



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 24, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kelly Dawn Graham, Nikki Corlett, Katie Kuivenhoven and others requesting the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider a one-year moratorium on the closure of the Human Resources Opportunity Centre in Selkirk.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Trish Minish, Gordon MacKenzie, Ken Twomay and others requesting the government consider restoring the former full funding of \$700,000 to fight Dutch elm disease.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Human Resources Opportunity Office has operated in Selkirk for over 21 years providing training for the unemployed and people re-entering the labour force; and

WHEREAS during the past 10 years alone over 1,000 trainees have gone through the program gaining valuable skills and training; and

WHEREAS upwards of 80 percent of the training centre's recent graduates have found employment; and

WHEREAS without consultation the program was cut in the 1992 provincial budget forcing the centre to close; and

WHEREAS there is a growing need for this program in Selkirk and the program has the support of the town of Selkirk, the Selkirk local of the Manitoba Metis Federation as well as many other local organizations and individuals.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider a one-year moratorium on the program.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to announce the fourth offering of Manitoba Hydro Savings Bonds to the people of Manitoba.

HydroBonds are an exciting initiative that provide an opportunity for every family and every individual to participate directly as a builder and beneficiary in the Manitoba economy. Manitobans will again be given the opportunity to invest in the future of Manitoba Hydro and their province through Manitoba Hydro Savings Bonds, Series 4. Once again, HydroBonds are available only to Manitobans to enable residents and businesses alike the unique opportunity of investing in their home, their province.

As in past issues, HydroBonds, Series 4 will be issued in denominations as low as \$100. HydroBonds will go on sale Tuesday, May 19, with the interest rate being announced May 15. The rate will be competitively priced with principal and interest in all bonds fully guaranteed by the Province of Manitoba. HydroBonds are available for a five-year term, and purchasers can choose to have interest compounded over the five-year period to have the interest paid monthly or to have the monthly or to have the interest paid yearly. Monthly interest is only available on purchases of \$5,000 or more.

* (1005)

With the last three issues, over 80,000 Manitobans have purchased HydroBonds, resulting in over \$760 million being raised for Manitoba Hydro. This is a clear example of the pride the people of Manitoba have for their hydro resource and their province. To date, approximately \$112 million in interest payments have been paid out to Manitoban Hydro bondholders, ensuring the benefits go to work in our province for our people.

Manitoba Hydro employs thousands of people, and through export sales, brings millions of dollars into our economy each year. Manitoba Hydro has grown and developed through the years to extend the benefits of electrical service throughout our province. Proceeds from the sale will provide a local source of funds to meet the financial requirements for continued development of this vast renewable energy resource to ensure the demands of future generations of Manitobans are met.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are already enjoying the benefits of three successful HydroBonds series. I encourage all Manitobans to share in this exciting opportunity with HydroBonds 4. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Indeed, I would like to rise and respond to the ministerial statement issued today by the Minister of Finance, dealing with Manitoba Hydro Savings Bonds.

We have said in the past and we will say it again today that we support the program of HydroBonds. We think it is a positive program for Manitobans, and we have always believed that it is very, very positive for Manitobans to be investing in their own province.

We find it very interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see the members opposite bringing us good news in public enterprise. We know that members opposite have a terrible time with public enterprise in public Crown corporations. In fact, I recall many of the members opposite were campaigning in 1981 to sell some of Hydro's assets to private corporations. We like to see the conversion on the road to Damascus and the need for strong Crown corporations and strong public enterprises in this province.

I would ask also, Mr. Speaker, that while we are praising Hydro in this province and public enterprise generally, which is one of the stronger parts of our Manitoba economy right now with the decline at this present point in the private sector, that members opposite talk to their Nova Scotia brethren. The Conservative Party in Nova Scotia is selling off their Hydro corporation which we think is the wrong way to go, and perhaps the Conservative Premier can talk to his fellow Conservative Premier in the province of Nova Scotia where they are going in the opposite direction.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, this is good for Manitoba and public Crown corporations are great for this province and that is why we support them.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, it gives me some pleasure to rise again and comment to the minister that this is and has been a very good program. It is an opportunity for Manitobans to invest in this province and to see that capital remains in this province.

It is interesting that out of the some two dozen initiatives that this Finance minister has announced since he became Finance minister, this is the only one that has shown any real success and any ability to really produce any growth in this province. Quite seriously, we are in a very difficult position in this province, and the revenue generated from this, invested in this province, and the interest return to this province is a good thing. It is unfortunate though that this Minister of Finance is not more forthcoming with the results of other programs.

I have had orders for return that the minister has very expansively accepted and said, oh yes, we will get you all that information on what is happening with Vision Capital and other economic programs, and to date has produced nothing. He seems to be afraid to show us the results of all his initiatives with the exception of this one which he stands up in the House and speaks quite positively of.

It is a good program. It is one that should be supported, and I am pleased to see it is doing as well as it is.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us this morning, nine visitors from the Women's Committee of the Manitoba Government Employees' Association. They are under the direction of Ms. Myrna Phillips, a former Speaker of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

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

Also with us this morning, we have from the Sun Valley Elementary School, twenty-six Grade 5 students. They are under the direction of Mrs. Rempel. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson).

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

* (1010)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Free Trade Agreement Impact on Manitoba

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, two studies have been released this week dealing with the Canadian-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, one produced by the U.S. commerce department and another one produced by corporations in Canada.

