I do not know the details of it, but the preliminary report seems to indicate that there is a softening of demand. On the basis of the preliminary report, I think it would be less than prudent for us to make a decision.

Decentralization Statistics

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, when we first heard of the decentralization plan, this government promised 625 civil servant positions and 104 Crown corporation jobs to be decentralized by September of this year.

On May 3, the Premier told this House that 250 jobs had been decentralized and another 250 would be decentralized by the end of this year. However, during the Estimates, the Minister responsible for Decentralization (Mr. Downey) stated that only 146 positions have been decentralized, about half of these are filled and only 145 positions are to be decentralized by the end of this physical year.

My question to the Minister responsible for Decentralization: Will the minister admit that the decentralization plan has failed, he has been misleading the public and covering up for the failures of this government on decentralization?

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

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Decentralization): Mr. Speaker, the "physical year" that the member refers to may be the fiscal year, and if I can just clarify, the numbers which were put on the record are correct. The numbers which were referred to by the Premier were both the Civil Service positions and the Crown corporation positions which are over 250 positions decentralized to this time.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, that is not the information we received during the Estimates.

Decentralization Compensation

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): To the same minister. Because this government has failed—and false and misleading predictions and inaccurate figures—communities' expectations have been built up and now are let down. How are these communities going to be compensated for the jobs they were promised, the economic growth they were supposed to have, and also out-of-pocket money that communities such as Rivers have put because of this government's failures?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I am having great difficulty understanding the intent of the New Democrats on this issue. They have been opposed to decentralization from Day One, Mr. Speaker, from Day One. They have been quoted—

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

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Beauchesne is very clear that Question Period is not a time for debate. If it were, we would categorically reject the statements of the Premier, which are not—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: They have locked step with the Manitoba Government Employees' Association.

They have blindly opposed decentralization. Now, all of a sudden, the member for Swan River wants to somehow try and get some politics out of this and suggest that now she is in favour of some decentralization. -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Let the public know that they were opposed to decentralization.

We have \$5 million allocated in this year's budget for the continuing process of decentralization. Jobs have been announced as decentralized in Thompson, in Virden, in Brandon within the last two weeks—in Minnedosa as well. All of those announcements have been made, and more announcements will take place.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, it is strange that the Premier should try to think that I am trying to make politics out of this when that is exactly what his government was doing before the election.

Decentralization Apology Request

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Will the minister apologize to the communities which were misled, communities such as Dauphin and Rivers, and fulfill his commitment to other communities, not only those communities in Tory constituencies?

* (1355)

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Decentralization): Mr. Speaker, I believe the only apology the communities deserve are ones from the NDP for not supporting the initiative to start with, and I can assure her that the numbers that have been put on the record are accurate. There are some close to 300 positions, after this recent round of decentralization, that have in fact been decentralized, and more will be announced, as the Premier said, in a short period of time.

Seniors RentalStart Program Applicant List

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Housing repeatedly said in the House that he would give us details regarding Seniors RentalStart in Estimates. Now we are in Estimates, and this minister will not give us the details we seek. This minister is stonewalling and covering up the facts.

This minister accused resource groups of not being aggressive enough. Now in Estimates we learn that this minister reviewed only two applicants to Seniors RentalStart, Carman Lions and Rotary Pines.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member, kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Martindale: Will the Minister of Housing now table the 22 applicants to Seniors RentalStart, since he said on May 22: "I will be happy to go through every single project with the member during the Estimates process"?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, what transpired in Estimates was a request by the member and a request by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) to table a list of 103 applications to the nonprofit housing program.

I said I would do that pending permission from each of those applicants, because a number of those applicants represent women's shelters and other special projects that have had a sensitivity to having that information made public in the past.

I have written to all of the applicants, Mr. Speaker, requesting their permission. Upon receiving that permission, I would be happy to table the list.

Applicant Review Criteria

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Housing tell the House and the public of Manitoba why staff were ordered to review only two applicants, Rotary Pines and Carman Lions, when there are eight or 22 applicants, depending on whose version you believe, who applied for that program, when there was \$10 million available? Why were only two reviewed?

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

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Madam Deputy Speaker, the member is wrong.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Deputy Speaker, Hansard will show that the minister admitted that there were two that were reviewed.

Will the Minister of Housing tell the House why Rotary Pines application was approved when Carman Lions had a better proposal with a mortgage loan of only \$1.3 million and no grant? Why is the minister not doing his share to keep costs down instead of handing out \$357,000 to Rotary Pines?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, the hypocrisy of the member for Burrows and his party continues. Yesterday, I indicated to the House, this member was happy. He congratulated the government for doing away with the Seniors RentalStart program. I found out since yesterday that the member for Burrows not only is happy that it was terminated now, he was never in favour of this program. He made representations to the NDP minister of the day when the program was brought in. He made representations to that minister to oppose the program and never bring it in.

He is trying to pretend at this time that he is some kind of a hero to the public out there when in fact he never supported the program.

Crown Corporations Fee Rollback Request

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): This government tells the people that they have had to take the action they took in freezing the wages of some 48,000 Manitobans, because they wanted to protect the taxpayers. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the taxpayers have not been protected. Their city taxes are up 4.78 percent. Their hydro rates are up 3.1 percent. Their fuel tax is up 1.5 cents a litre. Their MPIC premiums are up 5.5 percent. Their telephone rates are presently before the PUB at a requested rate increase of 4.5 percent.

Will the Premier tell the House today, since he has interfered with the direct actions of the Crown corporations, if he is now prepared to go to the Public Utilities Board and ask for a rollback in fee increases for MPIC, for MTS and for the other Crown corporations affected in that that would be equitable and just in the province of Manitoba?

* (1400)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Deputy Speaker, the Public Utilities Board were set up as a result of the actions of this government to review all of those public sector Crown corporation requests for rate increases, because that is the objective third party review, to take it out of the cabinet room, where it was set by the NDP, where they jacked up rates unmercifully during their years of power in the 1980s, and as a result, the increases have been dramatically kept down under this administration as opposed to the huge increases under the NDP.

If, as a result of Bill 70, the wage costs and salary costs of those Crown corporations are less than those that were projected in their presentation to the PUB, we will ask the PUB to ensure that the rates are reduced to reflect that saving.

Labour Relations Government Credibility

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Premier.

This government cut a deal on final offer selection, a deal with the New Democratic Party that they would extend it until the 31st of March. They did not need to do that. They chose to do it to get out of last session. Can the government tell us now how they are to be trusted by the people of Manitoba when they cut a deal allowing FOS to continue until March 31 and then do not abide by the decisions made by the particular interest groups that went before the final offer selection panel?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Deputy Speaker, I can recall, when FOS was brought in, it was referred to as the "bail-out-Bernie bill." It was a bill that was brought in to provide support for unionized workers against the big, bad corporations. It was not necessarily intended to be a tool just for government. In fact, we have never suggested that we ever supported or favoured final offer selection. The fact of the matter is that we have said that it is not with a great deal of pleasure that we move towards this—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: We have said before, we favour the free collective bargaining process, and we have not been faced with free collective bargaining on the part of public sector unions over the past number of months. In fact, none of them want to engage in free collective bargaining. They are turning to arbitration, arbitration that was referred to by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) as stifling and freezing free collective bargaining.

Deputy Minister of Finance Salary Increase

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Would the Premier explain today, in that he has frozen the wages of civil servants and those who work for Crown corporations, why in the

detailed Supplementary Estimates of the Department of Finance, the Deputy Minister of Finance will receive a 7.9 percent increase in wages for this year, and the Director of Human Resource Management will receive a 25.7 percent?

An Honourable Member: Shame!

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I am not intimate with the line that the member brings forward, but I have been told that certainly senior executive and deputies will not receive increases across government, other than those that are reclassified. That is the general—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Manness: That is no different than the near 40 percent of the Civil Service who will still be able to achieve a 3 percent to 4 percent increase as a result of merit or reclassification or change in their status.

That is what has been provided for in the legislation, but more importantly, the tenure of the question suggests that the member could care less about the taxpayers of this province. All she really cares about is spending more.

Family Violence Court Status Report

Mrs. Rosemary Vodrey (Fort Garry): Madam Deputy Speaker, last September, the Department of Justice established a Family Violence Court in Winnipeg in order to deal more efficiently and sensitively with the issue of violence in the home.

Can the Minister of Justice tell us today whether the objectives of efficiency and sensitivity are being met?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I thank the honourable member for Fort Garry for her interest in this matter.

For the last week or so, I have had before me a report on the Family Violence Court prepared by the Criminology Research Centre of the Department of Sociology of the University of Manitoba, and, yes, indeed, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Family Violence Court is being successful in the objectives that were set for it.

For example, according to the report that I have, based on an analysis of 243 cases disposed in the first six months, the average processing time for court was 3.37 months. With respect to stays of proceedings, Madam Deputy Speaker, the stay rate

in Family Violence Court has dropped approximately 7 percent from previous patterns of stay rates. Incarceration as a sentence, for the five-year average previous to the Family Violence Court, was 5.8 percent; that is up to 18.9 percent. We are meeting our objectives.

Mrs. Vodrey: I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Justice.

To what does the minister attribute the success of this project?

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, having asked more than a few back-bench questions in my time and having been ruled out of order on various occasions, I would point to the fact that both the first question and the second question were essentially not asking or seeking information, were asking for opinions. It is not in order to ask for opinions. I think it might be more appropriate if the member was to restate to ask for information from the minister rather than opinions, which is not in order.

Mr. McCrae: On the same point of order, I cannot quite understand what it is the opposition House leader—what it is that is bothering him about debating and discussing in this House matters relating to protection for people who are the victims of violence, family violence in our province. I really am offended that the honourable member, under the guise of a point of order, would try to prevent this government from reporting on a very important initiative.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank all honourable members for their advice. There is no point of order. However, I would remind all honourable members, the intent of Question Period is to seek information.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Exactly, Madam Deputy Speaker. The honourable member for Fort Garry asked what it is that makes this program so successful.

I say to you, the people behind the program are what make it successful, the people who helped us develop this program and the people who are working and monitoring this program, people like our court staff, our Crown attorneys and judges, the people involved in the Women's Advocacy Program of the Department of Family Services, who are helping us with the monitoring of this program, people like Jane Ursel, who is involved in the

evaluation of this program, all of those people working together for a better product and better protection for women and families in this province. That is to what I attribute the success of the program.

* (1410)

Farming Industry Debt Crisis

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, on numerous occasions, I have asked the Minister of Agriculture to address the deepening agricultural long-term debt crisis in Manitoba. We have said that the support programs that are in place would not deal with and relieve the crippling debt that was placed to bear on the shoulders of farmers in Manitoba. The Minister of Agriculture has repeatedly said that the GATT talks, NISA, GRIP would deal with these kinds of problems. They are not.

I ask the minister: Will he now admit that GRIP and these other programs will not deal with the long-term debt crisis in Manitoba and that he must now take action with the federal government, joint federal-provincial action, to put in place a program to write down the long-term debt that is in place?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Deputy Speaker, as I have answered the member on previous occasions, any risk protection income program, like GRIP or NISA, is going to help farmers deal with their ongoing expenses, of which one of them is certainly their debt problem, their principal and interest payments.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I want to tell the member that, over the last three years, the number of applications to the Mediation Board have gone from 300 in '88-89 to 308 in 1989-90 to 217 in the past year 1990-91, so the number of cases where farmers have to go for mediation has decreased significantly. The percent of farmers who are drawing upon the guarantees went from 87 percent three years ago to 50 percent two years ago to 27 percent last year, Mr. Speaker. All farmers are doing a better job of meeting their debt commitments. The risk protection programs are in place to give them a better opportunity to do that in the years ahead.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, the minister has repeatedly said in this House that there is no deepening crisis. He said it again just now, yet his own department, Economics Branch, agriculture

statistics shows that the outstanding agricultural debt in Manitoba is at a record level, 6 percent in 1990, above 1989, the highest it has ever been in the history of this province, and he denies there is a problem.

I ask him, in light of that fact, the statistics from his own department, will he now admit he has been wrong to say that there is not a deepening debt crisis? Will he now make overtures to the federal government that there must be a program put in place to address it?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, in the course of our being in government, through the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, we doubled the benefits to young farmers in terms of interest rebate. We doubled it. We increased the allowance under the Guaranteed Operating Loan Program. We increased the asset value farmers could have in order to qualify for an MACC loan. We have made numerous improvements in terms of our lending capacity, particularly to the young farmer in the province of Manitoba, who is the farmer of the future.

The figures I have just put on the record show that there is a lessening number of farmers who actually are in severe financial situations, who have to use the service of the Mediation Board. I will remind the member that 70 percent to 80 percent of the farmers who go before the Mediation Board remain in farming. There is a success going on over there in terms of the ability to resolve farmers' difficulties with their financial institutions to allow them to continue to farm. The record is clear. There is success in resolving that debt problem in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Plohan: There are fewer farmers and more debt, and the minister tries to deny that fact.

Farm Mediation Board Funding Criteria

Mr. John Plohan (Dauphin): In view of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that this minister said GRIP is a voluntary program and he said it was wrong for the banks to insist that a person applying for GRIP must apply for GRIP, must enter GRIP, before they could get an operating loan, I ask this minister, why has he directed that farmers going before the only provincial mechanism to help farmers in crisis, the Farm Mediation Board, must join GRIP, NISA and Crop Insurance before they can get any operating loan and any help through the Mediation Board?

Why has he insisted on that requirement when he says it is a voluntary program? Is this his version of voluntary—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the member, as he often does, puts misinformation on the record. At no time did this Minister of Agriculture direct the Mediation Board to use those elements in the negotiation.

Naturally, if those elements improve the farmers' viability, I would expect he would also condone that the members of the board would use that in the negotiation process. I would imagine that farmers, knowing that reduces their risk and increases the probability of survival, would also want to have that in their record in terms of the negotiation with their financial institution.

Mr. Speaker, I make it very clear that the member has put false information on the record if he says I directed it, absolutely false information.

Ojibway Language Program Funding

Mr. George Hlckes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, last October, my colleagues and I pressured the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs to provide funding for the Ojibway language preschool program, the only one of its kind in Canada. Finally, in November, the minister established a working group between three government departments and a representative of the program in order to develop a plan for long-term financial funding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the reports from the working group and the letter which was recently sent by the Department of Education and Training informing the working group there are no provincial funds available for the program. Once again, we see evidence of this government breaking its word to Manitobans.

Why is the minister not following through on his commitment to help preserve the Ojibway program which is crucial to maintaining Native languages and the culture?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there was funding provided to finish the program out as was requested. The commitment was to look at other alternatives for funding. As I am aware at this particular time, there have not been alternative funds made

available, that other priorities have to be taken into consideration.

The member is well aware of the fact of this government's commitment to other Native activities. I am prepared to further discuss it, Mr. Speaker, but at this point, there is no additional funding for that program.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could have leave of the House to make a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Finance have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a great deal of pride and join all Manitobans in congratulating a great athlete. Last night, many Manitobans watched the NHL Awards on television. They watched with pride as a young man from Carman, Manitoba, received not one, but two of the league's top awards.

Mr. Speaker, 26-year-old Chicago Blackhawk Eddie "The Eagle" Belfour was honoured with the Calder Trophy as top rookie and the Vezina Trophy as top goaltender. I would like to add that Eddie Belfour is the first Manitoba-born goalie to win the Calder Trophy since Terry Sawchuk won it back in 1951.

I would also like to point out with pride that the town of Carman now has two Calder Trophy winners to call its own. In 1948, Jim McFadden won the award as a Detroit Red Wing.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to Eddie Belfour's trophy wins last night in Toronto, he was also named to the NHL's first team all-star squad. I would like to congratulate Eddie Belfour and his wife, Rita. I would also like to add congratulations to Eddie's parents, Henry and Alma Belfour, on their son's accomplishments.

Eddie Belfour serves as another shining example that Manitoba's people are its greatest resource and serve as an inspiration to others. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Mr. Cliff Evans: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to from this side of the House—and through this past year had many opportunities to watch Eddie Belfour play hockey, being the astute hockey fan that I am, and watching throughout the year the many games that he had played outstandingly and was the backbone of his team, getting his team into the playoffs, watching the playoffs.

The young man from Manitoba, from Carman, is an outstanding athlete, outstanding hockey player, and we on this side of the House would like to also offer our congratulations to him and his wife and to his family, and to say how proud we are on this side of his accomplishments. Thank you.

* * *

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): I respectfully request leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed.