The U.S. commerce department talks about the gains of the Free Trade Agreement, Mr. Speaker. In fact they talk about the gains in very glowing terms, where the deficit of trade between Canada and the United States has gone from a \$12-billion surplus in Canada's favour now down to half as much in the four years that the study includes dealing with free trade.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier (Mr. Filmon) has talked about positive parts of the Free Trade Agreement with Canada and the United States in terms of Manitoba, and there have been some positive parts in agriculture, but we see a deficit of trade of \$1 billion right now, about double for Manitoba with the United States since the Free Trade Agreement came in.

We noted that when free trade was being discussed in this Chamber in 1988, the Premier said, and I quote: Our empirical study says that we will gain between 10,000 and 15,000 new net jobs in this province, and it will lower the unemployment rates in this province.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is: Can he produce the empirical studies, as Chair of the Economic Committee of Cabinet, on the total winners and losers and net benefits to the province of Manitoba of the Free Trade Agreement that he supported when the trade agreement was before us?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the best source of information for us in terms of dealing with the Canada-U.S. free trade are the people of Manitoba. I had the opportunity, when we did the review of the North American free trade, to inquire of each and every sector as it relates to the impact of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

While everybody recognizes that because of several other factors that have impacted on our economy, the value of the Canadian dollar, the recession taking place in Canada, that the impact

has been minimal overall. Most felt that in the long run it is a pact that will certainly benefit Manitoba and Manitoba industries.

I do want to point out that while our trade situation with the United States diminished in 1990—in part due to some of the matters that I have already touched on—in 1991, our deficit with the United States actually shrunk by 18.7 percent, an improvement in terms of our trade position with the United States, certainly a sign that things are in fact going in the right direction, Mr. Speaker. [interjection]

Mr. Doer: Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) from his seat says competitiveness. When you go from a \$450-million deficit with the United States before free trade to over \$1 billion and you reduce it by 18 percent, Mr. Speaker—we have not seen the numbers—it is not a very positive sign. No wonder Manitoba has doubled the national average in the last month for rising unemployment in the province of Manitoba.

Labour Adjustment Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): In light of the statement made by the minister and the government that these trade results are due to the recession: Has the government reviewed the study that was released yesterday in Washington that said clearly that the recession is not the only factor for the change in free trade with the United States? In fact, the adjustment costs were seriously underestimated by the supporters of free trade—supporters like the Premier (Mr. Filmon), like the members opposite. Adjustment was seriously underestimated, Mr. Speaker, and they further recommend that we have to have a very, very serious adjustment strategy dealing with any further trade. Now this was produced by corporations and the study was released in Washington.

I would ask the government: Does it concur with those findings of the corporations in their study that was released in Washington yesterday? Does it have any concrete adjustment strategies in place based on their meetings with the Ministers of Trade that the minister has met with, and dealing with adjustment strategies dealing with a proposed North American free trade agreement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we have recognized as well that it goes beyond merely the recession in terms of the impact of our trade relationship with the United States.

* (1015)

I touched on at least one other area, and that has been the value of the Canadian dollar. In terms of all the reports that are prepared on Canada-U.S. free trade, my department receives them and does do an analysis of them, not unlike the other reports we referred to in the House from the Royal Bank and other institutions.

In terms of the issue of adjustment provisions, clearly that is fundamental and important. I think as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) knows, in terms of the North American free trade agreement, we have said on many, many occasions in this House, we do not support a North American free trade agreement with Canada, U.S. and Mexico unless six fundamental conditions are met. One of those conditions is that adequate adjustment provisions be put in place.

That matter was once again addressed at our trade minister meeting as recently as a couple of weeks ago. Clearly it is an important condition of any North American free trade agreement.

Mr. Doer: I hate to remind members opposite it sounds like an echo from the pre-1988 free trade agreement where they said, oh, we need adjustment strategies, and we trust the federal government will have adjustment strategies. There were absolutely no adjustment strategies dealing with the Canada-U.S. trade agreement.

Manitoba workers and workers across Canada that are being laid off, many of them middle-aged, Mr. Speaker, are absolutely being left—I guess the Premier (Mr. Filmon) does not care about it—but a lot of people are being left in the unemployment lines; 60,000 people are unemployed right now in this province.

The study further concludes—

Point of Order

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) to withdraw his remarks about whether or not I care about things. I care about employment. I care about improved economy for Manitoba. I care about jobs for Manitobans. I do everything possible to ensure that we as a government are putting in place the kind of policies that will foster that kind of investment.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon) does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

North American Free Trade Agreement Impact on Manitoba

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Premier now would like to answer a question in this Chamber.

The study further goes on to say that there will be a significant hardship—jobs will be lost, firms will go out of business and some industries will suffer, and particular areas that suffer may fall into long-term decline with the proposed free trade agreement with Canada, U.S. and Mexico.

I would ask the Premier, has he got an empirical study that he has prepared, as Chair of the Economic Committee of Cabinet, to show that Manitoba will not be one of the areas which will decline, and we will not lose industries and jobs and opportunities in this province.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, based on the analysis that we have done in this province in the consultations with various industry sectors, we came up with six conditions that should apply to any North American free trade agreement. We have steadfastly stated in this Legislature and throughout the country and other fora that those are the conditions which must be met in order for any North American free trade agreement to be of benefit to Manitoba.

I just point out to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) that when he talks about cutting off trade, putting barriers to trade that he runs the risk, of course, of cutting off the things that have been able to build the economies of Canada and Manitoba. You take the recent example that is in today's paper about cutting off beer sales to the United States, and by cutting off American beer sales to Canada we save them from selling \$30 million a year into Canada, and we lose \$190 million a year of Canadian sales into the United States. We lose hundreds of jobs. We lose \$160 million worth of net benefit in terms of sales by trade because we want to follow an ideologically blinkered policy of the New Democratic policy.

That is absolutely ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. That is over and over and over again the kind of losses that will be incurred if this country puts up barriers because the barriers are two-way. If we put up barriers to trade from other countries, they put up

barriers to our production and we lose because we are net exporters of goods over and over and over again, and we lose thousands of jobs by following that kind of ideologically blind course. It is wrong.

Hearing Disorder Screening Program Funding

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey).

Winnipeg School Division No. 1, through the Child Guidance Clinic, has one of the finest prescreening programs for hearing difficulties in the country. In Winnipeg all kindergarten children are prescreened for hearing difficulties and losses. Now the program is in jeopardy because the Department of Health is cutting off a \$43,000 grant that aids in the staffing of an audiologist position. In light of the need for departments to work together and the success of this program, does the Minister of Education agree with this decision to cut off the \$43,000 grant for the audiologist?

* (1020)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, in allocating limited resources—and we dealt with this issue yesterday in my ministry of Health Estimates in terms of funding for agencies—we made the decision to prioritize rather than take an across-the-board direction in terms of grants. We attempted to prioritize, and that was one of the reductions in grant support funding that we made. That does not in any way, shape or form disallow a reallocation of resource which is happening throughout the length and breadth of government-provided services to meet critical needs. That opportunity to continue a good program exists and can and should be explored, Sir.

Mr. Chomlak: Speaker, my supplementary is to the Minister of Education.

Will the minister assure this House that she will contact the Minister of Health in light of the fact that she has made pronouncements that she will work together with other departments to insist that this grant be reinstated from Health or from some other department in order that the program be reinstated and not cut off?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, again my honourable friend, the New Democrat, from the comfort of opposition is saying the only solution to program delivery is more money, more spending, more

taxes, more deficit. That is NDP old-think. It is not even being emulated anywhere that an NDP party is in government. Consider Saskatchewan, 1 percent increase to Education and to Health. No, pardon me, that was Ontario at 1 percent increase, Saskatchewan is 2.8 percent decrease, Sir. From the comfort of opposition, New Democrats cry for more money to be spent. From the reality of government they ask for more management which has been the hallmark of this government, Sir.

Mr. Chomlak: My final supplementary will be to the Minister of Health.

Will the minister table in this House any cost-benefit analysis he has on that program to show that it will decrease costs, in light of the fact that these people will have to go to more highly expensive hospitals to get this program and these kind of services? Will he table a cost-benefit analysis to show how this government is going to save money by doing that?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend obviously missed the intent of the first answer that I gave to him and the first question he posed.

My honourable friend's only solution is to pour more money in. Mr. Speaker, what the system of health care, what the system of government funding needs is management around existing resources, because there is not anywhere in Canada where governments are having the luxury of saying let us continue to fund everything at the level we have already done and more.

Governments are asking managers throughout the length and breadth of government-delivered services to manage better, to set priorities according to their budgets they have. The global budget allows that to happen. That is the request we are making in this case and in many others, Sir.

Manitoba Heritage Federation Granting Authority

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, this government's decision to take the granting authority away from the Manitoba Heritage Federation in an attempt to politicize it is wrong. The minister has said that out of \$712,000 that has been allocated out to the Manitoba Heritage Federation, \$215,000 was used for administrative costs. That is wrong. In fact, 94 percent of the \$712,000 was spent for the grants.

Will the minister now tell us the real reason why this government is taking away the granting authority from the Manitoba Heritage Federation?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I think the issue here is that the heritage community should be well served through allocation of Lotteries dollars that do make good things happen throughout the breadth of this province. We know that administratively we can deliver a program that will serve the heritage community in a better fashion with a peer process and with a volunteer component.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the heritage community will be involved, and they will have an opportunity to ensure that the new program that is put in place will serve the community well.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the minister is wrong. The community was well served through the Heritage Federation. Is she trying to say that the Heritage Federation did not serve the heritage—

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

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my question is: Will the minister reconsider her decision to take away the granting authority and listen to what the Heritage Federation is trying to tell the government as opposed to making a decision without consulting with anyone?

* (1025)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, there will be major consultation with the heritage community in setting up the new program.

I understand that the Heritage Federation met with many of the major heritage organizations just last night. In fact, major heritage organizations realize and recognize that a decision has been made, that we will be putting in place a new structure to administer grants to the heritage community in a very reasonable fashion with a volunteer component and commitment.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, the heritage community will be well served and we want to get ahead with our consultation and ensure that the program and the procedures that are put in place will serve the community.

Heritage Community Granting Process

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, again, the heritage community was well served.

My question to the minister is: Will the minister assure this House that the decisions as to who gets Heritage grants will not be made from any politically appointed board or from the minister?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, the heritage community will be well served with the process that will be put in place in consultation with the community, with a peer process. I think that the entire heritage community will be the community that will make the decision on how well they are being served in the future.