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, the Filipino-Canadian community in Winnipeg shall be celebrating a Philippine Heritage Week from June 8 to June 16.

This is an annual schedule of events that includes June 12, which is the Philippine Independence Day commemorating the emergence of the Philippines as a sovereign nation on account of the many sacrifices of the cost of lives, blood, sweat and tears of our national heroes including Dr. Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, Marcelo del Pilar, Apolinario Mabini, Emilio Aguinaldo and others.

Every day of the week there will be a schedule of events under the sponsorship of the volunteer organization in charge of the event.

Almost all the organizations and associations and groups in the political community will be participating as a symbol of our volatile unity. Among the sponsoring organizations will include the Philippine Association of Manitoba, the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers Incorporated, the Original Filipino Seniors of Manitoba, the Filipino Community Group, and many others. I could hardly name them all.

* (1420)

Among the highlights of the celebration of the Philippine Heritage Week will be the flag raising ceremony at the City Hall quadrangle, immediately followed by a festival in the Old Market Square almost all day, ending up in the evening with Discovery Hour sponsored by the seniors.

There will also be a prelude concert the day before the flag raising ceremony which comes on a Sunday morning. Then there will be tree planting, as well, in Assiniboine Park. There will also be citizenship oath taking which will take place at the chamber area of City Hall.

There will be a dinner and dance, Independence Day Ball, at the Radisson Hotel, and many other activities during the week.

Mr. Speaker, presuming that the members of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Liberal Party are feeling the same way, we in the New Democratic Party are pleased to join the Philippine-Canadian community. We appreciate the contribution to Canada, particularly the contribution to the cultural mosaic of Manitoba.

In celebrating their Philippine roots, we are witnessing the evolving generation of new Canadians who will be joined by so many Manitobans in the celebration of their heritage week because this group is truly becoming an integral, nonseverable portion of our total Manitoba heritage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

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

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I want to echo many of the remarks that the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) has put on the record. I know I have in the past participated, and many colleagues in all three political parties have participated, in the Independence Week's functions that are put on by the Filipino community.

Once again, I would encourage members to go to some of the events. It is all week long. I believe it starts on this Sunday at a flag-raising ceremony over at City Hall, and I encourage people to go and receive very warm Filipino hospitality. Thank you.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that under Rule 27 that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the potential closure of CFB Shilo and its serious negative implications for the Manitoba economy.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before determining whether the motion meets requirements of our Rule 27, the honourable member for Brandon East will have five minutes to state his case for urgency of debate on this matter, and also a spokesperson for each of the other parties will also have five minutes to address the position of their party respecting the urgency of the matter.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to explain the urgency of the matter, first of all, to indicate that the closure of CFB Shilo would have a very serious negative impact on the Manitoba economy. We have about 1,700 military and civilian personnel jobs there, the payroll roughly \$70 million. There is no question that it is very significant.

Of course, on top of that, we have the German training establishment which also spends millions of dollars in the area. It is probably the largest single employer outside of Winnipeg and perhaps the largest single employer in the province of Manitoba. Without question, Mr. Speaker, the closure of the base would be detrimental to the Manitoba economy and, certainly, it would be disastrous for the Brandon and area economy.

I believe debate on this issue at this time would focus greater attention on the issue, would provide all members of the House an opportunity to discuss this issue. Only yesterday, Marcel Masse refused to meet an all-party delegation during his two-day visit in Winnipeg. This may be an ominous sign. Either he is indifferent to this or closure may be imminent.

I have also been advised that Mr. Masse's position on these matters is that he will make the decision first and then allow consultation after the decision has been announced. I have been advised on good authority of that.

Also, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Justice will affirm, Mary Collins, the Associate Minister of Defence, said a decision would be made on this

matter sooner rather than later. In other words, we cannot wait. It is a matter that has to be discussed now. It is a matter that has the support of all the members of this Legislature now.

We are past the throne speech debate, of course, Mr. Speaker, and, of course, we have passed the budget debate. Both of these types of debates give all members an opportunity to talk about any matters of general interest to them. I believe, therefore, that it is important to have this debate at this time to give all members of this Legislature an opportunity to voice their concerns, to help send a message to Ottawa and to speak with one voice.

Such a debate, Mr. Speaker, would be an opportunity to mobilize public opinion in this province, to help raise awareness of the seriousness of this issue. I know there has been some media coverage, but it is a serious issue. We do not want to read in tomorrow's paper or the day after that the base is being closed, and we have not taken any direct action by this Legislature.

There is no other opportunity for a debate allowing a large number of MLAs to put their view on record, to work together, I would hope in a nonpartisan way, to try to persuade the federal government not to close the base down and perhaps transfer it to Suffield, Alberta, as we have been advised. There may be a transfer of the Canadian military personnel to Suffield, Alberta. We just cannot afford that to happen. We cannot afford to lose any jobs in this province.

Certainly, that area has been very badly hurt. We have lost the VIA Rail service. The main post office is going. The air control tower has gone. We have lost manufacturing jobs because of the recession and free trade. Farm incomes have been very poor. The area simply cannot sustain the negative economic impact and the closure, and indeed the province as a whole would be seriously hurt.

I would trust that all members of this House would support this motion of mine that we put the ordinary business aside and discuss this as a matter of urgent public importance. Certainly, I trust that I can depend on all members of the House to approach this in an unpartisan, all-party fashion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne's states that there are two reasons in order to have a matter of urgent public importance, the first being that the public interest is served, the

second being, of course, that there is no other opportunity to in fact debate it. I would argue that there are no other opportunities for us to debate it, given that the current Minister of Defence is in a position of wanting to make a decision on what is going to be happening with Shilo in the very near future. In terms of the public interest, I believe Manitoba cannot afford to lose our base out in Shilo.

* (1430)

When Portage la Prairie was being closed down we had an all-party committee that went down to Ottawa, and that all-party committee was basically told in short that because the decision has already been made, there is nothing that an all-party committee can do to reverse that decision.

What we need to do is to make a decision now, and the Associate Minister of Defence said it so herself when she said that in fact this is going to be a political decision. It is very important. It is indeed in Manitoba's best interest that this issue be dealt with as quickly as possible. We have to realize the impact, not only socially or economically, Mr. Speaker. We take a look at Shilo, it employs over a thousand military personnel, 400 nonmilitary public employees, 200 nonpublic employees, 150 to 200 seasonal help. This is something that has provided economic activity to the city of Brandon, to rural Manitoba, in fact to the province as a whole. There are many other spinoffs, the social impact. Many members of the forces participate in all sorts of different communities as volunteers for different organizations and so forth.

Let us not see what happened to Portage la Prairie happen to Shilo. Manitoba just cannot afford it. We have seen bad political decisions made in Ottawa previously, whether it was the CF-18, whether it was Portage la Prairie, whether it was Kapyong Barracks. We cannot afford to sit idly by and let the decisions being made in Ottawa without Manitoba coming forward with a strong, clear position.

On those grounds, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all members of this Chamber that we should be debating, in fact, Mr. Speaker, that we should be able to debate this today, so that we are sending that one strong message to Ottawa. Thank you.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree wholeheartedly with the sentiments which actuate

the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) today in raising the matter he raises. Indeed, the honourable member for Brandon East is part of a delegation that I headed on Monday of this week to meet with the Honourable Mary Collins, Associate Minister of National Defence for our country, here in Winnipeg.

As part of that delegation, the honourable member for Brandon East will realize that the positions he has put forward in his brief five-minute address this afternoon are precisely the positions we put, working as a group together, on Monday with a representative of the Liberal Party, a representative of the city of Brandon, as well as a representative of the rural municipality of Cornwallis, my colleagues the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) and the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) who represents the Minnedosa constituency which, like the honourable member's constituency and my constituency, would be profoundly affected by any move that may be made by the federal authority to cut or close down operations at CFB Shilo.

* (1440)

Mr. Speaker, I believe we are playing a little loosely here with the rules that we operate under in this place. I certainly think it is going to be up to yourself to decide just what we do about this today. This House and this government have certain administrative capacities and national defence is not one of them.

What we are faced with this afternoon is an important political job to be done by members of this House acting—I suggest the wiser course would be to continue to act as a delegation, an all-party delegation, joined by municipal authorities, in continuing to press for meetings with federal people, not unlike the one we had on Monday with Minister Collins.

I had to state yesterday, unfortunately, how very, very disappointed I was in the position taken by the Honourable Marcel Masse, Minister of National Defence, in refusing out of hand to meet with me and the aforementioned delegation. I was extremely disappointed in that particular attitude.

As I said, I do not know what was on Mr. Masse's schedule yesterday and today, perhaps a tea party or two, I do not know. It seems to me that whatever he is doing here in Winnipeg could not be more

important than addressing the issue of the future of the Canadian Forces Base Shilo which has been such an extremely important part of our economy in southwestern Manitoba and, indeed, all of Manitoba.

Camp Shilo is probably the finest training facility that you can find anywhere. Its position in Manitoba is a good position. Were it not for Shilo, people like myself, who are responsible for calling in the military in times of need for aid to the civil power—I would hate to have to think that we would have to go all the way to Calgary or London, Ontario, to get the help that we would need in times of flood or fire, or times when search and rescue operations are required.

The honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) has dealt very well, I suggest, in his comments with the serious, extremely serious, gravely serious, economic impact of the kinds of moves we have been hearing rumours about. Of course, there are political issues involved here respecting national unity, a fair deal for Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

The political aftershock of a failure or a refusal to meet with people who care about these things in Manitoba, I suggest, is an important thing, a very negative thing, but it is not the end of the story, because we have been given the assurance by the office of the Minister of National Defence that indeed a meeting can take place. We just have not been able to settle all the details of such a meeting, and my office is working very intensively to ensure that an early meeting does take place.

Mr. Speaker, I also have before me a copy of Hansard for May 28 in the House of Commons. We have another ally, and that person is Dr. Lee Clark, the honourable member for Brandon-Souris in the federal Parliament, who has stated basically the same things that the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) and I have been stating. He stated that with his caucus colleagues and, indeed, in the full House of Commons. Other people need to be involved here.

I guess another reason why I have concerns about a debate and setting aside the business of Manitoba in this House is that when we are dealing with the administrative capacity of our government to act, that is not there. Also, we are not dealing with any proposal that is actually out there just yet, Mr. Speaker. We are all fearful that might be coming,

and we are all trying to head that off. We should continue with that work.

Indeed, in addition to the work that has been done, there is a local committee in Brandon which—if I may have one second, Mr. Speaker, to tell you that a parallel committee working out of the city of Brandon composed of the Chamber of Commerce, composed of labour representatives and Economic Development representatives. Indeed, the press secretary to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), Mr. Ron Arnst, is involved in that committee as well. A lot of things are going on to let the federal government know just how we feel about this matter.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all honourable members for their advice as to whether or not the motion proposed by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) satisfies the conditions to be met if the matter is to proceed as a matter of urgent public importance.

I did receive the notice required under our subrule 27(1).

The conditions and procedures required if a motion is to be debated as a matter of urgent public importance are set out in Beauchesne's Citation 389 and 390, as well as in our Rule 27. The first condition requires that the subject matter be so pressing that the ordinary opportunity for debate will not allow it to be brought on early enough. The second condition is that it must be shown that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention.

Because of the inability of the associate Minister of Defence to shed any light on the matter of the potential base closure when she met with a delegation of MLAs earlier this week, and because the Minister of National Defence is in Manitoba today, but has declined the invitation to meet with MLAs, I believe it is urgent that the House debate this matter at this time. I do believe that the public interest will suffer if this matter is not given immediate attention by the House. Therefore, I am ruling the motion in order.

Therefore the question before the House is: Shall the debate proceed? Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I indeed appreciate your ruling, and I think it was a wise ruling. Also, I believe it reflected the view of the majority in this Legislature because indeed it is a serious threat to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to belabour the point by quoting all kinds of statistics. We could, indeed, because we do have the numbers about the job losses. We have the numbers about the payroll losses. We have numbers about other operating expenditures that are incurred by the national Department of Defence in Manitoba. All of these monies would be lost and there would definitely be a negative impact on our economy.

I was very disturbed when we met with the Associate Minister of National Defence, Mary Collins, because in answer to a question put by the all-party delegation, and I do emphasize it was an all-party delegation, including the Minister of Industry (Mr. Stefanson), the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and myself and also the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), along with the mayor of Brandon, we did take a nonpartisan, all-party approach, because this is the way we have to go.

* (1450)

We were disturbed when, in answer to a question put by the delegation about the criteria, the answer was, well, she did not have any criteria. If I understood her correctly, she did not know what criteria. Now that really disturbed me, because how could you argue a case when you do not know what is the basis of the decision making.

I also got some disturbing information from a member of Parliament in Ottawa just earlier today who said that Mr. Masse, the Minister of National Defence, has said, not necessarily in the Parliament, but he has said in and around Ottawa on a number of occasions that his approach in this matter will be to make a decision first on which bases will be closed and announce it and then receive delegations, I suppose, from people to argue what can be done to offset the base closure.

I think that this is a very poor way to operate, Mr. Speaker, but, indeed, this is what we understand is the approach of this particular minister, and it is therefore very exasperating. This is why I have urged that we have this debate today to give a number of members an opportunity to speak on this matter. It is also why I have urged that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) of this Legislature, of this province, lead a top-level delegation to Ottawa to meet with the Prime Minister, because ultimately it will be a political decision, it will be a decision made

in cabinet, it will be a decision made in the Prime Minister's office.

I think it is absolutely imperative that the First Minister and this government now, today, begin to organize a top-level delegation representing various interests, representing municipal government. We would have municipal representatives. We would have local MLAs. We could have union representatives and, indeed, anyone and everyone who would be appropriate for this top-level delegation to meet and discuss this matter with the Prime Minister.

I was a bit taken aback when Mary Collins said to the delegation, well, we have to save money; how do you propose that we should save money? Well, first of all, I do not think it is up to anyone other than the Department of Defence, the minister and his staff, to decide how they can save money, because they have the information.

I could not help but remark that Canada does tend to have a bloated hierarchy in its military. We have a great number of senior officers, probably too many chiefs and not enough Indians, as they used to say, too many top level people compared to ordinary ranks. In fact, within the last year there have been five major generals added to the Canadian army. I say, therefore, compared to many other countries that have similar sized armies, similar sized military forces, indeed, we have a bloated hierarchy.

As a matter of fact, I was told that the Dutch people, the country of Holland has a military about the same size as Canada, and yet the expenditures are about half of what we spend in Canada for the same number of military personnel and the same level of military preparedness.

The other point we made with the associate minister, one that we should be making with the Government of Canada, is that if you are looking at any base closures as a way of saving money, and we are not saying you should but, if you are, surely you have to look at the largest cities in this country.

I include in that the city of Toronto, where I understand at Downsview there is a large military base. The land alone is worth hundreds of millions of dollars. If the federal government wants to save money, surely they should close down that kind of a base, which is awfully expensive and which indeed costs the military families, the personnel who have to move into Toronto, because they do not all live on the base. Some of them are not in permanent

married quarters. Some live in the community, and I would say, it is an understatement to say that the cost of housing is triple in Toronto what it is in Brandon and the Shilo area—triple, maybe quadruple.

I still do not understand why 20 percent of the Canadian army has to be centred in Ottawa. Surely that is very expensive. Surely what we need to do in terms of maintaining a good military, a strong military force, is to look at this country and say, there are regional areas that need some support. They are in the Maritimes. They are in Manitoba. They may be elsewhere, but I say if you look at Westman, it needs some support. We have unfortunately had poor farm incomes for a number of years. We have lost the VIA Rail service. The main post office is going. The air tower controllers have disappeared. In the province generally, we have had more than our share of cutbacks. I am thinking particularly of Portage la Prairie and, of course, the loss of the CF-18 contract I think was a damn shame. It was a shame, Mr. Speaker, and I think we have paid more than our share towards government cutbacks and in terms of government decisions that have an effect on jobs.

So what I am talking about, Mr. Speaker, essentially is, I am not telling the Government of Canada or the military how to run their army or what military policy they should have, but I am saying, there is a matter of common sense that you should locate bases in rural areas essentially. In the case of Shilo, we know we have an excellent facility. It is well established. It goes back to 1934, I believe. It has an excellent reputation. There is plenty of space. There are plenty of facilities.