Health Care System Childbirth Classes

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): You will know, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has been justifying cuts in hospitals, beds and patient services in the name of health care reform. It is very disturbing to now see that this minister and this government is cutting back just as deep on community-based services and prevention programs. This government has just eliminated total funding for the Manitoba Association for Childbirth and Family Education and in so doing has cut the only Spanish language childbirth preparation classes—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Considering that this—

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, with your question, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I will get right to the question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, you will.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: On what basis could this minister justify cutting back the only association that deals with labour companion services for women who are isolated and without family supports, who provide preparation classes for multiple births, and for vaginal births after Caesarean sections, when this program saves money and keeps women and children healthy?

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

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the ministry of Health through regional services provides significant childbirthing classes. Through other areas of funded agencies, language instruction sensitive to newcomer languages are provided. The service will be maintained, Sir, but not in a different location, and that is where we are coming at management across the system to avoid the kind of duplication parallel funding that my honourable friend has always said should not happen.

When we make those kinds of adjustments, service capability to be in place elsewhere, my honourable friend says, no, we cannot. It is NDP old-think revisited again where the answer is pour more money, never analyze outcome, never make any changes because that is the old way of doing things.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, why then would his own departmental staff in communicating this cutback to the Association for Childbirth and Family Education state clearly that some clients will undoubtedly be affected by the withdrawal of funding?

Will the minister, in light of this clear statement of an important service by his own department, now reinstate this \$21,000 grant for this association?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, in the adjustment period of seeking those services where other language capabilities are available, there may be a period of time where maybe some individuals are not readily accessing the other and alternate services that are in place. That is an adjustment period potential only. The long-run ability to deliver the services in fact, Sir, is there.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Would this minister reallocate over \$21,000 in salary increases for this year alone for the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister of Healthy Public Policy, the executive directors of Health Promotion and Women's Health, which is precisely the size of the cutback to the Manitoba Association for Childbirth and Family Education?

* (1030)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I will go one better. I will suggest my honourable friend in the New Democratic Party give up some of their overspending on malling of absolute balderdash to Manitobans and put that money toward health care.

Canadian Airlines International Reservation Office Layoffs

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday of this week, we saw the loss of 97 jobs at CN Rail, and today we hear about the loss of airline jobs in the province of Manitoba. We have been informed that in January of this year, the senior vice-president of customer service for Canadian Airlines International met with reservation employees and informed them that the Winnipeg reservation office and their 75 jobs do not have a future.

Can the Minister of Highways and Transportation indicate if he or his staff have had any discussions with Canadian Airlines International to discuss these layoffs in Manitoba?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Yes, my staff have been in touch with Canadian Airlines on the issue. We do not think that there is necessarily going to be a reduction in staff. According to the information we have received, we figure there are going to be benefits that are well accrued to people in Manitoba.

Centralization

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, we have a letter here to confirm these layoffs from the members of that particular company.

Will the Minister of Highways and Transportation confirm that Canadian Airlines International was considering Winnipeg as the location to centralize its weight and balance function but now has rejected Winnipeg at a loss of 75 to 100 jobs for this province?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): No, I cannot confirm that, but I want to indicate that we have grave concerns about the economic health of both our airlines. There has been ongoing discussion with the federal people, and we try and play our role in terms of making sure that the interests of Manitobans are going to be protected.

Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): In light of the information that the Premier said he was looking to protect the jobs in this province, we will give him a chance to do so now for his government.

Will the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), and Industry, Trade and Tourism

(Mr. Stefanson) communicate with Canadian Airlines International to determine if there is a role that we can play in this province to preserve the jobs that are currently here and to bring new airline jobs to the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): That is a very general type of question. I can assure the member that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and my other colleagues in government are continually looking to see whether we can enhance job opportunities in this province.

Economic Growth Full-Time Employment Decline

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, one of the indicators of deindustrialization is the conversion of full-time jobs into part-time jobs. After four years of Conservative government, five budgets and nearly two dozen important economic announcements, we have nearly 16,000 fewer full-time jobs in this province than we had when they came to power.

I would like to ask the Minister of Industry and Trade how he accounts for this.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I think when we talk about the economy, we have to keep in context the national economy as part of our discussion. We have had this discussion in the House on occasions before. No province, no jurisdiction within Canada, is happy with their current unemployment rates. The good news is Manitoba is faring better than most other provinces within Canada. In fact, our unemployment rate is the third lowest of all provinces.

The projections for growth in this province in 1992 are among the best, the Conference Board of Canada predicting that we will have the third highest growth rate within Canada in 1992. When you go through the list of economic indicators, which I will gladly do at some point with the honourable member, in most areas the predictions for 1992 for the province of Manitoba are very encouraging, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, we are losing full-time jobs at a rate twice that of the rest of Canada, twice that.

I would like to ask the Minister for Industry and Trade how he accounts for this loss.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, that change in the structuring of the economy is not something that is unique to Manitoba. It is something that is in fact occurring in each jurisdiction across Canada. I think the important aspect of the discussion is what is the future for Manitoba, what are the opportunities for Manitoba. I have touched on the unemployment statistics.

When you look at capital investment opportunities in our province, we are projected to have the fifth highest growth of all provinces in Canada. In the manufacturing sector, we are predicted to have the highest growth in capital investment in all of Canada in 1992. Those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker, will lead to jobs for Manitobans.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, why is this province doing so much worse than the rest of Canada? That is the question I have for the Minister of Industry and Trade, and I would like him to address that one. Why is our rate of loss of full-time jobs more than twice that of the rest of this country?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I think to a large extent I have answered the honourable member's question. There are restructurings occurring within the business community, within job opportunities within every province, but in terms of the overall performance of Manitoba, the overall unemployment rate of Manitoba, the predictions for Manitoba in 1992 are very encouraging as it relates to other provinces.

So, once again, as is normally the habit of the NDP and not traditionally the habit of the Liberals, the honourable member picks one isolated aspect of the economic indicators and likes to point to a negative aspect instead of looking at the positive aspects of our economic indicators in terms of where we are positioned in unemployment rates, where we are positioned in manufacturing investment, where we are positioned in overall investment, in terms of the future of Manitoba looking extremely favourable, in terms of the major economic indicators for 1992, Mr. Speaker.

North West Company Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism talked about one isolated fact. There are 59,000 isolated facts. They are called unemployed in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons we are losing jobs is because this government has a very strange way of conducting business. Yesterday, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism took part in a press conference at which time the province of Manitoba was losing 174 jobs as a result of the closure of the Hudson's Bay Company warehouse. At the same time, the minister was announcing 137 jobs being saved in the province. We are losing jobs.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism is: Why has this government contributed almost half of the cost of this development without protecting the jobs of the 174 people who work for Hudson's Bay store in Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, in response to that question, again, as usual I cannot accept any of the preamble of the honourable member for Flin Flon when he talks about unemployment and unemployment rates. I have to remind him that the highest unemployment rate that this province has experienced goes back to November of 1982 when it was 10.8 percent, and we know who was the government of the day, and they should know what the outfall is of coming through a recession.

In terms of the specific questions about jobs, the member for Flin Flon is now doing the opposite of the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock). In terms of full-time employment, the impact on Hudson's Bay Company is 60 full-time jobs. In terms of the impact of the announcement yesterday by North West Company is the creation immediately of 137 jobs in '93-94 going to a high of 189 full-time jobs.

The two decisions were not related. The Hudson's Bay Company made this decision in terms of their distribution system, as they are doing not only in Manitoba but across all of Canada in terms of how they handle their inventory. The good news for Manitobans is that North West Company, along with the Province of Manitoba, will be investing some \$13 million, creating 189 full-time jobs and creating an opportunity for a company that has sales of \$400 million from Manitoba businesses to do procurement for that company, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Storle: The Minister of industry, Trade and Tourism is beginning to believe his own press releases—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

* (1040)

Mr. Storle: Mr. Speaker, there are no full-time jobs as a result of the North West acquisition until next year.

My question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and it is a simple question.

There are 174 people employed by Hudson's Bay Company today. Why has the government not moved to protect the interests of those 174 people by ensuring that they could transfer or some accommodation would be made by the North West Company for employment? They are in, essentially, the same kind of operation. Today we have learned that is not happening. Why?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, we have created an opportunity for those employees by assisting North West Company to establish 189 full-time jobs right here in our province. North West Company indicated yesterday that they will be accepting applications in January of 1993, and that those full-time jobs will be up to 137 jobs by 1994, going up to a high of 189 full-time jobs, from a company that currently has its headquarters here in our province of 270 jobs, on top of that 28 stores in northern Manitoba, 140 stores in the rest of Canada and the opportunity for enhanced economic opportunities to providing services and supplies to North West Company.

Mr. Storle: Mr. Speaker, my final question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism is: Why does Hudson's Bay say that none of the 174 people will be retained by North West? Why could the province not protect those jobs and have some of those people at least transferred into jobs that may be occurring over the next decade?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I have to stand here in disbelief that the honourable member for Flin Flon is not supportive of a company that has its headquarters here in Canada, has 300 years of history here in Canada and is prepared to create 189 full-time jobs right here in our province for Manitobans, for those employees of Hudson's Bay Company so that they can get re-employment based on a decision that Hudson's Bay had made that was going to be made anyway. Those people would not have an opportunity for re-employment, whereas today they do because of a decision of this government, a decision of the City of Winnipeg and North West Company—absolute disbelief that they do not.

They stand there and they criticize job opportunities for Manitobans. Here are 189 full-time jobs being created, and the NDP do not support that initiative, Mr. Speaker. Shame, I say to them.

Manitoba Heritage Federation Political Interference

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Earlier this week the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship replied to one of my questions by saying that if we were setting policy for the Heritage Federation, we would be accused of political interference, yet two years ago this minister signed a contract with the federation representing 87 heritage organizations to communicate policies and priorities for heritage development.

Would the minister tell the House exactly what she has said to the Heritage Federation on those occasions when she has conveyed the policy and whether she in fact believes that that is political interference?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I have never in any way attempted to interfere with the ongoing operations of the Manitoba Heritage Federation. I believe that government has a responsibility to ensure that the dollars that are going out to the heritage community and indeed to all communities within the province of Manitoba are administered in an efficient and effective way to best serve the community.

Mr. Speaker, we are attempting to do that through a new process in consultation with the heritage community and the heritage organizations. The community will be well served through the new process.

Meeting Cancellations

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Could I ask the same minister then: Why did she again break her contract with the federation to annually review the effectiveness of their results based upon agreed-upon objectives and cancel six meetings with the federation and permit her deputy minister to cancel five more meetings with the federation?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier this week, I believe, to questioning, or last week, whenever it was, it was a budget decision to change the method that the heritage

community would be funded under. As a result of it being a budget decision, it was announced to the Heritage Federation on budget day because of budget confidentiality. We are living up to the contract by giving them 90 days notice that in fact the contract would be terminated, as it states.