I was very disturbed when I was advised that rumour has it out of Ottawa that the plan is to move the Canadian military personnel to Suffield, Alberta. I would criticize that on a number of grounds, including, Mr. Speaker, the fact that Alberta already has about six bases. We have barely got one—well, perhaps. We continue to have the one in Winnipeg; I am not sure. That still may be up in the air, but Alberta has about six bases including Suffield. The Suffield base does not have the facilities that Shilo has. So the Government of Canada is going to incur a substantial cost in having to provide facilities, housing, office space, training facilities, et cetera, at Suffield. It simply does not make sense from that area in that respect as well.

There is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the decision will be a political one, and I regret to say that, as I read in the Brandon Sun, our local M.P., who I know is well meaning, has not been effective in this matter. As a matter of fact, he has been subject to severe criticism by the Brandon Sun in saying that Lee Clark, the member there, has no influence on major policy issues whatsoever. They were particularly concerned about Shilo. In fact, Mr. Clark was reported in the Brandon Sun on May 23 that he is unable to tell us anything about Shilo's future and, apparently, was not able to get anywhere with the Minister Marcel Masse.

The editorial in the Brandon Sun urges that the provincial level, the provincial MLAs, the provincial government, municipal officials and others support our M.P.s to fight for this because, if it is going to be left to the Manitoba M.P.s, I am afraid that we can say goodbye to it. I do not want to sound alarmist but, from all the vibes we have been getting, all the rumors we have been getting, and it is not just from military sources, it is from Legion personnel, from civilian personnel, it is from various sources that this base is, it is just a matter of time when Mr. Masse announces the Canadian Forces will be transferred to Suffield and Shilo, as we have known it, will be no more.

Mr. Speaker, this will be, as I said earlier, a disaster in terms of jobs, in terms of our economy. It is simply not fair. It is not fair to the Manitoba economy. It is not fair to the people of Manitoba. I would hope that all members of this House will join with us in supporting our efforts. I welcome the support of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), Minister of Industry (Mr. Stefanson) and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr). Let us work together. Let us continue this. Let us fight together. Let us fight now for Shilo.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to join in this debate. I have, of course, as I said earlier, some doubts about whether it is all that—I made my points about that earlier, and you have ruled, and I certainly respect that ruling. It puts one in an awkward position sometimes because this is a very, very, extremely important matter, and sometimes things do not just fit the way I see them into the rules, as I see them, but that does not make them any the less important.

I am glad to see so many members in the Chamber at this moment to take part and to listen to

this debate because, certainly, there might be a tendency to think it is a Brandon issue or an R.M. of Cornwallis issue or some such thing. It is a Manitoba issue and, Mr. Speaker, it is a Canada issue. It goes well beyond the borders of this room, when we talk about the issue of the Shilo base and any possible changes, negative changes, to that base in the future.

* (1500)

As I said a little while ago, CFB Shilo is probably one of the finest military training facilities anywhere. Having grown up not far away from Shilo and lived there for a good part of my life, lived in that neighbourhood, I know the importance of that facility to the surrounding district. How could you not understand the importance of \$120 million economic spin or economic impact in a community so sparsely populated in terms of any comparisons you might make down East with the more populated regions down east. That kind of economic impact is extremely, extremely significant and we are trying our best, Mr. Speaker, to make that point well known to federal politicians right from the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence right on down.

(Madam Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

You know, the member for the region, Dr. Lee Clark, the Member of Parliament for Brandon-Souris has put some things on the record in Ottawa with respect to this matter. I believe the Manitoba caucus of the federal government party is well aware of the concerns of honourable members in this Chamber and well aware of my own concerns, aware of the concerns of the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), who joined with us on Monday in our delegation as we met with the Honourable Mary Collins, Associate Minister of National Defence, and spoke very frankly and openly and, I must say, courteously with the federal minister and she with us about matters relating to this.

We left the message very clearly with her where we stand with regard to training, with regard to the geography of this whole thing and its importance with regard to aid to the civil power, crucially important to economic aspects relating to soldiers training there or relating to the families of soldiers, the families of civilian personnel, the fact that we are training something over 5,000 German soldiers in the space of a year and the importance all of that has to our region there, but also the importance it

has in military terms and the importance it has with respect to national unity, with respect to a fair deal for this part of the country.

Manitoba takes pride in being an integral part of this country and, for goodness sake, to take out all assistance, military bases in the sense of artillery and army activities from between London, Ontario, and Suffield, Alberta, would really be a foolish military strategy, I suggest, for the defence of our nation or for the civilian peacetime operations that are so vital in times of distress and trouble in our own country, trouble relating to fire or flood or other civil emergency situations.

I would just like, though, to read to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, the final paragraph of what it was that Mr. Lee Clark said in the House of Commons on May 28, 1991, because it sums up my position and sums up the position of all of the members of this House who participated in the meeting with Mary Collins last Monday and who hope to participate in early future meetings with Minister Masse who unfortunately saw fit not to meet with us while he was here for a two-day visit.

We have no idea what all else Mr. Masse was here in Winnipeg for. As I have said, I do not know what could be more important to a Minister of National Defence than the kinds of things that are being said these days about CFB Shilo. All he has to do is say, it is not true. If he says that, we can get back to other things. The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) can get back to playing his violin or or doing his job here in the Legislature, getting after the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), those kinds of things.

Of course, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) can get back to reading all of those statistics that he likes to read all the time. The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and the Minister of Industry (Mr. Stefanson) can get back to the very important responsibilities they have here in the government of Manitoba. Of course, I can get back to important matters like looking after the justice system in Manitoba.

I will read the third paragraph that Mr. Lee Clark said, as recorded in Hansard: In conclusion, I asked the Minister of National Defence to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the future of CFB Shilo and to reassure my constituents who understandably are worried by the speculative newspaper stories of recent days. Well, amen.

We are all worried about those speculative stories, all of us in this province and certainly all of us in southwestern Manitoba are extremely worried. We realize, we acknowledge what Minister Collins said to us on Monday, but what we have is something that is before the department and not something that is sitting by way of a proposal on a minister's desk. That is what they told us, so we are going to accept that, but you know how these things can happen, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are concerned because this is so vitally important to us.

I have said my little piece today, Madam Deputy Speaker. I look forward to a very, very early opportunity to say my piece in no uncertain terms to the federal Minister of National Defence at the earliest opportunity. My office will not stop attempting to arrange a meeting with that federal minister on behalf of myself and the other members of our delegation, which includes members from all three parties and also includes civic representatives from Brandon and the R.M. of Cornwallis.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there was one other thing I wanted to point out and that is that members who would like to take a few minutes to have a look at today's Brandon Sun will learn that Brandon is not just sitting around and letting me and the others do this work of letting the federal people know of our concerns.

There is a new committee in Brandon comprised of the following members: Ron Arnst, the Premier's acting press secretary and director of the Westman regional cabinet office; we also have Ross Martin, who is a city councillor and the president of Brandon District Labour Council on this committee; we have Gord Peters the president of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce; Brian Molsberry, president of the union local representing civilian employees of Shilo; and finally, Brian Marshall, who is the managing editor of the Brandon Sun.

Now, that particular committee is on the ball and gearing up to do their job to bring home to the federal government the importance of this matter. They are going to be involving many, many hundreds, if not thousands, of people in the Brandon area to make sure that this message gets out. I said before, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in the past maybe we have waited just a little too long because waiting to find out if there is any truth to the rumours, I want to know now. I want to know today. If there is any truth to this rumour, I want to know about it, but if there is not, Mr. Masse, just tell me, and we can

cancel all these activities and start working with you towards expanded operations at Shilo base and nothing else will be satisfactory to us.

All I say is, just give us the reassurance that Mr. Clark has asked for and that we are all asking for. We can get on with looking towards a bright future for CFB Shilo, a bright future for all the people who work there, military and otherwise. You know 700 families would be affected directly, not to mention everybody else indirectly affected in our corner of the province by virtue of the economic spinoff those families and the incomes they earn at Shilo base generate. So make no mistake about how serious we are about this. We are very serious, and we will take every opportunity at our disposal to let the federal government know about how serious we are. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

* (1510)

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Crescentwood. -(applause)-

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): Save the applause until we make sure that CFB Shilo stays open, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This is a particularly important day to have this debate, because this is the very day when the federal Minister of National Defence is in Manitoba. I do not know why he is in our province, but I know one meeting he is not attending, and that is a meeting with the all-party delegation of this House, representing all of the people of Manitoba, so that the arguments can be put to the minister who will ultimately make the decision on the future of Shilo and the hundreds of civilian employees whose families depend for their livelihood on the maintenance of that base.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not often when representatives from all three political parties in this Chamber speak with one voice, and I have to tell you that while the meeting with Associate Minister Collins was not satisfying on Monday of this week, the camaraderie and the unity with which all parties in this Chamber spoke to the federal government on behalf of the people who elected us was assuring. It was assuring to know that we can set aside our partisan differences when the provincial interest is at stake, and I would go further than that and say that there is a national interest at stake in this entire debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have to tell you that I took no comfort at all from the message that the

all-party delegation received from Mary Collins on Monday of this week. Firstly, she told us that there were no criteria established to choose between one base or the other. How are we to make the arguments persuasively when the decision makers themselves do not know what arguments they are going to be asking for or listening to or using as finally they will come to terms with what is going to be a very difficult set of decisions?

Secondly, she told us that while there will be recommendations made by the military and by the Department of National Defence, ultimately the decision will be a political one. Well, that has to be cold comfort for Manitobans who have witnessed over the last number of years how Manitobans are affected by political decisions made by the government in Ottawa—cold comfort indeed, Madam Deputy Speaker, to be told that the decision to be taken was a political one, given the history of such decisions that have been taken by this Government of Canada. -(interjection)-

The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) says go after them but be positive. I have been positive about the co-operation of political parties in this House. I have been positive about our mission, which is to save the Shilo base for Manitobans, but there was nothing positive that came out of the meeting with the Associate Minister of National Defence. Nothing came out of it; therefore nothing positive. I can only interpret as negative the refusal of the Minister of National Defence to meet with us while he is in Manitoba. I cannot imagine, and I agree with the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), an issue that is more important for the Minister of National Defence, when he visits our province, than to meet with an all-party delegation to talk about the future of Shilo.

We do not have to beg on this issue, Madam Deputy Speaker. We do have to appeal to some sentiment or emotion because the arguments speak for themselves, and the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) made those arguments, as did the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) and others, at the meeting on Monday.

Eighty-five thousand acres of prime training ground, the only base between Ontario and Alberta, a base that was not established during the Second World War or shortly after, as many were, but a base that was established in 1934, which is so conducive for the purpose for which it was established, that German soldiers have been training at the base for years.

The arguments are there, but the arguments are not being heard. That is why there has to be a call to political action. If the Associate Minister of Defence is telling us the decisions are going to be political, then we have to take off our gloves, Madam Deputy Speaker, and get involved in a political fight. A political fight means that the citizens of Manitoba have to write the members of Parliament on the government side, and the Associate Minister and the Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister of this country, to let them know that this is not just another one of those issues where some lose and some win. This strikes at the heart of Manitoba's sense of fairness from its national government.

If we want to look at the history of decisions taken by the Government of Canada, need I remind members of the House about CF-18, which was a political decision. In spite of the fact that the lowest bid came from the Manitoba company, in spite of the fact that the bureaucrats had recommended that the contract come here, a political decision was taken by the Prime Minister that overruled the common sense and the rational arguments that were made by others.

Why should we believe that will not happen again? So we should take nothing for granted. We should not rely on the sensitivities or the good will or the mealy-mouthed words of a federal minister or the Prime Minister himself. We have to satisfy ourselves as Manitobans that we have done everything within our power, including a call to political action among our constituents to save this base, not only because it is in the provincial interest, but because it is in the national interest.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know there are many other members of the Chamber who want to speak to this issue, and I applaud that. I applaud the ruling of the Chair to allow this debate to proceed. This is an emotional issue. This is an issue which contains great symbolism and importance to the people of Manitoba who want to be a part of a nation that recognizes fairness and equity, and we challenge the Minister of National Defence to meet with us, to hear our arguments, and to refute them with whatever logic or whatever rationale he can summon to the table.

It is very difficult when the debate is like the sound of one hand clapping, because if you shout from the rooftops and no one can hear, your arguments fall on deaf ears.

I am proud to be part of the all-party delegation that is standing up for Manitoba. We will continue to do that, and we will continue to offer our help as the third party in this Legislature to all of the efforts that are required to make sure that CFB Shilo stays as an important element of the military training establishment of the Government of Canada. We will not rest until we hear it from the lips of the Prime Minister or the Minister of Defence. We will redouble our efforts in a nonpartisan way to make sure that justice is done. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to take part in this extremely important debate for all members of this House, for all parties and for all Manitobans.

This is truly a nonpartisan fight that must be fought on behalf of Manitobans if we are to have any chance to retain the space which is so important to the economy of Manitoba, particularly the rural economy at a time when it is faced with unprecedented pressures and is in a state of decline as a result of the weakened agricultural economy right across the country and a lack of attention from governments in rural areas, as well as the reductions and cutbacks in presence of services by governments, particularly the federal government, but both levels in this province.

So this would be a tremendous blow to our rural economy to lose this base. I know we are fighting an uphill battle here, because when we are in a political battle with Ottawa, inevitably we lose. It may sound very pessimistic to say that, but we have to be realistic and look at history.

Realistically, we do not really count in political decision making at this time at the national level. I wish we did. I think we have relatively weak representation at the national level, and we do not have the numbers. So we are left out of the political mainstream of decision making in this country, time and time again.

We have been left out when it comes to decisions on Churchill as a national port in this country. We have had to continue to fight. We have fought in a nonpartisan way with an all-party committee in the past, and we have been successful in averting, I believe, a closure of Churchill because of that. We have been less successful in other areas.

We have been less successful if we get together after the fact, such as with the CF-18 decision,

another political decision by the Conservative government. The Portage closure by the Mulroney government, again, an all-party committee getting together after the fact, after the decision was made. We have to take action before these decisions are made if, indeed, we have any chance of running those decisions off to the board and stopping them before, in fact, they get into the process to the extent that they cannot be reversed.

* (1520)

That is the only hope in this case, I submit. Our party, I believe, and all members I think agree, that is our only hope, to stop this before it gets to the final decision-making process, because once it is done there is very little that can be done to reverse it when we do not have the political clout in Ottawa.

We do not have to search very hard to find answers for the federal government as to where they can save money in this area. My colleague the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), who has taken up this cause with the same kind of enthusiasm that he has on many occasions in the past, is aware that this decision is in the process of being made. He has been told by many people that this is the case, and he realizes that there are alternatives. So, as unfair as it is for the minister, Mary Collins, to say, well, where should we save money, it is easy for us to find those answers.

If it was a nonpartisan type of process that was in place, that was employed to analyze exactly what should happen with military bases in this country, as it is, I am told, in the United States. There a public board is set up, and all interested people have an opportunity to come forward and make their case and bring forward information to that board. Then the President, still obviously a political person and political decision, gets a report that analyzes all of the merits, the pros and cons, of each particular base and the impact that it would have on the economy, and he can then make an intelligent and informed decision.

That is not done publicly in this country; it is done behind closed doors. They do not even know what the criteria is for their decisions. The minister cannot answer what they are looking for to make a decision, what kinds of things will they consider, so no one knows. No one could play that game fairly, obviously, because they do not know what information to bring forward. That is the way they are operating at the present time. I think it is

deplorable, but it is typical of this federal government, and I think it is going to be very difficult for us to turn this around. The only hope we have, of course, is that everyone does stick together and does make as much noise and make it as uncomfortable as possible for the federal government to, in fact, carry through with this kind of decision.

Where should they find the cuts? Downsview, Toronto—hundreds of millions of dollars of prime real estate in a downtown area that could be used for residential development. Why not? Why have a base there? What kind of sense does that make? They do not do it because it is political. It is as simple as that.

What about the bases in Europe, in Germany? What are we doing? Why are spending those billions of dollars at a time when we have got the iron curtain falling and the east European countries moving towards democracy, and the Soviet Union? Yes, we have to look at lowering that tremendous burden and cost on Canadian taxpayers. There is another alternative, and that is surely in the near future.

The Minister for Housing (Mr. Ernst) says, well, we keep living up to our commitments. It must be on the agenda in the near future to have those commitments dropped so that, in fact, Canada could save a considerable amount of money by reducing its obligation there. Why do we need to have it there when the cold war is essentially, well, it is ended, and democracy is coming to many of those countries in eastern Europe?

I think we have to learn from the CF-18 fiasco, and that is that while Jake Epp and Leo Duguay perhaps were trying behind closed doors to get things changed, essentially, while they lulled us to sleep in Manitoba and said, we are looking after this, the decision was being made, and we lost.