Ms. Friesen: I think the contract has been broken so many—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Volunteer Role

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Will the minister explain to the House how she plans to retain the confidence and the assistance of those hundreds of volunteers who have worked for many years for the federation? How does she explain that she is going to get them to assist her when in fact they have been so shabbily treated in the last few months by this department?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I have letters on file from members of the heritage community who have applauded government's decision to change the method of funding and to try to efficiently and effectively administer funds to their community. Volunteers and volunteer input will be part of the process, and I have indicated time and time again that there will be a peer process through the heritage community to determine where the grant funding will go.

Repap Manitoba Inc. Swan River Area

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance.

When the government finally admitted that they made a mistake on the Repap deal, the minister went to Swan River to meet with people to discuss whether or not they wanted the south area kept in the Repap deal. Since that time, he has had resolutions sent to him from the people of Swan River saying that they do not want to be in the cut area.

I want to ask the minister: Now that he has these resolutions, will he put that into part of his plan as he renegotiates the deal with Repap?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member is mistaken. We did not make a mistake in divesting of—who made a mistake was the former government in trying to maintain

something that was not working very well; Manfor, \$200-million loss over the years, \$30 million lost one year when the corporation was shepherded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). So when the member says that we have made a mistake divesting of Manfor into Repap, I categorically reject that.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to whether or not the negotiations and the renegotiations that the southern wood forest is held inside or outside, let me say, that is a matter that will be discussed in its fullness. I am very well aware of the resolutions that have come forward from the Swan River area, and indeed I am taking them into account through the process of renegotiation.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, we told this government that they are categorically wrong. They should not use chlorine bleach, and the cut area was wrong. The people tell them the same thing.

Has the minister communicated with the people of Swan River indicating whether or not he will take their advice seriously?

Mr. Manness: Well, the short answer is yes, Mr. Speaker, but I want the members opposite to tell us where they stand as a collective or not with respect to logging within provincial parks. I want to see where the members opposite are coming. Does the member for Swan River agree with her Leader on this issue? Where does the Leader stand on this issue? It is pretty easy for the member opposite to be on one side one day and one side the other. Is she with her constituents, or is she against them on this issue?

Ms. Wowchuk: Will this minister now meet with the committee from Swan River, and will he begin to look at other opportunities for the use of the wood in the Swan River area since they took away all opportunities when they killed the wafer board plant deal with their signing of Repap?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I would love to know more about this phantom wafer board plant. The member tries to give the impression that there was a deal. Where was the deal? If there was a deal, the provincial government certainly did not need to be involved. If somebody wanted to come forward and provide their own resources to employ people towards that type of activity, that would have been fine by way of this provincial government. So where was the deal? There was not one.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that we will certainly have provided an opportunity for the so-called southern wood resource that, indeed, if the community there is approached by some concern wishing to base an activity, not based on taxpayer money, based on the marketplace and it has a viability, certainly government would be prepared to consider that. That is the challenge that I have held out to the Swan River area.

Federal Co-op Housing Program Funding Reduction

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I would like to report a minor miracle. For the first time the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) and I are in agreement. We are in agreement on a serious issue and that is the unilateral cutback in the federal Co-op Housing Program. It is detrimental to the best interests of Manitoba. It means fewer housing starts, fewer construction jobs and less affordable housing for Manitobans. I would like to ask the minister if he has protested this unilateral move to the federal Minister of Housing or the federal Minister of Finance.

* (1050)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, on April 10 of this year, the Housing ministers from across the country met in Ottawa to discuss the 3 percent cap on CMHC budget funding. That budget cap is going to have serious ramifications on public housing right across the country. I believe somewhere in the area of 25,000 housing units will be lost over the next four years as a result of that impact.

Mr. Speaker, we have protested in the strongest possible terms. But not only that, not only have we protested the issue, we have offered the federal government an alternative, an alternative to reprioritize their budgets and an alternative from our side to streamline our operations, reduce operating costs, increase revenue in order to have a partnership to see social housing available for all people in need.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Under Rule 27, I would like to move a motion requesting a debate on a matter of urgent public importance.

I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), that under Rule 27, the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the decision by this government to withdraw granting authority of the Manitoba Heritage Federation and its decision to politicize the process.

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

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Budget Debate is over; the Throne Speech Debate is over; there are no relevant bills. The government needs to reverse its decision before the department comes up to the Estimates process, which could be four, five weeks from now.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you why I believe that it is important that it is in the public's best interest that debate on this issue be heard. What the government has done is taken away the funding authority from the Manitoba Heritage Federation. Individuals, literally hundreds of volunteers, represent and have volunteered thousands of hours toward the preservation of the heritage throughout the province of Manitoba, including rural and urban, where we had urban and rural members on the Heritage board.

This is, in the Liberal Party's opinion, a step backwards when we see what we are seeing done to the heritage community, what we have seen done to MIC and the multicultural community. The minister has tried to justify it, has tried to justify her decision.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Urgency. You are supposed to argue urgency.

Mr. Lamoureux: This is the urgency. I tell the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to be patient, and he will try to understand how urgent the matter is. He should be supporting the MUPI. [interjection]

This is why it is urgent, if the Deputy Premier would listen. The minister is on the record of saying that the reason why the government has decided to take away the funding from the Heritage board is because a third of their costs—and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) even from his seat has said, a third of the administrative costs, a third of the grant money that

is allocated from the Lotteries to the federation is used towards administration. Mr. Speaker, we know that is not true. We know that in fact 94 percent last year was actually used. That is nowhere even close to what the government is saying.