In this case, we cannot wait for our elected representatives to work behind closed doors to try and make a difference. It has to be done from the grassroots up, and we have to mobilize all of the people to protest, and in the limited numbers we have, we are going to have limited impact on the political process, but we have only that chance.

I am very afraid when I hear that it is a political decision because, in fact, we tend to lose in Manitoba when political decisions impact on the economy of this province. We lose time and time

again, and that means that we have very little chance through that history to make a difference this time. I say that we can work together, and we must in the future, on this issue and other important issues, as we did with Churchill, as we have tried to do in the CF-18, and as we have tried to do with the Portage base closure.

If we continue, if there is any sense of fairness whatsoever left in the federal government—I have my doubts, I have to say. I believe I am being realistic, not pessimistic, but I have to say that if there is any sense of fairness and decency at the federal level left in this Prime Minister and this Minister of Defence, who was not meeting and many say perhaps because of his vendetta against Manitoba, or response to the Meech Lake Accord dying, I would hope those kinds of things do not enter into it. It is really hard to explain, is it not, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the minister would come to Manitoba, be in Manitoba and would not consent to a meeting, even out of courtesy with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province and an all-party delegation to deal with a matter as important as that?

One can only assume that there is a lack of willingness, of understanding, of sympathy, of empathy, of decency at the federal level. In the absence of an explanation for his failure to meet, that there is a lack of fundamental respect for Manitoba, and that is the worst message I think that we have here before us, one of the reasons why we must renew our efforts in this area and continue to be enthusiastic fighters for this base if we are going to have any chance.

I urge all members to give this their strongest support—this request for a debate, I know that we have before us at the present time—in this fight, working with their constituents to mobilize grassroots support for retaining this important fundamental economic development function in the province of Manitoba, the base at Shilo.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to put some thoughts on the record on this issue.

I think that we have made a good start on the raising of public awareness of this issue, an issue that affects my constituency as well as the city of Brandon and all of southwestern Manitoba, that the CFB Shilo is the largest employer in rural Manitoba

and the economic impact of a negative decision on the base at Shilo would have a tremendous impact on all of Manitoba but particularly on communities such as Spruce Woods, the city of Brandon and other communities in southwestern Manitoba.

I am pleased that we have been able to work co-operatively on this issue with members of the New Democratic Party, members of the Liberal Party and colleagues on this side of the House, because I think that this is an issue that we must band together on to get the type of publicity to put forth the strong case that we all know we can for the retention of CFB Shilo.

So at this point in time, I am pleased that I have been a part of a rally at the gates of Camp Shilo just last week, that we have been able to mobilize support from the people who work there and live in that community and the City of Brandon and the R.M. of Cornwallis. This is an issue that affects all levels of government and it is incumbent upon all of us to draw this to the attention of federal politicians and the federal government so that they can make a positive political decision on this.

* (1530)

Others have spoken of the economic impact of a decision to close CFB Shilo, which has a payroll of \$120 million, and the impact on that area of the province. There is also a human impact. The community of Sprucewoods, which exists on the very borders of that base, is an area where hundreds of Manitobans live who work at the base or amongst the businesses which populate that area. These people face this threat, and I can tell you that I have been through this before.

I lived in Rivers at the time of the speculation of the close of the Rivers base in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. In many ways not knowing was worse than the final decision finally coming. I can tell you the government of that day did not make a clear and clean decision on that, but they let the decision take place over a number of years as businesses closed and anticipation of the closing of the base and the population drained away from that community and following that, very feeble attempts to put economic stability back in the community with a variety of proposals and projects at CFB Rivers at that time, all failed.

Now there is a farm operation located there, PMQs have been moved away, hangars have been destroyed. All that remains is a number of the

newer hangars that existed and quite a number of miles of runway which are still in excellent condition. The economic impact on southwestern Manitoba in that case, and on the community of Rivers and surrounding communities, is still being felt. We have schools existing there that are about a quarter full. We have other facilities at the base which are rotting. I can tell you that the devastation was very complete, and we do not want to see that happen again in the same area of Manitoba, in southwestern Manitoba, and have a major employer, a major base close. I say again, the economic impact would be devastating.

I am pleased that politicians in this House have joined with the mayor and City Council of Brandon, the reeve and councillors of the R.M. of Cornwallis. I can tell you from knowing those people personally, they will not be quiet, they will not be silent. They will be heard and I can tell you that the UMM is prepared to become involved with their membership to make the feelings of rural Manitoba known on this issue.

I think we should also look at the military aspect of this base, the suitability of CFB Shilo for what it does is unparalleled in this country. We have vast expanses there where the Canadian military have been training since 1934. I think it is important to note that that base has been in existence for many, many years. It was not one that sprung up because of the war effort but it has been there for a long time. Certainly aspects of warfare are changing, training is changing, but as long as we have ground troops and that type of armament, there is not a better place in Canada for that training to take place. That is recognized by military experts.

The personnel on the base at this time, prior to this discussion of closing the base, have frequently said what an important base Shilo is and what an excellent training site it is. The German military, who have used that base now for a dozen to 15 years, also extol the virtues of the training that they are able to do during the summer months in Shilo and are quite interested, I believe, in extending that training to the winter months. We recently have met with officials there where they have talked about the training runs that exist and the need for expanded runs. I can tell you, this government, and the role they play as the landlord of much of that territory, has been co-operative and indicated to Canadian military officials as well as German military officials that this government is prepared to work

co-operatively with the military establishments of both countries to extend the lease on that Crown land and to see that whatever the provincial government can do to maintain the existence of Shilo we will do.

My colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) has indicated that we have had meetings with Mary Collins and we appreciate her efforts to be here in Winnipeg and listen to our case.

I, too, lament the fact that we have the Defence minister in this vicinity today and in recent times, and I, too, wonder what business brings him to the city that could be more important than discussing this issue with provincial politicians. I realize that he has given the intention that he is prepared to meet with us in the near future, but we think the time is now and that his time should have been made available so that we could put our case forward. Again, I feel strongly that we have a collective voice here within this Chamber, and with the other level of government, the municipal level of governments that are involved. We will put a strong case forward to maintain this base.

I have concerns that military establishment are bringing forth their view on this and that senior military advisers who are firmly ensconced in Ottawa, Toronto, other urban areas and enjoying the amenities of those locations, do not perhaps see the military value of CFB Shilo. We feel strongly if this decision is made on a military basis that Shilo will measure up very well to other bases across this country. If the decision by the military is made by some officers in the bureaucracy who, as I said earlier, enjoy the amenities of Ottawa, Toronto and other urban areas, if they are making the decision on that basis, it is wrong.

I take some comfort in the fact that there will be a political decision made and that the political importance of CFB Shilo and the importance of Shilo to Manitoba and to Canada will be taken into consideration. We would like to reaffirm our support along with other members of this Chamber to meet with federal politicians from Manitoba and members of the federal cabinet to state our case.

I think Manitoba has already done its share. I reference the closure of the base at Rivers back in the early '70s. We have recently seen the closures in Gimli, in Portage, Kapyong Barracks and we are going to be down to very, very few installations in this province. A previous speaker had indicated

that there would not be a similar base between southern Ontario and Alberta. There are many good reasons for maintaining this base in Shilo.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am aware that time is important here. Again, I think that there is a good feeling of co-operation that exists amongst members in this House and municipal politicians, and I look forward to putting our case for it very strongly at the federal level and looking forward to a positive resolution of this issue.

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure—I should not say pleasure—but it gives me pleasure to speak on this subject this afternoon, and the fact that three parties are involved collectively, together, to support the nonclosure of Shilo.

It has been brought up a couple of times in the House, and the people of Manitoba are concerned, especially the people of Brandon. It has been said in the Winnipeg Free Press just on May 31, that: Closing the base, the largest employer in rural Manitoba with some 700 civilian jobs, would devastate the economy not only in the adjacent town of Sprucewoods, but in Brandon and all of southwestern Manitoba, Mr. Molsberry warned.

I think it is important that we as politicians work together against this closure of Shilo, especially when every day we hear about rural Manitoba, the farmers and lack of jobs all through the rural areas. This base is important in Brandon especially, a city where we were just a couple of days ago with the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme) and the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). Whenever we go to Brandon, it is such a nice city.

* (1540)

Again, in talking to the seniors in Brandon—there are a lot of seniors who have retired in Brandon. We need these jobs in the area of Brandon to keep the economy of this city of Manitoba. If we close a base like Shilo, what happens to the city of Brandon? Does it become a ghost town like many of our mining towns that were booming towns in the past? You close these mining centres, and what happens? These towns become ghost towns, and we can name several in Manitoba.

This is not what we want for Brandon or the surrounding areas, especially when you look at their 700 civilian jobs and all the military base people who

are there and the economy that it has on a city like Brandon.

For example, just last week the Premier (Mr. Filmon) hosted the welcome home for the military base people who had gone to the Persian Gulf War. When we visited these people here in the Legislature, in talking to them we noticed many of them came from Quebec, Francophones. What does it do also for the culture of Manitoba? We are proud to be a bilingual province, and something like a closure of the base would affect this also in that respect.

Last year, for example, I went to the Morris Stampede for a day. In meeting people—I was not campaigning, I was just meeting people that I happened to be talking to. I met some people who were from the Shilo base. They were from Germany, had been there for a year, and they were on their way back a couple of weeks later. They indicated the good times and how they had enjoyed being in Shilo. They were sorry to say that they were leaving in a couple of weeks, and they were enjoying again the south of Manitoba by going to our Stampede.

When you have these people from other countries who come on these military bases, what does it do for the economy? When they are stationed in these areas like Shilo or Portage, these people visit Manitoba, because it is a great province. We have a lot to offer as a tourist industry. If we were to close Shilo, it would affect our tourist industry also.

We do not want to see the same thing happen in Shilo that has happened in Portage. When they decided to close Portage, I think it was too late, but at this time with the people being involved, the politicians being involved right away, we can send a message to Ottawa to our Prime Minister of Canada that Manitoba is united and they want to keep Shilo. It is important for Manitoba.

I think when you see that a group of three parties had met with the assistant to Marcel Masse the other day, we can see that we are united. This message has to be passed on to the Prime Minister of Canada and I think to Marcel Masse. It is important to let him know that we are united here in this Chamber, and I think we have the people of Manitoba behind the politicians of Manitoba.

We cannot afford to lose Shilo, and we should fight to the end of this, so that we make sure Shilo is not lost to Manitoba. It is important because I

think human lives are touched, families. We look at Shilo, those 700 civilians, what do we do with them? We do not want them on the welfare roll, no, we want them to work. They want to work, these people, but some of them, how old are they out of these, 50, 55? Where will they find a job? We know that it is hard to find a job nowadays without closing a base like Shilo that employs so many civilians. It is important not only for Brandon, but for rural Manitoba, especially in the southwestern part of Manitoba.

In conclusion, I would ask that we keep on fighting, and we all support it. We talked to our people in Manitoba, in our own constituency. We make them aware of what is happening and that we do not let it happen like it happened at Portage just a couple years ago. I think it is important, and I am sure as we stand here united this afternoon in having this MUPI to go through in the Legislature to discuss this important issue that we will continue to fight. Let us make our people aware in Manitoba in each of our constituencies, so that we continue to fight for the people of Brandon and rural Manitoba especially. I think we all feel for the people of rural Manitoba.

It does not matter. When we will speak with one voice and let the Prime Minister of Canada know that we are united and we will keep being united for the nonclosure of Shilo.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to join with the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) and the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and other members of this Chamber in raising the concerns and the support for the CFB—

An Honourable Member: And the member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Reid: —and other members of the Chamber in support of CFB Shilo. Manitoba has been put into a position where it has to once again defend its interests with the federal government. We have seen many conditions, situations over the past number of years, Madam Deputy Speaker, where we have to defend Manitoba's interest with the federal Government.

Manitoba has lost six bases over the years, and once again we are put in a position where we have to defend against the loss of another one of our bases. Gypsumville, Gimli, Rivers, Portage, Kapyong and Churchill are among the bases that have been lost to Manitoba. Now CFB Shilo may

be in a position where it too may be added to that list.

Many of the speakers here today have talked about the employment that CFB Shilo means to Manitoba, to the communities of Brandon and the surrounding area, of the 1,000 military personnel that are employed on this base and the 700 civilian jobs that are related to Shilo. If CFB Shilo closes, it will have far reaching impact upon Brandon and southwestern Manitoba and the Manitoba economy in general. Shilo, as many members here have stated today, is the largest employer in rural Manitoba. With the closure of this base it will have a devastating impact upon the economy of Manitoba.

We have seen through the course of the last few years, Madam Deputy Speaker, other areas, as members who have spoken before I have indicated, losses to the province of Manitoba. The CF-18 fiasco that was brought upon the province of Manitoba and the loss of employment that it meant for this province, and now Manitoba is put in a position where it has to struggle to move back into a position where we want to bring back to Manitoba high-tech jobs. The CF-18 contract would have provided that solution and support to bring those high tech jobs to Manitoba.

We have also seen many other areas where we have lost jobs that have been as a result of political decisions that have been taken by the federal government. CN Rail itself has transferred jobs out of Winnipeg, out of its headquarters in Winnipeg to the province of Alberta. Those jobs, of course, have gone into the province where at the time the Minister of Transportation happened to be Mr. Mazankowski. Even though the federal government denied that those jobs were being transferred, Madam Deputy Speaker, those jobs nevertheless did disappear from Manitoba.

We are afraid now that those CFB Shilo jobs will also disappear to Alberta. That will have a devastating impact on the Manitoba economy just as the loss of the CN jobs and the CF-18 jobs did for this province.

* (1550)

A couple of months back I had the opportunity to travel to the community of Churchill. Churchill used to be a thriving community that had a military base there. There was upwards of 6,000 people who were living in the community of Churchill, many of

them employed by the base that was there. When we visited that base there were only less than 1,000 remaining residents in the community of Churchill. That community had been devastated by the removal of the military base from that community. Not only that, the facilities that were provided by the base were bulldozed. Those facilities were no longer there to be utilized by the community. So this community had been devastated by the removal of the base. That is the fear that all members have here today, that if the CFB Shilo base is allowed to be removed from the province of Manitoba, Brandon and the surrounding communities will suffer the same consequences that the community of Churchill has suffered.

Many of the speakers here today have talked about the German military presence on CFB Shilo, the training of the German soldiers on the base. The agreement with the Canadian government is due to expire in 1993, Madam Deputy Speaker. In my discussions that I have had over this past weekend with members of the military, they have indicated to me that there is a good possibility the German government will not renew their contract with the Government of Canada. Therefore, we will see the German training pull out of the base at Shilo. That too will have a devastating blow upon Shilo itself. I think it is important for the Government of Canada to take the necessary steps to have our military presence, the Canadian military presence, maintained in CFB Shilo.

What we are asking here today, in an all-party nonpartisan way, is for the federal government to recognize that Manitoba has paid its fair share by the loss of the bases in Manitoba and the loss of other facilities and institutions in the province of Manitoba, and that it is time to spread that to the other areas of Canada and let them pay as well.

The previous speaker, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), had indicated that there was a possibility that these losses we have had in Manitoba may have been a result of Manitoba's decision on the Meech Lake Accord. I hope that is not the case and that the federal government is not, in this sense, looking to punish Manitoba for the decision that we have made here in this province.

I join with all members of this Chamber, with all members of the community of Brandon and the surrounding communities that will be seriously impacted should the federal government decide to remove this base, and call upon the federal

government to make the right decision and to keep Shilo as a viable, active part of the Canadian military establishment in Canada. Thank you.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, I too wanted to put a few words on the record regarding this very important matter, not only to Shilo and to Brandon, as some previous speakers have said before me, but this rumour that has been going about Manitoba for the last number of days has scared a great deal of Manitobans, whether you live in Brandon, Shilo, Winnipeg, wherever you might live, because Manitobans realize the importance, the role that the Shilo base plays in our society, not only economically but also socially.

I had made reference to, in speaking for the MUPI just shortly after Question Period, in terms of the impact, and we talk about the economic impact of a base like Shilo closing, where we have over 1,000 military personnel with an estimated payroll of \$43.5 million, estimated 400 nonmilitary public employees estimated at \$19.7 million. We have 200 nonpublic employees, mess staff, et cetera, employees of that nature, \$1.7 million.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you could go on in terms of all of the direct and indirect jobs that are created because of Shilo being where it is, and to see the base close, we would see a severe, devastating impact to rural Manitoba and particularly towns and villages, in fact, cities that are located right around the base Shilo.

We have seen in the past, Madam Deputy Speaker, base closures, where we had base closures in Sydney, Nova Scotia; Manitaw (phonetic), Quebec; Summerside, P.E.I.; London, Ontario; Portage in Manitoba; Holbrook in B.C. Then we had further reductions in which we have seen Gander, Newfoundland; New Brunswick; Ontario, in Ottawa; North Bay in Ontario; CFB Winnipeg South here in Manitoba; Camp Penhold in Alberta.

Manitoba has had a fair share of military reduction over the past year, year and a half, that we cannot afford to lose yet another base, that base in particular being Shilo. We take a look at what happened when we had the announcement that Portage la Prairie was going to be phased out, and it was estimated that the cost was going to be nearly 800 jobs, approximately 500 military, 184 civilian. The economic impact in terms of the city was \$450,000 a year in property tax lost to the city of

Portage, \$330,000 lost in school taxes for our school divisions. The potential of an additional 17 percent of other local jobs being lost indirectly, a potential loss of 17 percent of Portage's disposable income.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we could debate the figures and percentages that are going to come as a direct result of the base in Shilo being closed, and I believe that we can bring forward an argument to the federal government that Shilo is not one of the bases that they should be looking at in terms of closure, that that rumour should be put to rest, and it can be put to rest if in fact either the minister, the current Minister of National Defence, so chose, or in fact our Prime Minister decided to make the decision which I believe he knows is in Canada's best interest, and that is to allow the base Shilo to continue on.

Earlier this week, we had an all-party committee that met with the Associate Minister of National Defence. We were very concerned as the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) pointed out, that there were no criteria set out in what bases will be closed, so it really makes us wonder in terms of how are we supposed to make our case. Does in fact the current national government want to hear our arguments as to why we believe that it is important that Shilo be here today and tomorrow?

The minister had also made reference, even though they will be listening to recommendations from within the department, from within the Canadian Forces branches and so forth, that ultimately that it is going to be a political decision.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that concerns us a great deal, because we have seen political decisions made from the government we currently have. Manitoba has not fared well under those political decisions. One only needs to look at the whole CF-18. Many Manitobans have not forgotten that.

* (1600)

At times, national leaders do something that stick with the government, and that is one of those issues that will stick with different leaders, different things. In particular, with this government, the awarding of the CF-18 contract is something that sticks in the minds of individuals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, another issue would be the closure. If this government, the federal government, chose to close the base out in Shilo, that would go down in history as one of those things that will not be easily forgotten. Many rural

Manitobans will not forget that when the next federal election comes around.

I do want to conclude on making the remarks that it is important in this Chamber that we have a united force, that we try to depoliticize it as much as we can within this Chamber, but we speak as one voice representing all of Manitoba and stand up for what is in Manitoba's best interest and put forward our arguments in the best manner in which we can in one voice to the national government. Let us hope that someday soon we will hear from the national government that Base Shilo will remain. Thank you.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased, too, to join into the debate here.

It is about time that Manitobans and Manitoba governments have recognized the value of military establishments in this province. It is about time that we tell the military they are welcome here. It is about time that we recognize the value, the economic benefit that military establishments in this province provide for the people of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not only time, it is long past time, because they have not had that co-operation in the past. They have not had that welcoming feeling in the past. That is one of the reasons why, I think, the Premier decided to welcome the people from the Canadian armed forces who served in the Gulf, to tell the people of the military that they are welcome in Manitoba. We value their service, we value the economic benefit, we value what they do in this province.

As a young person, I grew up very, very close to the Winnipeg International Airport, and I went to school with military kids whose parents were in the armed forces, and I know very well the kind of contribution that they make to our community and certainly Shilo is no different. Shilo presents an enormous economic benefit for people of Westman, Brandon and vicinity.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was a little concerned when the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) stood up and said, let us pull our troops out of Europe and have the money spent here. Well, we have 5,000 German troops on the base in Shilo every year. Those people rotate about 600 at a time every three weeks. That is 5,000 tourists in the province of Manitoba. The economic benefit from Germany that is conferred on that base is practically as equal as the Canadian military.

I think what we have to do is more than just the Canadian base, more than just the Canadian presence there, we have to recognize, too, that the German presence there provides us with an enormous economic benefit. It is something, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I think may well be the key to the saving of Shilo.

It may well be the key that if we can convince the Canadian government, if we can somehow be able to make contact with the German government to tell them that we want their troops here, we want them to train here, we want them to come here every year, we want them for their economic benefit and that they are welcome here—we cannot do that, Madam Deputy Speaker, if we suggest to them we are not going to honour our NATO commitments. That is what the member for Dauphin wanted us to do.

Point of Order

Mr. Plohman: Madam Deputy Speaker, unfortunately, this minister is getting sidetracked off the issues of nonpartisan debate here.

My point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that the minister has incorrectly paraphrased what I said. I think that is not becoming of him, and he should withdraw those statements because I did not say to close the debate, the NATO debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Dauphin does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over facts.

* * *

Mr. Ernst: Madam Deputy Speaker, if I misunderstood the member for Dauphin, I apologize. I am pleased at the spirit of nonpartisanship in this Chamber today, to see that the New Democratic Party is supporting the Canadian military. I am very pleased to see the members from the NDP standing up and supporting the Canadian military, the fact that the Canadian army, the Canadian air force and the Canadian navy are important parts of this country and provide economic benefits, provide a wide variety of those elements to the people of Manitoba. That has been a significant change for them, and I appreciate that.

It is important from a wide variety of reasons. The reasons that I have indicated during the short time that I have had to address the Chamber, that we do work together, that we support the position of maintenance of military bases like Shilo, certainly

Shilo, both the Canadian military aspect of Shilo and the foreign military aspect of Shilo so that we enjoy the benefits of both—those activities both provide enormous economic benefits to the people of Westman.

So I am pleased, Madam Deputy Speaker, to speak on behalf of our party and I am sure to join with the members of the New Democratic Party and the members of the Liberal Party, in supporting a very worthwhile initiative in an effort to ensure that that base particularly, and the rest of the bases in Manitoba, remain in Manitoba. Thank you.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that nobody else is speaking on this debate. Is that correct?

Mr. Speaker: Is there anybody else wishing to participate in this debate? No? The debate is concluded.

House Business

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, in consultation with the other House leaders, I propose that we spend the rest of the day in discussing bills. Therefore, I call the three bills. I will call Bill 38, Bill 6 and Bill 44 at this point in time.

I would further ask whether there is a willingness to waive private members' hour so we could discuss the many bills in front of us.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? Agreed?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is no agreement.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BIII 38—The Wildlife Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), Bill 38, The Wildlife Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune, standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Stand? Is there leave?

I have just called Bill 38, The Wildlife Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member

for Swan River. Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, in terms of Bill 38, our caucus has completed its comments and is willing to pass it through to committee.

Mr. Speaker: There is no leave to allow standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River.

Leave is denied.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 6—The Mines and Minerals and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), Bill 6, The Mines and Minerals and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les mines et les minéraux et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives, standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Stand? Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is no leave. The honourable member for Inkster has lost his opportunity to speak.

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Inkster, who adjourned debate so I could speak on the bill.

This is a very important bill that has been a long time in the making. I think it is 60 years since there was an overhaul of the mines and minerals act. It is a very long time for an outdated statute to be on the books, so we welcome the initiative taken by the Minister of Energy and Mines and of the government to update the bill and make it more current.

* (1610)

I should say that if you were to look at the results of elections in northern Manitoba over the last number of years, you will see that our party has not done all that well regrettably. Some of the numbers from the northern constituencies are not quite as fulsome as we would like them to be, but I want to make it perfectly clear to members of the House that in spite of the fact that the people of northern Manitoba have not en masse supported our party,

we care about them, Mr. Speaker, and we care about the elements of this bill that are put forward.

It gives us an opportunity to talk about the importance of the mining industry in Manitoba, and while the economy of our province is diversified and therefore insulated from the booms and the busts of the economic cycle, the same cannot be true of the mining industry, which is very much dependent on the international price of minerals. We can see through the funds that are flowed into the provincial treasury over the last number of years that, in fact, tens of millions of dollars will flow or will not flow into the coffers of our province, depending on the health of the mining industry. The health of that industry is often dependent on things over which the government has very little control. The international price of copper, of zinc, of nickel is a huge factor as we determine just what revenues will flow into the provincial coffers.

So it is not a minor matter that we are debating here. We are debating an industry of major importance to the province, and the spirit and the intent of the legislation should be to encourage a particular kind of mining development, a development that is sustainable, to use the words of the bill and to use the words of the minister.

There are some very important principles that are contained within the bill. The first, I suppose, is really one of process and of what ought to be in legislation and what ought not to be. One of the major changes of approach that the government has used is to take a whole bunch of regulations and include them within the statute itself. The government has chosen in its wisdom to go that route for greater certainty and to take out political decisions or, I should say, cabinet decisions from the operations of many aspects of the mining industry. We think that is generally a good strategy, and we support the government in trying to make the bill say much more than the previous mining act did.

That is why we find it a little odd that on the question of protecting Winnipeg's water supply, the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) has left it to regulation. It is particularly odd when you see that the thrust of this mining bill is to include more and more in the legislation itself, and, at the same time, the Minister of Environment, on a matter as important as the security of Winnipeg's water supply, chooses to go the route of regulation rather than the route of legislation. We do not understand

the logic of that, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly as important as many of the clauses in the new mining bill, yet the government, in its wisdom, has decided to leave to regulation a constraint on development within one kilometre of Shoal Lake itself.

This is not an issue that is going to go away, Mr. Speaker, because the opposition will not let it, and there are many people within our community including, I might add, the City of Winnipeg Council, which passed a resolution just a few days ago that said: The City of Winnipeg most vigorously requests that the Province of Manitoba prohibit any person from carrying on any mining exploration or development as defined under the mining act or any other related mining activity including the staking of mining claims anywhere within any part of the Shoal Lake watershed governed by Manitoba.

So the government should expect that our party will put forward an amendment to the mining act to ensure that Winnipeg's water supply is protected not through regulation, but through legislation.

An Honourable Member: As it should be.

Mr. Carr: As it should be and as the government has determined it wise to do in a whole wide variety of areas covered by this major overhaul of the mining act.

Of course, our party has documented over the last number of years the importance we attach to protecting Winnipeg's water supply. Many members in this Chamber will remember the former member for Wolseley, Harold Taylor, a fine member, Mr. Speaker, who was on to this question back as far as September of 1989. There are a whole number of press releases, position papers that our party has put forward, and we have been consistent on this from the beginning that this is not an area that should be treated lightly. It is an area that deserves the attention of the government to give it greater certainty. We believe that protection should be enshrined in the legislation.

The bill talks about sustainable development, and it is hard to talk about sustainable development in the mining context. As the Brundtland commission stated, and I quote: Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

How can that definition be consistent with the objective of mining which, by its very nature, is an industry that wants to take out the minerals from the

ground, presumably, until there are no minerals left. So we cannot leave to future generations the condition of mining activity the way the principle of sustainable development would have us do.

So I think that the words that are used, both in the act and in speeches, are really not appropriate. We may be talking about environmentally sensitive mining. We may be talking about a reformed approach to the industry, but we are not, in the true sense of the word, talking about sustainable development.

We also note that there is no reference in the bill, Mr. Speaker, to communities. We know that the industry and the government has a role to play, and we applaud the initiative, but there is no mention of the role of communities in defining sustainable development. Why not? Should communities that are affected not have the say in the way in which mines are rehabilitated and the whole process outlined in this bill for the checks and balances on mining activity?

We see that the bill talks about mineral management areas, and the concept, presumably, is to set aside tracks of Crown land, tracks of provincial land, for the purposes of mining and mineral exploration and development. We know that there could be some conflict between the Department of Energy and Mines and Parks and Natural Resources as to the kind of land use which would be permitted.

So we would want to ask the minister just what mechanism has there been established within the government to assure that when there is conflict between the use of Crown land as it affects Natural Resources and Parks or with the ability of the government to set aside lands for mineral development and exploration? Who wins? What is the conflict-breaking mechanism, and who will determine exactly how provincial lands will be used?

* (1620)

We also wonder if there is any conflict with aboriginal land claims. What happens if there is a conflict between a mineral management area, as determined by the province, and a Native land claim? How will that be determined? Who will ultimately decide what claim—no pun intended—takes precedence and priority? These are unanswered questions.

We know there is an endangered spaces campaign currently organized in our province. We

think there must be greater clarification about the effect of setting aside mineral management areas as they could potentially conflict with environmental groups and their interests with Native land claims and with prior claims on those lands from Parks and Natural Resources.

We see there is a Minerals Research Advisory Council that is put in place. We applaud that. We applaud it, Mr. Speaker, because the government has determined that it ought to surround itself with the best technical expertise that is available in the province. This can be found presumably in universities, in research institutes and elsewhere. We think this is a model that should not only be used in the context of mineral development and the mining industry in our province but in all kinds of different other sectors.

Why would we not want to take advantage of expertise in our own community, those people who are intimately knowledgeable about a particular sector, and bring them into the councils of decision making so that the government has at its disposal the most current, up-to-date, advanced and appropriate expertise available to it?

We know that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), for example, has an advisory network and, presumably, the members are appointed to that advisory network on the basis of how they can contribute to the public policy process, how they can advise the minister on issues that are related to health care. The same is true of the Minerals Research Advisory Council, and we think it is a good idea. The act says that they do not have any powers of decision making, they just have powers of an advisory council. We believe that is appropriate.

There are, however, a great number of powers given to the mining board. The mining board is to consist of at least three individuals. It has enormous powers to review decisions that are taken by the ministry, in particular, the director of mines whose powers are enunciated in the act. In the case of conflict, that will go to the mining board for arbitration and for decision in case of conflict.

We also want to point out in this regard that the director of mines is given sweeping authority in the act. Rarely do you see so much power vested within one public servant and defined within the bill itself. There is an appeal mechanism, and we think there ought to be, and that is an appeal to the mining board itself and, presumably, the minister who

would reserve the right, ultimately, to decide in cases of conflict.

We are a little concerned about the power of one individual who takes on the title of director in mines, and we are glad the oversight exists in the act. We would want the minister to be ever mindful of the powers that he has given to the director of mines.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very technical bill. It is about 150 pages or so. The reason that it is so complex and comprehensive is because the government has decided to move regulations into the statute, and also because this act has not been substantially amended for the past 60 years.

As you cast your mind back to 1931, you can only imagine what the mining industry must have been like in Manitoba. Certainly, when I think of it, I conjure up images—

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): What was it like, Jim, when you were there?

Mr. Carr: Well, the Minister of Health wants to know what it was like when I was there. In 1931, I was far, far away from northern Manitoba and so was the Minister of Health, but others presumably were there and in other parts of the province prospecting for minerals, maybe even prospecting for a little gold. It conjures up all kinds of folkloric images of wizened veterans with five or six days of stubble on their beards looking for their moment in the sun to head into the depths of the earth and pull out valuable minerals, and that has been done very effectively in our province.

We have seen some very responsible corporate management of the resources we have in northern Manitoba, and particularly in Thompson, where the Inco company has been a very responsible corporate citizen, where they have taken the profits which have accrued to them as a result of very favourable international conditions with the commodity prices for nickel, and they have shared the wealth literally with their employees.

We think that Inco ought to be congratulated for taking that approach. They have determined that it is, after all, the employees who extract the minerals from the ground. It is to the employees that some of the benefits of the fortunate international situation should flow.

We now know that there will be a further investment in the community of Thompson of several hundred millions of dollars, which will ensure the continuing employment of literally hundreds of

people, maybe thousands of people in that community. We applaud the responsible corporate citizenship.

We also look at Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting in Flin Flon. We see that we are awaiting a decision by the Government of Canada and the government of Manitoba on an expenditure of, in total, I believe, some \$160 million to upgrade the mine in Flin Flon in order to meet more stringent environmental requirements by January of 1994. We now have on the table an offer to purchase Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting, and we want to know what the status of that offer is and where the commitment is from the government of Manitoba and the Government of Canada?

I believe the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) has said that as much as \$55 million has been put on the table by the Province of Manitoba. We are anxious to know if the federal government is going to kick in its \$25 million to make sure that the resources are available to upgrade the mine, because there are, again, thousands of jobs at stake. We would like to see that confirmed, finally, rather than surrounding the issue with uncertainty and a little bit of confusion.