It was only two years ago in fact when this government entered into an agreement with the Manitoba Heritage Federation. Within that agreement they had an agreement on the administrative costs, and at no point, from the day that agreement was signed back on April 2, 1990, has this government ever negotiated or hinted or suggested in any fashion whatsoever to the Heritage Federation that their administrative costs were too high?

What in fact happened was, while we were sitting inside the Chamber listening to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) give the budget speech, 24 hours notice was given to the Heritage Federation to come down to the minister's office to speak to the deputy minister, at which point in time, we are told, they were losing their granting authority. Prior to that, they had absolutely no indication whatsoever.

Again, the minister has said that the Heritage Federation has been in violation of the agreement. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister: Where have they been in violation of the agreement? If there is anyone that has been violation of the agreement, it has been the government.

Mr. Speaker, if we take a look at some of the things that the Heritage Federation has done and where they have had their grants going—in all disciplines, archaeologically, archives, natural history and environment, genealogy, historical architecture, history, museology. They have done their job, contrary to what the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson) tried to say in the House. They were being served. The heritage community was being served, and they were being served well. The volunteers were doing an excellent job; the minister and this government are dead wrong.

That is why it is urgent that we have this debate today, because if we do not have this debate today, we are going to be going into the Estimates, which is the only other time we are going to have to discuss this. The decision has to be changed prior to us going into that debate.

* (1100)

The government House leader (Mr. Manness), as the Minister of Finance, knows full well that we cannot go into Culture and Heritage four weeks from now if in fact, Mr. Speaker, we even get there. We see what is happening in the Department of Health. There is no guarantee that we will even get into Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. So it is urgent because we need to ensure that everything that is possible is done to try to get the government to change its mind. They are moving in the wrong direction. They are taking an apolitical granting body and turning the granting authority into politics.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the issue before us is urgency. I find it deplorable that the Liberal House critic would flaunt the rules in the fashion that he did. The issue is urgency. The issue is not to debate the issue, it is to try and provide his point of view to the House that unless this is debated now, right today, there will be some significant change not in the manner in which but indeed the total funding that goes to the heritage community in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the member by his own admission, I think, would suggest that he has not made his point at all as to the urgency. That is what the rules say we are supposed to spend these five minutes directed towards is the urgency. The member countered his own argument by saying, yes, the Estimates are coming up and we can ask questions then. That is the truth, but if this was such an urgent matter for the members opposite, why did they decide on the list of department's Estimates that it would be towards the last three-quarters of the time—Culture, Heritage and Citizenship after Health, Rural Development, Agriculture, Native Affairs, Seniors Directorate, Labour, Civil Service, Housing, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Family Services, Education, Urban Affairs, Status of Women, Highways and Transportation, and then Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

The member knows fully well that he has other opportunities. He knows Estimates are coming up. He knows his members have an opportunity to grieve on this issue, if they want, on any day the Supply motion is before the House. He knows that he can bring forward a private members' resolution and appeal to the House to bring it forward then in the order if he so wishes, and of course, there is concurrence. But what I find unacceptable, not that the members do not have the right to bring forward

a request looking for emergency debate, is that he would spend a full 80 percent to 90 percent of his time not arguing on the urgency but arguing the issue. I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is your responsibility to call the member to order and force him to deal with urgency.

This is not an urgent matter under the rules of definition. There are other opportunities to debate this, and I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, that you should rule in that respect. Thank you.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address this issue and to make the argument that this is an important and immediate issue, and I look forward to your ruling upon this. I think, first of all, both the second opposition party and ourselves have raised this issue a number of times in Question Period. I do not, unfortunately, have all the answers with me, but the answers that the minister gave to my questions both today and yesterday I do not feel answered the urgency of the situation, and they certainly did not answer the content or the principles that I was trying to address. So it seems to me that a debate, and an immediate debate, given the minister's reluctance to deal in a straightforward manner with our questions, is an important issue.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) raised the issue in his capacity as House leader, raised the question of the order of Estimates, and that is an important one, Mr. Speaker. It is true that Culture, Heritage, and Citizenship is down the list. The minister well knows that this is done by negotiation. For example, would he want to argue the issue of Health being the last one last year? It has no relationship to the nature of the subject or to the importance of it. The point is, it is negotiated and it is based upon ministers' timetables, members' timetables and a negotiation between all the three groups, so that is an absolutely irrelevant argument, and it is a very stupid one to have made in this kind of situation.

In the Estimates situation, Mr. Speaker, we have some weeks yet before we get to it, and it may indeed be one of the very last ones that we are able to get to. We have tried to deal with this in Question Period. I have in fact brought private members' resolutions in the past which have addressed the same issue as this. Last year, I brought a private members' resolution which drew the minister's attention to the fact that she was drawing more of Lotteries money into her department when in fact

her own policy suggested that she should not be doing that. This is the same principle; Lotteries money is being drawn into the department. So we have raised the principle of this in private members' resolutions. The point that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was making, I think, is perhaps a little ill-founded.

It is an important issue, Mr. Speaker, because it involves people right across this province. Eighty-seven heritage organizations are represented by the Heritage Federation of Manitoba. It is the umbrella organization for the distribution of, in heritage terms, a very large amount of money. It affects people in all parts of the province. The federation has been formed for a number of years. It has developed many ways of distributing its money, and it has done it in a way that has been acceptable to many people in the heritage field in Manitoba. It has done it with peer review, and it has done it with a very large number of volunteers.