We would like to see that that is cleared up, so that the people of Flin Flon will have some security as they look ahead to the prospects of their own mine over the next number of years.

The process of determining what is going to be and not going to be in this legislation was an interesting one, Mr. Speaker. I know that the minister and his officials consulted quite broadly on the issue. We have had our own discussions with industry officials and others who are generally supportive of the bill.

We can support the three or four major principles which are embodied within it. We support the advisory council. We support the mining board. We can support the movement from regulation to legislation. There are a number of technical issues which are embodied within the bill that we will look at during the committee stage when we go through this rather complex and technical piece of legislation clause by clause.

Our position in the Liberal Party is to generally support the thrust of the minister's initiative. We will offer an amendment in order to give greater certainty and protection to Shoal Lake. We do not think there ought to be any mining on Shoal Lake. We ought to

ban mining through legislation, so that there is greater certainty to the people of Manitoba who depend on their very survival on the purity of the Shoal Lake waters.

Mr. Speaker, while the Liberal Party does not have a huge political stake, at least up to now, in northern Manitoba—

An Honourable Member: Not yet.

Mr. Carr: —not yet. We continue to work away at it. We know how important the mining industry is to our province. In spite of the fact that many Northerners have not seen fit to vote for the Liberal Party, we care about the North. We care about the mining industry and its health throughout the province. We think that this bill goes a long way to rationalize a process. We think this bill does a pretty good job of putting into legislation those issues which were left to regulation or which had not been amended for 60 years.

We look forward to the opportunity of looking at the bill in more detail when it goes to committee and for now, Mr. Speaker, that concludes our remarks on Bill 6.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Energy and Mines, closing debate.

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I put my thoughts on Bill 6 on the table when I introduced the bill, but I will add a few more at this point.

I want to thank, first of all, the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) for their co-operation in bringing this bill through the House and into committee.

As has been mentioned, Mr. Speaker, a new Mines Act is long overdue. It is some 40 to 60 years since the last one was introduced. Since that time, we have operated with regulations. As I have said, it is long overdue and we are happy to present it to this Chamber at this time.

* (1630)

I should mention that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) indicated that we have asked for lands to be set aside for the sole purpose of mining. The reason we have asked for this is that Parks has land set aside for their sole purposes; Natural Resources has land set aside for their purposes. What we are asking for is approximately

10 percent of the land mass of Manitoba. That is the extent of the land mass that is available for mining to us that has a possibility or a potential for mining. What we are asking for is approximately 10 percent of the land mass in Manitoba to be set aside so that exploration and mining can be done in it without fear of interruption or interference from Parks or Natural Resources. We do not think that is to onerous a position to take.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) indicated that we should include in the act a section on Shoal Lake that no mining could be done in Shoal Lake. Mr. Speaker, on the Manitoba side of the Ontario border, the leases have all expired, and it is not our intention to issue new leases in that area, so that I think we have covered that off.

I would like to quote Mr. Wint Newman, the executive secretary of the Manitoba mining association. He has said of this new act, and I quote—Newman says: A recent revision to the Manitoba Mines Act was helpful to companies in the industry, as it made some of the rules for mining in the province more lucid. We believe it will be helpful to attracting investment, he says. The government has made a very good effort to address some of our concerns.

One of the industry's concerns was that a proper lease document was not spelled out in The Mines Act. The new act spells this out. The new act also spells out the new environmental regulations for the mining industry in Manitoba and outlines what must be done to clean up a mine site after operations cease. These new regulations recognize the time in which we live.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I recommend this act be taken to committee for more detailed review. I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 6, The Mines and Minerals and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les mines et les minéraux et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 44—The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and

Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), Bill 44, The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Régie des services publics, standing in the name of honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Agreed.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable government House leader, what are your intentions, sir?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, will you call Bill 70, please?

Bill 70—The Public Sector Compensation Management Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill 70, The Public Sector Compensation Management Act; Loi sur la gestion des salaires du secteur public, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying yesterday in my prologue before I was so rudely interrupted by the clock as I was just beginning to begin my preliminary comments, indeed as I was just beginning to get warmed up, and despite a few interruptions that interrupted my flow considerably in terms of points of order, which were actually appreciated for reasons which the member may not have understood at the time that he raised the point of order, indeed, I will sum up what I said yesterday, and what I will say today, and what I will say tomorrow and what I will say whenever, because the implications of this bill are so sweeping, so sweeping that they go to the heart of labour relations, tenets in terms of labour relations, principles that have been placed in Canada since the 1940s. This government is now violating them.

I talked yesterday in brief terms and looked at only the situation essential for most of my comments basing those who had applied for final offer selection, those who had taken the word of the Finance minister (Mr. Manness) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and had followed the final offer selection process that is in place in Manitoba and show just how there were no principles that were

being imposed by the government in dealing with those employees.

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

They are but a small percentage, significant, yes, but a small percentage of the number of Manitoba workers who are being affected by this bill, a bill that goes far further than simply violating the signed agreement from the government House leader and the two opposition House leaders, a signed agreement which said that they would have access to final offer selection.

An Honourable Member: . . . longer, if you do not shout so much.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, to the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), I will try in whatever way I can to communicate to members of the government at whatever volume in whatever way.

I threw out the suggestion and perhaps—well, I do not think the member for Brandon West, who became well known when he was the Labour critic for the Conservative Party in the period that we were in opposition after 1966 for proposing many of the changes, I might say, that I am so concerned about in terms of this bill. The member for Brandon West, perhaps in ignorance, but whatever way, was suggesting changes that would have rolled back labour legislation to the 1940s.

An Honourable Member: And right-wing ideology.

Mr. Ashton: Right-wing ideology, indeed. As was expressed by the member for Brandon West—and I remember some of the debates that we had at the time, concerns about the whole question, for example, of right-to-work legislation. I remember -(interjection)-

Well, to the Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), when it comes to a matter of principle, when it comes to protecting the collective bargaining process that has evolved out of 40 years and 50 years of hard struggle by working people for recognition in legislation, we indeed will keep on speaking. We will keep on speaking until this government realizes the errors of its ways.

To the minister, we will not abandon principles that have been in place since the 1940s, principles that even Sterling Lyon accepted. Even Sterling Lyon realized when he was Premier, as right wing

as he was, as reactionary as he was, as regressive that he was, that he should not touch some of the fundamental principles of labour legislation in this province and, indeed, he did not.

My predecessor the former MLA for Thompson, Ken MacMaster, was involved with a lot of things I did not agree with in terms of the North, in terms of policies, but as the Minister of Labour even he did not—

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): A fine fellow.

Mr. Ashton: Indeed, a fine fellow, says the member for Brandon West. Well, I will say that he was a fine fellow for not introducing the kind of regressive right-wing ideology we are seeing from this government on a daily basis in terms of labour legislation and that is what is the root of the issue, to the Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) and to any other members.

I think the Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs best summed up the whole attitude of the Conservatives. They have piously said that they do not have a political agenda. There is not one member of this Legislature who does not believe that this action in introducing Bill 70 is nothing more than a political move. It is complete, absolute, 100 percent, unadulterated politics.

The Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs knows that. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), they are out to find the scapegoat for their own economic incompetence—their own economic incompetence. This bill should be called "The Scapegoat Bill." It should be called "The Scapegoat-of-the-Week Bill" because this government will find others in the upcoming weeks. It has found others, and I mentioned this yesterday in terms of those who are on social assistance, those who are students, those who are unemployed, those who are residents of northern Manitoba, those who are residents in some of the rural areas who did not happen to vote for this government, those who reside in certain areas of the city who did not happen to vote for this government.

Call this if you will, Bill 70, "The Scapegoat Bill," because that is what this government is attempting to do. It is attempting, in a way that is absolutely insidious, to destroy the collective bargaining process in the desperate attempt to find somebody

to blame for their own incompetence. They are grasping at straws, they are grasping at anything because they go down with the economy that is also going down on a daily and a weekly and a monthly basis in this province.

Do you know what amazes me, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the degree to which they will go to convince themselves that what they are doing is right and proper and correct? I look at some of the more recent statements. This is on a daily basis that we see this. The Premier suggested that every time the government sat down, that there was only bargaining from the government side; there was no bargaining from the union side. He made reference to a number of particular bargaining units. Do you know what the Premier said, Mr. Acting Speaker, which I find rather interesting? He said that was one of the reasons they brought in this bill, because there was really no collective bargaining anyway. Everybody was going to final offer selection and arbitration.

How many Manitoba workers, who were included in the net of this draconian bill, have not gone to arbitration, have not gone to final offer selection, have continued to bargain in good faith? I ask that question to this government, because the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), if he does not know yet, should understand and realize that there are many workers who have not accessed final offer selection or arbitration who have been caught by this particular bill. They are affected by this bill and yet the Premier in Question Period yesterday, in comments the day before, the comments I am sure he will keep repeating, seems to put that erroneous, unfactual—I hate to even call it information, Mr. Acting Speaker, because it is not true. The Premier has not put truth on the record in terms of that situation, has not been telling the truth.

The bottom line is, there are many Manitoba workers who are impacted who have not accessed final offer selection and have not accessed arbitration. Do you know what is even worse than that complete and blatant example of the Premier and the Finance minister not understanding what is happening has been the suggestion that there is something wrong with those workers accessing final offer selection and arbitration? I indicated yesterday, Mr. Acting Speaker, when arbitration was introduced—was it introduced by a socialist government? Was it introduced by the Schreyer government or the Pawley government? No. It was

introduced by Duff Roblin. It has been in place for close to 30 years. Up until this point, agreements have been able to be achieved without the kind of situation that has developed, but it has been in place. What does it provide an alternative to? It provides an alternative to those employees going out on strike.

Is the Premier suggesting that is irresponsible on behalf of the MGEA, or is he suggesting that going to arbitration instead of going on strike is irresponsible? Would he rather the government employees were on strike? Would he rather force them out on the picket line as did his Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) the nurses? Would he rather force them out on the picket line as did the Minister of Health and the operating engineers? Would that be the responsible course?

Is that the Premier's version of collective bargaining in the 1990s? Does the Premier honestly believe that we would be better off with people being out on strike than trying to settle their differences when they cannot be settled at the bargaining table through final offer selection and arbitration, where each side gets to present its case, where each side can appeal to a neutral, objective arbitrator, a selector? What is the vision that this Premier has, if any, for labour relations in Manitoba?

Would he rather, Mr. Acting Speaker, because of his bills such as Bill 70, see us go to a situation where we have, if you like, the law of the jungle prevail for collective bargaining in Manitoba? Is that what the Premier (Mr. Filmon) wants? Does he want us to lose our position as having the second lowest strike rate in Canada which we have traditionally had, thanks to many of the improvements to labour legislation that have taken place in the last 40 years? Would he rather see us do that? I ask that question because that was our concern when this government moved to get rid of final offer selection.

We said it is an alternative to strikes. It builds on the co-operative nature of labour relations that by and large has been the character of labour relations in this province. We said at that time, is that what the Premier wants? Would he rather have people out on strike? Would the Premier rather have people walking a picket line to settle their differences? Would he rather have strikes and lockouts? Indeed, many labour disputes we are seeing in the province are, Mr. Acting Speaker,

lockouts brought on by the employers not giving the employees an opportunity to continue to work.

In many cases we see employers—we saw just recently in the CKY dispute where employers locked out their employees and brought in replacement workers. Is that what the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) thought was fair? Mr. Acting Speaker, we raised that question with final offer selection, and I have raised the question again today. When we look at the very principle of Bill 70, Bill 70 is fundamentally unfair legislation. Bill 70 destroys collective bargaining. Bill 70, above and beyond everything else, will lead to greater labour unrest and strife in this province. It will lead to employees not accessing arbitration or final offer selection. It will lead to employees who cannot get what they feel is a fair settlement at the bargaining table using the strike weapon. Is that what the Premier wants? Does he want more nurses' strikes? Does he want more strikes by the operating engineers?

Out of those 48,000 workers, which group does he want to go on strike, the government employees, the casino workers, who were on strike last fall, the operating engineers who walked the picket line for 55 days and believed the word of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and attempted to access final offer selection, which has now been taken away from them? Would he like them to go on strike?

Which hospital workers, which other hospital workers does he want on strike? Which other, the nurses' aides? Who else does he want in terms of the unions he has impacted—the Hydro workers, the MTS workers? I look forward to this government putting on the record which groups of workers it feels should not be accessing final offer selection or arbitration, which groups of workers it feels should not be continuing to bargain at the bargaining table, Mr. Acting Speaker, which groups of workers it would rather see out on a picket line, because that is the logical conclusion of this bill.

This bill will lead to public sector workers being far more militant dealing with the government. It will lead to public sector workers, many of whom cannot believe they have been included in this broad net the government has set, taking action against this government. Indeed, one of those potential actions will indeed be the strike weapon. That is the Premier.

* (1650)

I ask the Finance minister, is this his goal? Is he wanting to see more and more Manitoba workers access the right to strike within the public sector? -(interjection)- Well, the Finance minister asked if I want him to answer the question. I would yield the floor gladly to the Finance minister, to continue my comments afterwards if he, indeed, is serious about answering that question.

I suspect, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the Finance minister would probably answer, yes. I suspect that one of the ways he feels he can save money is by, in some cases, saying to employees, perhaps in many of the cases in the public sector, here is our offer. Take it or leave it. If you do not like it, go on strike. That is a logical conclusion of what is being done.

You know, Mr. Acting Speaker, if that is the intent of the Finance minister, I would invite him to look at what happened with the operating engineers' strike. That cost the province money. There is evidence of that. That cost the province money. The nurses' strike—did that really save the government money? I do not believe it did. There are a couple of examples.

The casino strike—and I look to our Lotteries critic who, I know, asked this very specific question in Estimates. How much money did they save by that strike? How much did they lose in lost revenue during that period? Upwards of a million dollars—\$1.3 million to save what? To save a 5 percent wage increase? To save a few thousand dollars a year in salaries?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Just a few thousand.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the Finance minister says, just a few thousand. In the case of the casino workers -(interjection)- the Finance minister says just a few thousand. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, compared to the \$1.3 million they lost, how much did the government save on salaries? How much did the government save? I ask that to the Minister of Finance. Was it \$1.3 million? -(interjection)- \$50 million in salaries. The government saved \$50 million in salaries.

Now we see the agenda unfold here. The casino workers walked the picket line. They would have been the villains if they had received the cost-of-living increase and the Province of Manitoba being stuck with a \$50 million wage bill. Mr. Acting Speaker, what other conspiracy theories does the

Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) have behind it? We have heard everything now. Now we know why the casino workers have been put in here. They are responsible, they walked the picket line, they wanted a cost-of-living increase—they are responsible for Bill 70? I do believe what I am hearing.

Who else is responsible? The operating engineers? What dastardly results to the province would result if they were to receive a cost-of-living increase?

An Honourable Member: Fifty million.

Mr. Ashton: Fifty million. Well, there they are again, and I want the operating engineers to know, each and every one of them individually, when they were walking that picket line, they were walking for \$50 million. -(interjection)- Oh, now they are upping the ante. The Tories are upping the ante, though each and every one of those workers were involved. How about the IBEW?

An Honourable Member: Fifty million.

Mr. Ashton: Fifty million. Well, fifty million—there is another group of scapegoats to blame for what would have been \$50 million in terms of debt. Oh, well, now the Minister of Finance is not blaming them. He is just saying that they were not walking the picket line for a cost-of-living increase. They were not negotiating through final offer selection for a cost-of-living increase. They were trying to hit this Finance minister with a \$50 million bill.

What is he going to suggest next? They would have bankrupted the province, those casino workers? How much is this First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and this Finance minister (Mr. Manness) willing to spend to stop them from getting a cost-of-living increase, if he feels the stakes are so high, \$1.3 million? Is that what he was willing to spend in the case of the casino workers? How much more? How much more is he willing to spend? This is a Finance minister who considers himself an economist. Indeed, as an economist myself, I wonder what logic there is in someone suggesting that in this particular case -(interjection)-

Well, indeed if the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) would care to get out her pencil and calculate the arithmetic, any government that will, to save a few hundred thousand dollars on salary for Lotteries Commission, lose \$1.3 million in the process, has people, whether they are or not economists, who

obviously cannot add because that made no economic sense for the Province of Manitoba.

For this minister to suggest that a settlement under final offer selection, which looks at the ability to pay, the principle the First Minister and the Finance minister were so concerned about, that included that ability to pay in the selector's decision that was based very specifically—if he reads the selector's decision on the situation with Manitoba Lotteries, he would find how ridiculous his statements are, that those lottery workers if they had received the cost-of-living increase would have cost the Province of Manitoba \$50 million, Mr. Acting Speaker. -(interjection)-

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Finance minister (Mr. Manness) is trying to lecture me on logic. What logic could he have when he goes and loses \$1.3 million to save the Province of Manitoba a small salary increase? There is no logic. There is no degree to which this government will not go to pursue its right-wing agenda, whether it be on this bill that violates the collective bargaining process in Manitoba, or Bill 69 which we will soon be debating, which violates the Rand formula that has been in place in legislation in Canada since the 1940s, right-to-work legislation, which I know the Finance minister supports. I know from his comments in this Chamber only a few years ago that he supports it.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. If this Finance minister has his way, it will be back to the good old days. What were those good old days? The 1930s. He is doing it economically, pushing us into a depression. He is going to do it in terms of labour relations. He will hammer down government. He will take away services. He will stop at nothing, and he will sit there and say well, I did it for the good of the province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, Manitobans will not be thrown back to the 1930s by the right-wing ideology of the Finance minister who indeed—I wonder, will not give up his pretence of being a Progressive Conservative. I mean, this is the Reform agenda. If anybody wanted to see what the Reform Party would do to Canada, all they have to do is look at what this Finance minister is doing in terms of this province, and I wonder if this is not the agenda as well. I wonder if this is not the agenda as well. Well, it is interesting. Perhaps the Reform Party is breathing down the necks of the members opposite. Perhaps, Mr. Acting Speaker, they are afraid that

the Reform Party might run against them provincially. -(interjection)-

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson has the floor and I would appreciate hearing him.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Acting Speaker, there may be more people singing as this debate continues. I may even quote the words from that fine song which says once again something that Conservatives never understood, that there is nothing more feeble than the power of one.

The people have to remain solid in this particular case. What this government is doing is trying to divide and conquer. They are trying to set the private sector against the public sector. They are trying to set one worker against another in their depression mentality, their depression economic strategy and their depression labour relations. They say piously that there is no politics. This is all politics on their part. They know it is the case. The Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) at least had the honesty to admit it, but New Democrats will not subscribe to a divide and conquer philosophy.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

We stood against the persecution of Japanese Canadians, we stood against the persecution of the War Measures Act, and we will stand against any Tory attempt to hatchet the collective bargaining process in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, history has shown to those Tories, who smugly sit by and talk about -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, if they are going to sing that fine song, they should learn the rest of the words, perhaps subscribe to the fine ideals in that anthem of the labour movement, something I know they are not doing by their conduct on this bill, Bill 70.

Mr. Speaker, that is the issue at stake here. This is an issue of fundamental principle, when we are fighting today against Bill 70. When we fight again in upcoming days on Bill 70 our fight is not just for the 48,000 Manitobans who have been targeted this time around. It is not yet only for the many more Manitobans who by one stroke of the pen can be included as part of this Draconian legislation. It is for every working Manitoban for whom the collective bargaining process has proven to be the only

reliable way of assuring any kind of decent working conditions and living conditions in this province, because without that process, without the process of collective bargaining, reflected and respected in labour legislation, Mr. Speaker, we would be back to the 1930s. We would be back to those economic circumstances, because we are in a depressed situation economically, we are in a desperate situation economically.

The bottom line is our fight today, our fight tomorrow and in the upcoming days for 48,000 Manitobans now. It will be for many more thousands when this bill—if this bill were to pass would impact and is for tens of thousands of other Manitobans who look to the collective bargaining process, who look to the rule of law, who look to some semblance of co-operative labour relations and who will, when they learn about the true impact of this bill, reject this government and its right wing, reactionary, ideological policies in terms of the working people of this province.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

This matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson.

The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is a disposition to call it six o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

BIII 22—The Manitoba Energy Authority Repeal Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), Bill 22, The Manitoba Energy Authority Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la Régie de l'énergie du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) who has 13 minutes remaining.

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I trust that we will keep a quorum long enough for me to finish my remarks.

I got into only the first part of my comments on this bill and I would like to—

An Honourable Member: Agree with it.

Mr. Neufeld: I did not agree with it, Mr. Speaker. I think there are some reasons for having The Manitoba Energy Authority Repeal Act repealed but I think that has to come from the government's side, because it is only the government that knows what has to happen, the consequences of the repeal.

I have some question as to whether or not this bill is indeed a legal one inasmuch as it has budgetary implications and whether or not a member from the opposition benches can bring in a bill with budgetary implications. I do not believe that is the case and it should not have been allowed, I think.

The Manitoba energy act was brought in as a result of the Tritschler Inquiry some years ago and it was the authority's first function to act, perhaps, as a watchdog over Manitoba Hydro. As the years went by, its responsibilities were to include the attraction of energy intensive industries into Manitoba, which they performed rather well. They brought in Dow Corning into Manitoba, and we hope that will end up in some 500 jobs for Manitobans. As time went on, their responsibilities included the sale of energy to other utilities, and they have worked with Manitoba Hydro to sell energy to Northern States Power and to Ontario Hydro.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that most of the work that they are now doing can be transferred to other departments, but I do not think that we can repeal The Manitoba Energy Authority Act without knowing the implications. That is the case as we stand here today. We do not know what all the implications of the repeal might be. We have to study that before we can repeal that act.

There are, we believe, a number of implications. A number of things would fall through the cracks if we were to automatically repeal it. For instance, who will take over the responsibility for attracting energy intensive industries? Who will take over the responsibility for the sale of energy to other utilities? Who will take over the responsibility of making certain that Manitoba Hydro is following their mandate? These are all issues that have to be considered before we repeal the act.

As far as the budgetary implications are concerned, Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Energy Authority's budget was in the area of \$2 million a year and those costs will have to be transferred to one department or another. It is quite possible that the Department of Industry and Technology will take over some of the responsibility. It is possible that some of the responsibilities will be taken over by the Department of Energy and Mines and some of the responsibilities, indeed, will be taken over by Manitoba Hydro.

I do believe that we have to consider what all the implications are before we repeal an act of this type. It is our intention to bring in an energy act into this Chamber in the next session which would include the duties that are not being handled by the Manitoba Energy Authority. We are considering repealing this act but not before we bring in an act to carry out or to transfer the responsibilities of the Manitoba Energy Authority.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) withdraw the act so that we can carry on and bring in an energy act in the next session, at which time we will be repealing this act. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The honourable member for Crescentwood to close debate. Nobody else wants to speak?

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): I would like to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): To close debate? I was going to speak to it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Norbert wants to speak to it? Is there leave to allow the honourable member for St. Norbert to speak to the bill? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Oh, there was leave. Order, please. There was leave to allow the honourable member for St. Norbert to speak. I asked for leave; there was leave.

Mr. Laurendeau: The honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) has worked very hard on this. Could I move that this remain standing in my name? I would like to move that this remain standing in my name and seconded by the honourable minister—further remain standing in my name.

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Yes. Out of courtesy we did allow leave in order for the member to speak. If, in fact, he is prepared to speak, we are more than happy to hear him speak. Otherwise, the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) was recognized to close debate.

* * *

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):

Mr. Speaker, I also believe too that the member for Crescentwood was recognized and the leave was to allow the member to speak. I would suggest that the member should indeed speak and then indeed the matter would be in the name of the member for Crescentwood who may wish to either speak or have the matter remain standing in his name and speak at a further time.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) apparently did not need leave to speak to the bill. Leave would have been needed to allow the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) to close the debate. The honourable member for Crescentwood was apparently ready to start his closing of the debate, at which time the honourable member for St. Norbert rose and I believe the honourable member for St. Norbert needed leave, but apparently leave was not needed for that. Leave was needed to allow the honourable member for Crescentwood to have it standing in his name.

I believe in good faith, the House had thought that the honourable member for St. Norbert had leave to speak to this bill, at which time we recognized the honourable member for St. Norbert to speak to this bill.

* * *

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, I was rising because I did not think that the honourable members of the second opposition party wanted to actually close debate on this bill at this time. I do believe that we had some members who were hoping that they could come forward and speak a little later, and I know that we have given the opportunity to the other members at different times and we have moved to give extensions and allowed them leave to do certain things.

I do believe that they are being a little bit finicky today, but it is okay for a bunch of fence sitters to do

this type of thing, and I am used to the fence sitters actually falling off and getting hurt once in a while. I am sure that it will happen every once in a while, Mr. Speaker, that this type of thing is going to continue to happen.

The honourable members really do not seem to understand that the bill that is being brought forward which—

* (1710)

Point of Order

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the member was recognized to speak to the substance of the bill, and the member has a habit of calling other members to order on matters of relevancy. I would ask the member to be relevant to the contents of the bill. We are anxious. We have given him leave because we want to hear what he has to say.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Norbert will be relevant to the question before the House.

* * *

Mr. Laurendeau: I do thank the honourable member for reminding me that I should be relevant to the bill. I have reminded many members that they should be relevant towards bills, but I do remember that the honourable minister had reminded us that there were some budgetary implications on this matter, Mr. Speaker. I really do wish that the honourable members would have withdrawn the bill, rather that we could get it done properly and not halfheartedly the way it is being put forward today.

I know our minister has put a lot of time and effort into working towards—

An Honourable Member: Energy. Say the word "energy."

Mr. Laurendeau: —the energy bill, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure it does a lot more than what the honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) does. It actually contemplates doing something. I am glad the honourable member brought that up. I mean, if I have to be relevant at least I should speak towards what it is doing.

It repeals an act is what it does, and repealing the act has got some budgetary implications which should be looked at and the full ramifications of this should be taken into account. It should be done during the budgetary times and not just

halfheartedly the way the honourable members of the opposition—you know, and it should be brought forward by the government, Mr. Speaker, brought forward and done properly and not just haphazardly and slapped together.

All the implications just have not been looked at and when the honourable member brought it forward I am sure after he had discussed it with our minister, he would have really taken the time and looked at just pulling back on this bill and said that -(interjection)-

Mr. Alcock: What is the impact on fishing licences?

Mr. Laurendeau: I do not know. What is the impact on fishing licences, the honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) asks. I really do not think it has any impact on fishing licences. I really think they do not want me to be relevant for some reason, Mr. Speaker, and I just cannot contemplate why they are doing this to me, other than they are trying to get even with me for something.

An Honourable Member: Let us get on with the content.

Mr. Laurendeau: You want to get on with the content? I just happened to be looking for a copy of the bill, Mr. Speaker, and I was not able to find it here. If the honourable members will just give me one minute. All it does is repeal the act and with the budgetary aspects of the bill—with those few words, I would like to allow the honourable member -(interjection)-

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) taught us a lesson just a few moments ago. He taught us a lesson that all of us could do well to emulate and to learn. He, despite what honourable members opposite may think, captured in those few well-prepared remarks, well-researched remarks, of course, the very essence of why this government, while not opposed in principle to what the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) is proposing in the bill before us, has a very good, sound and understandable reason why it is not acceptable to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) and to this government.

It is, as the honourable member for St. Norbert said, not a way of doing business. There are other considerations to be taken into account when an act has had about a 17-year lifetime in terms of its effect in the province of Manitoba. It is understandable

when a piece of legislation that has been operative for a number of years is repealed that there are ramifications, that there are considerations to be taken into account by the responsible minister and by the government. As the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) so capably expressed, it cannot be done, it is not proper for it to be done, in a haphazard manner, as being suggested by the actions of the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr).

Mr. Speaker, it is my good fortune to have seen and witnessed and, indeed, to have been part of the initial enactment of the bill that is being currently considered and requested to be stricken from the statute books of the province by the member for Crescentwood. I have some mixed feelings about the bill that is being discussed. I am cognizant that the bill was introduced by a government that I was part of and a colleague that I had a good and long association with in this Chamber, who is, regrettably, no longer with us, who was then the honourable member from the constituency of Riel, served as Minister of Finance, served as Minister of Energy and Mines, served as Minister of Natural Resources, served as Minister of Education at different times in his illustrious career in the service of the people of Manitoba. So it is obvious that a move that is now recognized by the government, that the bill has outlived its usefulness and will, indeed, be repealed.

I believe the minister has indicated in his remarks, and from other things that the government has said, has given every indication to the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), the mover of this bill, that we do not disagree in principle with what he is trying to do. It is, I suppose, even likely—I should not say likely, but as the adjournment date of this particular session seems to be receding into the hot steamy days of the summer that, indeed, there may even be a government initiative in this respect during the course of this session. More than likely, it will be a matter that will be dealt with in a coming session of this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, one can and one ought to look at the manner in which this bill has affected Hydro affairs and fiscal affairs in the province of Manitoba during its lifetime. There are certainly a number of things that can be said about it. I suspect that probably one of the more important things that can be said about it is that it is questionable. It was not introduced with any great enthusiasm, I might say, by the then government.

* (1720)

The bill, in my estimation, mixes two very important factors in Manitoba politics: the generation of electricity, the operation of Manitoba Hydro which, after all, is really one of our most important Crown corporations providing a service in the province of Manitoba. It has a specific mandate legislated by Legislatures of some time ago. Indeed, I never hesitate to acknowledge the authorship of some of the accomplishments within this Legislature to those who have been responsible for bringing them about.

Manitoba Hydro, as we know it today, of course was largely done through the leadership of the last Liberal Premier of this province, Mr. D. L. Campbell. I can recall, I was just coming into the age of awareness of public affairs when there was a great debate in the province about the different plans. It was called Plan C and Plan D, which was the amalgamation and the bringing together of what we now know as Manitoba Hydro. Then for a number of years Manitoba Hydro acted, I believe, in an exemplary fashion in providing the service to Manitobans for which it was mandated, that is, the provision of reasonable price, economic, clean—today we would say environmentally friendly—energy for the people of Manitoba at the lowest possible cost. That is the statuted mandate of Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Speaker, it is with some regret that I have to say that, while that carried on from about the early '50s and there is a very definitive year till the spring of 1969, that great Crown corporation carried out its mandate in an exemplary fashion that enabled politicians of all parties to stand up anywhere in this country and in most other parts of the world and say that we had managed to set up a system that provided our citizens with the best, cheapest, reasonably priced energy than perhaps in most other jurisdictions.

But, in 1969, politics interfered. Politics interfered massively—and there will be an occasion when I will be able to more properly document that—because in 1969, this Chamber regrettably led by the then Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Molgat, it was with some displeasure, I believe on my part, that the former Premier, the Premier whom I just accorded and acknowledged as the father of the modern day Manitoba Hydro, Mr. D. L. Campbell, who was sitting in the far seat on the front benches, but still a very active member, had to watch his party—and he

participated to some extent—interfere massively and politically in the affairs of that corporation that governed the affairs of energy production so well for some 35 years in this province.

An Honourable Member: It was Liberal.

Mr. Enns: Yes it was. That is when this Chamber and that is when we elected people who are hardly hydro experts or hardly water engineers decided to start instructing Manitoba Hydro engineers how to build dams, where to build them and indeed where to buy turbines untendered from the Soviet Union to be installed in questionable power plants at Jenpeg. That happened in 1969. The tragedy is that Manitoba Hydro, after spending \$4 million to \$5 million of Underwood McLellan in engineering studies, had looked at Lake Winnipeg regulation, had decided no, they did not want to flood out the five reserve nations of Norway House, of Cross Lake, of Split Lake. They did not want to do that.

They rejected that option and said to government of the day that if you are going to make a mess, and you do make a mess, then for goodness' sake do it in one place and preferably where you do the least amount of damage. That is why they recommended to the government of the day—that was a Conservative government of the day—that all of the flooding be contained in the one area, the one reservoir of South Indian Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I was the minister involved because it became a big issue. We were threatened with court injunctions. In fact, ten minutes prior to the opening of the 1969 Legislature, the Attorney General of my own government sent bailiffs into my office as I was readying to come in to participate in the opening ceremonies of 1969 Chamber, issuing me with summonses and warrants that I personally would be taken into court for permitting Hydro to do their work, because as the Minister of Natural Resources, including water in those days, I had to permit the Manitoba Hydro to build the Missi dam at South Indian Lake that would have caused substantial and massive flooding at South Indian Lake.

To circumvent that kind of court action, I brought a bill into the House, Bill 15. It was passed through second reading. Would you believe it? It was in committee stage. The government of the day, the Premier of the day, the late Walter Weir, decided to call an election. The rest is history. We were defeated, and our friends the New Democrats came

in. What did they then do? They chose the worst of all possible solutions, partly because of the political commitments that they had made.

Because they knew they really were not the Hydro engineers themselves, they gave Hydro the permission to flood South Indian Lake but not quite as high as Hydro really wanted it. By doing so, they had to commit to building an eight-mile channel off the north end of Lake Winnipeg into Playgreen Lake and to create Lake Winnipeg into a storage reservoir which keeps it unseasonably high and not good for recreational purposes. It is that water that is doing the flooding. It is that water that we are paying out the millions and millions of dollars to the five damaged communities. I do not begrudge those communities any cent of those dollars, because we have made an awful mess in those communities, but that was not Hydro's doing. That was not Hydro's recommendations. Mr. Speaker, everything I say can be documented time and again; the paper trail is there. So now we have a situation where we have spent millions instead.

The tragedy of it all, the tragedy of this, Hydro's recommendation to this Legislation to do what they wanted to do at South Indian Lake—at that time, the tendered contract was \$48 million to build the Missi dam, \$48 million. It would have given them 40 percent more water than we have today. Politicians intervened. We have spent \$800 million, and we get 40 percent less power. We have ruined five communities forever, at Cross Lake, at Norway House, at Split Lake. We are paying, and we are paying, and we are paying. My goodness, how those monies could be used today, either in cheaper Hydro rates or in social services.

Mr. Speaker, then what did Mr. Schreyer and his New Democrats have to do? They had to impose 25 percent, 35 percent, 50 percent hydro rate increases every year for five years.

An Honourable Member: Not 50.

Mr. Enns: Yes. In the space of four years, hydro rates went up over 100 percent. Small wonder when a Conservative administration finally came back into power, we then passed this bill that is under question that we politically—we carried on with the political interference because once on that course, you are on that course. Because the people of Manitoba had it with hydro rate increases, we then directed Manitoba Hydro, no, you cannot raise hydro rates any more. We put a freeze on. That was rank

political interference in Hydro affairs. We also had to promise, well, if you do that, then we will help you out with some of the payments of foreign money exchanges.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired. Does the honourable minister have a minute's leave? It is agreed?

Mr. Enns: I apologize to honourable members. I know that one ought not to belabour history in this House, but the significance of this bill that is before us has that kind of history. It is a demonstration that we ought to do, as members, what we are elected to do and what we are capable of doing—that is, making laws and making conditions. We ought not to become experts in our collective fields or in our ministries and allow politics to interfere with these kinds of decisions. The price tag in this case has been extreme for Manitobans. I support the repeal of this bill. This bill will be repealed. Our minister assures us of that, but it has been a sorry lesson about the cost to Manitoba, about the political interference in a Crown corporation that it was operating in a first-class manner. If you do not want to take my word for it, I suggest for bedtime reading the Tritschler Report which in itself cost \$3 million, but it will outline some of the details of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been misspent in the kind of interference that really is not acceptable in my appreciation of how one ought to conduct public affairs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1730)

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. For clarification, the record will show that the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) did not speak at closing of the debate on second readings, and the honourable member will have every opportunity to close the debate.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Okay.

Bill 23—The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 23, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member of St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Agreed.

Bill 24—The Business Practices Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), Bill 24, The Business Practices Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques commerciales, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Agreed.

Bill 25—The Environment Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), Bill 25, The Environment Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Agreed.

Bill 26—The Environment Amendment Act (3)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), Bill 26, The Environment Amendment Act (3); Loi no 3 modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Agreed.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Are we proceeding with Bill 16 (The Motor Vehicle Lemon Law Act; Loi sur les véhicules automobiles défectueux)? No.

Are we proceeding with Bill 17 (The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur)? No.

Are we proceeding with Bill 27 (The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie)? No.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 32—The Mount Carmel Clinic Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), Bill 32, The Mount Carmel Clinic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Mount Carmel Clinic, standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) who has 13 minutes remaining.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this particular bill. I did get an opportunity a short while ago to be able to say basically that we had in fact supported the bill because we feel, like many members of this Chamber, that there are private members' bills that are brought forward with good sincere intent.

We support community clinics and so forth. We have members such as the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) with the Salvation Army bill, which is another bill similar to this in a sense that we like to think them both as more of an apolitical bill—that is the reason why we feel it is important that the government address bills such as this nature because there is a lot of merit for these bills to, in fact, be passed into a committee stage where we can receive public input.

I know there is a temptation, Mr. Speaker, to delay debating bills, in particular bills of this nature, and wait towards the end of the session which I would suggest is not really necessarily in our best interests. With this particular bill, there are many different types of workers who work at the clinic, both volunteer and paid staff. The volunteers put in a lot of hard work and effort and we have to be able to appreciate the time and effort that they have put in. It is like so many other different organizations in

which without these individuals, it would not be able to succeed, because through boards, through volunteers, through the literally hundreds of hours that they put in, and in particular into this particular clinic, we as a society benefit from it.

Then of course, Mr. Speaker, we have paid individuals who work in clinics of this nature who also put in a considerable amount of time over and above, in fact, what they pay. They do that because they have a love for the work that they are doing. They should be respected for that because it is not an easy job, whether you are a paid individual or if you do some of the work on the side as a volunteer.

My intentions were not to speak at length on this particular bill but rather to encourage others to be able to stand up and speak on this bill. I would anticipate that when the member for St. James' bill comes forward like this bill, that the New Democratic Party will, in fact, support our bill as we support this bill and no doubt the government will choose to support both bills because both bills are worth the attention of this Chamber. Mount Carmel Clinic needs this bill to be passed and that is why, in fact, we should be dealing with the bill and hopefully it will be able to pass because it incorporates the Mount Carmel Clinic. We in the Liberal Party, as I pointed out very clearly, support it. We want the bill to go to committee. We wait for the government to address it and at that time, hopefully we will be able to see it go into committee.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 32 is also standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld). Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Agreed.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 23—Mail Delivery Services

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): With respect to Resolution 23, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak),

WHEREAS door-to-door mail delivery in urban areas has been in existence for several decades and is a particularly important service for senior citizens and the physically disabled; and

WHEREAS the cost of postage has continued to rise in recent years from 12 cents in 1978 to 40 cents in 1991, plus the GST, making it 43 cents; and

WHEREAS the government of Canada's supermailbox program has created and will continue to create second-class citizens of many Manitoba

urban dwellers by failing to provide door-to-door delivery service to new subdivisions; and

WHEREAS the supermailbox program will cause the percentage of Canadian addresses receiving home delivery to drop from 54 percent in 1987 to 47 percent over the next 10 years; and

WHEREAS Canada Post has cut the number of street mailboxes in Winnipeg by 13 percent in 1990; and

WHEREAS the Conservative government has also cut the number of postal outlets in Winnipeg, many of these outlets having served city residents for a number of years; and

WHEREAS the continued decline in postal services, particularly home delivery in urban areas, is placing a serious hardship on seniors and physically disabled citizens; and

WHEREAS the consequent differences in mail service to urban homes could decrease the value of those residences without home delivery,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the government of Canada to request the Canada Post Corporation to:

1. immediately abandon its supermailbox program;

2. restore home delivery to all affected residences; and

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

Motion presented.

* (1740)

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, before we can understand the problem with postal delivery, we must have a contextual understanding of what has been going on in the delivery of mail.

What was the nature of the post office department before and after it had been converted into a Crown corporation and the consequences of this change of status of the postal department from a regular department of government into an independent, autonomous Crown corporation?

What is the nature of Canada Post as an organizational unit of the federal Government of Canada before 1980? Before 1980, Canada Post was a regular department of government. As a

regular department of the federal Government of Canada, any regular department would be subject to all the restrictions of the Civil Service rules. They have no flexibility at all in the managing of the organizational unit. They will be subjected to many constraints like any other departments of government. They will have to depend upon the annual budgetary allocations for their financial sustenance and support.

As we know, there are budgetary allocations year after year for regular departments of government. In 1980, this regular department of Canada was transformed by means of the Canada Post Act of 1980 which converted the department of post office into a Crown corporation, and they named the Crown corporation Canada Post.

To convert a regular departmental organizational unit into an autonomous Crown corporation had many implications. It means that they will be freed from many regulatory rules applying to regular departments of government. For example, certain rules and regulations about who can make requisitions, who can make purchases, will no longer be applied to the independent autonomous Crown corporations. They will have, generally speaking, more flexibility in the managing and doing of their business, in the undertaking of the program of activities, than a regular department of government. They would have been freed from Civil Service rules and regulations, because they will have their own personal system of rules and regulations.

What are some of the mandated objectives of Canada Post as a reorganized organizational unit of the federal department in the form of a Crown corporation? Nowhere is it better stated, Mr. Speaker, than in Section 5(2) of the Canada Post Corporation Act of 1980.

I quote Section 5, subsection 2: While maintaining basic customary postal services, the corporation in carrying out its objective shall have regard to: (a) the desirability of improving and extending its products and services in the light of developments in the field of communications; (b) the need to conduct its operations on a self-sustaining financial basis while providing a standard of service that will meet the needs of the people of Canada and that is similar with respect to communities of the same size; (c) the need to conduct its operations in such a manner as will best provide for the security of the mails; (d) the desirability of utilizing the human

resources of the corporation in a manner that both obtain the objectives of the corporation and ensure the commitment and dedications of its employees to the attainment of these objections; (e) the need to maintain a corporate identity program approved by the Governor-in-Council that reflects the role of the corporation as an institution of the Government of Canada.

Those are the legal provisions. If we want to put the objectives of Canada Post in simpler English terms, it can be summarized by three key words. The objective or goal of service to meet the needs of the people of Canada, that is the first primary objective. Second, financial self-sufficiency for Canada Post as a Crown corporation, and third, effectiveness, efficiency of operation, including security of the mail and development in the field of communications. If there is any underlying reason for the existence of Canada Post as a public unit, as a public agency, it is for the purpose of serving the people of Canada to meet the needs of the people of Canada.

Since its conversion as a Crown corporation Canada Post has adapted certain policies. They said, for example, that they had steadily improved the level of services of delivery of mail on time. They said that their only statistic showed that 79 percent of delivery on time had been increased now to 90 percent of delivery on time of the mail. That is according to the Canada Post Corporation itself.

On the other hand, if you ask the public, the people who are being served by Canada Post—and there has been a study that has been conducted—only 12 percent of those who responded to the questionnaire said that they had observed some kind of improvement in the delivery of the mail on time—only 12 percent, whereas 25 percent of respondents said they have observed, in fact, a deterioration, a decline in the degree of services of Canada Post Corporation. So there is a different perspective now between Canada Post itself, how it is performing, and the general public whom it is supposed to be serving.

The second objective is with respect to financial self-sufficiency. Canada Post when it was established by the Canada Post Corporation Act of 1980 and created in 1981, Canada Post Corporation as a Crown agency had inherited some \$600 million deficit in its financial base. The Crown corporation would like to get rid of this deficit immediately. It will mean tremendous changes that the general public

cannot withstand, so that they cannot immediately do it in a short period of time. Indeed, they did not plan to change all the postage rates, increase the rates until after the decades of the 1980s.

Therefore, we cannot blame Canada Post when it undertakes certain managerial decisions, such as the closing of postal outlets and the reduction of services. However, it will be detracting from its primary responsibility of providing service to the people of Canada. No government has any legitimate right to cut down services simply to achieve financial stability, because government organizations, governmental units in general are not established for profit. Unlike any private business that can only survive when it makes profit, a government agency, whether in the form of a regular department of government or whether in the form of a Crown corporation, can survive without making profit, even if they do break even. That is essential in order to render service to its people because public agencies, as distinguished from private corporations, are there primarily to render public service and not to make money.

The third objective is effectiveness and efficiency in the operation of Canada Post as a governmental unit of government. There is an attempt on the part of the Crown corporation to improve the door-to-door services, delivery of mail by bargaining with the carriers' union. However, because of the collective bargaining agreement, there has been a high degree of non-co-operation between the public Crown corporation and its own employees. This is probably an outcome of the deteriorating employer-employee relationship between Canada Post and its own employees.

* (1750)

Efficiency in the working of any governmental unit, including the Crown corporation, can top them up only when there are certain values that are respected by both the employers and the employees. These are the values of the security of jobs as held by the employees and a satisfying work environment in which people can perform their responsibilities and their task.

Moreover, there should be better communication at work internally between all the personnel of the governmental unit and the managerial group in that agency. If all these recognitions to a satisfying working relationship are violated, there will be disruption and inefficiency, and there will be

dissatisfaction on the part of the personnel working for the government.

What has been happening is that Canada Post has been systematically raising the postal rates in order to get rid of the deficit that they have inherited. Not only were they doing that, they were also cutting down and systematically changing the manner of the delivery of mail. They have instituted the supermailbox program and they have also closed outlets, and they have already cut down on home delivery of mail for Canada Post.

What we are concerned with here as a party is the effect of this on our senior citizens who have limited mobility capacity, and on the people who are disabled and therefore cannot walk to the supermailboxes in central areas of the urban areas like cities. Not only Winnipeg is affected. There are also other megacities and other urban areas in the province of Manitoba. Let me give you an example of what is going on right now.

Canada Post had recently made an announcement of the closing of the main post office in Brandon. This will close on July 19, 1991. Instead of a single mail central-counter postal outlet post office in Brandon, they will be instituting six privately franchised outlets. Brandon city has a population of 40,000. This will be the first ever, the largest Canadian city ever to be deprived of a central post office in Canada.

The senior citizens have particular mobility and transportation problems. Many seniors are unable to make use of the conventional transit system in order to be able to mail their parcels or their letters. They have to depend on family members to make use of the mail. They cannot leave their homes, especially during wintertime. The physical handicapped in our society will be unable to make use of the supermailbox services; therefore, if this happens, they will be the isolated, alienated, forgotten members of our society. That is the reason why we are proposing this resolution.

Statistics show that in 1986, 81 percent of all seniors with disabilities have mobility problems. There are seniors who need wheelchairs, and of all seniors who need wheelchairs, 18 percent of them did not have such a wheelchair. Of all seniors who need some assistance in the entering and leaving of their residences, 39 percent did not have such assistance in the form of special features in their homes. Seniors who have access to public

transportation have difficulty sometimes in getting on and off the bus system; 25 percent of all the seniors cannot do so without difficulty.

If seniors have to make a long distance trip, they could not travel long distances because of ill health and some disability problem. Because of our compassion, because of our party's compassionate concern for the senior citizens of our country we are objecting, and we are passing this resolution in order that mail delivery can be restored to serve the senior citizens and the physically disabled in our society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I rise because I have some concern about the resolution that is before us and also, of course, because of the effect on many of the proposed initiatives that Canada Post is going to be taking in the next while.

Many of our rural communities and many of our people in this province are, of course, affected very drastically and very dramatically by actions taken by a Crown corporation such as Canada Post. Therefore, it is important to note that many of our people in this province depend very heavily on the regular and precise delivery of our mail and the ability for people to be able to access service centres that will provide them with the ability to mail letters, to acquire stamps and all those kinds of things.

I have seen over the past years, as the member for Broadway has said, a dramatic change in our postal delivery system. I have also seen, as the resolution states, the increase in postal rates over the past many years, as all of us have seen. I wonder if and when the member reflects, in reality, on the costs that would be incurred if we, in fact, did what the resolution states, and that is to reinstate home delivery to all Manitobans.

It would be, I suspect, somewhat expensive to provide home delivery services to somebody in the remote Northwest Territories on a very regular and precise basis. I would suspect we would see a rather dramatic increase in costs in postal rates if

we provided home delivery service to all rural people in all of Canada.

I wonder how our postal system could be maintained and how we would support those costs of that sort of an increased service to our population, although I agree that we who stand in this Legislature must take into consideration the ability of our system of Crown corporations such as Canada Post to be able to serve those that are the neediest.

Therefore, I would suspect that the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) would agree with me when I say that we must also respect then the ability for people to pay for those services. Very often it is those very people who are disabled, who are able to afford the least for government to provide services to them.

I stand here before you, Mr. Speaker, and ask the question whether, in fact, the honourable member for Broadway is proposing that we increase the costs of postal services to those who are less able to pay than others to the point where we could maintain and upgrade our facilities to ensure door-to-door delivery of mail on a daily basis.

If that is the case, then I wonder whether the honourable member for Broadway has done his homework and research to be able to tell us in this house what the cost or the additional increased costs would be. I think, Mr. Speaker, that question is something that we need to answer before we are able to fully comprehend the scope of the resolution that the member has put before us today.

I would also like to ask the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) whether he has ever given any thought to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Emerson will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Thursday, June 6, 1991

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