I think the urgency here, Mr. Speaker, is the shabby and arrogant way in which this government has treated those volunteers. I think the kinds of co-operation that the government anticipates and expects in a transition period are simply not going to be there. You do not turn around and break a contract, a written contract that you made two years ago, with 87 organizations who acted in good faith. You do not break that, and then in a transition period or even in the longer term, expect them to co-operate with you and to bring together those volunteers in the same way that they have been able to work with Heritage in the past.

So it is the arrogance of the government which is at stake. It is the transition period and the distribution of the monies which is at stake. I think the government should certainly be prepared to debate that in a way that the minister, for example, was not prepared to answer in Question Period today. I think, again, an immediate and important issue that the government should be concerned about is the question that I raised in Question Period today, that the contract was broken.

The minister had the responsibility, as I said last week, as I have said again this week, under Section 6.4 of that contract of April 2, 1992, to communicate, and I am quoting, Mr. Speaker: provincial policies on priorities for Heritage development to the federation and to annually review the effectiveness

of results achieved by the federation based on agreed-upon objectives.

I do not believe that has taken place. The minister has been unable in the House, on more than one occasion, this week and last week, to enunciate what the policies and priorities are of her department. She has been unable to say when she met with the federation and whether in fact any of those policies have ever been conveyed to the federation. In fact, when she was challenged on this, what she said was, it would be considered political interference to convey those policies. So clearly there seems to be some political confusion on the government side, and I do believe that this requires some immediate discussion.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the purpose for this debate today is because there is no other opportunity to debate this issue. That is the matter of urgency, and that is the matter of relevancy. This contract was dissolved by the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): . . . rules, Mr. Speaker, these issues, are we all available then to rise and speak on the urgency for five minutes? Is that the rule, all the members of the House?

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable government House leader, two cases in point: first of all, I had indicated to the House, and I will quote this, I said: "Before determining whether the motion meets the requirements of our Rule 27, the honourable member for Inkster will have five minutes to state his case for urgency of debate on this matter. A spokesperson for the other parties will also have five minutes to address the position of their party respecting the urgency of this matter."

Rule 27(2), which I believe what I just stated to the House is derived from, states: "A member making a motion under sub-rule (1) may explain his arguments in favour of his motion in not more than five minutes, and one member from each of the other parties in the House may state the position of his party with respect to the motion, in not more than five minutes."

Point of Order

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, we know that on similar debates in the past, the introductory person has been allowed to speak as, in fact, an introductory person of all three parties. All we request of the Speaker at this point is that he review past precedents on this matter to ensure that the rules are going to be applied equally to all members of this House.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Leader of the second opposition party, I have to indicate that it is contrary to the rules, but what I will do, I will review all my past rulings. The point of order that has been raised, I am taking under advisement, and I will report back to the House.

At this point, though, I will adhere to the rule because there actually is no justification, and if I have done so, as I have indicated, I will report back to the House.

At this point, I would like to thank all honourable members for their advice as to whether the motion proposed by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) should be debated today. The notice required under our subrule 27(1) was received.

As members know, our Rule 27 and Beauchesne's Citation 389, and I would like to quote this for the members: "The 'specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration', for the discussion of which the adjournment of the House may be moved under Standing Order 52 must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention."

Also, Beauchesne's 390, this one I want to put special emphasis on. I am advising the House at this point in time that we will adhere to this one. If we have deviated from it, I apologize, but this rule, "Urgency" within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means 'urgency of debate', when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and the public interest demands that discussion take place immediately."

They provide the conditions required for the matter of urgent public importance to proceed. First, the subject matter must be so pressing that the ordinary opportunities for debate will not allow it to be brought forward early enough. Second, it must be demonstrated that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention.

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has used his opportunity to debate the matter as a grievance, and Estimates for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship will not be considered by the Committee of Supply for some time. However, I do not believe that the matter is so pressing that the public interest will suffer if the proposed motion is not debated today. Accordingly, I am ruling the motion out of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, with respect, I challenge the ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair, having been challenged, all those in favour of supporting the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

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

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

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

Yeas

Cummings, Daquay, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Ernst, Findlay, Helwer, Laurendeau, Manness, McAlpine, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Reimer, Render, Rose, Stefanson, Sveinson, Vodrey.

Nays

Alcock, Barrett, Carstairs, Cerilli, Cheema, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Edwards, Enns, Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Harper, Hickey, Lamoureux, Maloway, Martindale, Reid, Santos, Storie, Wasylycla-Leis, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 21, Nays 22.

Mr. Speaker: The rule of the Chair having been overturned, the question before the House is: Shall the debate proceed? It is agreed?

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, what I was hoping to do, I would like to make just a very brief announcement

with respect to House Business before the debate ensues.

Mr. Speaker: Will the House allow the honourable government House leader? Yes. Okay.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I would like to cancel the Standing Committee on Economic Development previously scheduled for Tuesday, April 28, 1992, at 10 a.m. to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation and to change and reschedule that meeting to Thursday, May 21 at 10 a.m., at which time the Economic Development Standing Committee will meet to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation.

Also, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Economic Development will meet to consider the '90 and '91 Annual Reports of the Manitoba Mineral Resources on Thursday, May 7 at 10 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: That is agreed? I thank the honourable government House leader.

I would ask the honourable Deputy Speaker to take the Chair, please.

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

* (1220)

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: I should start off by thanking the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) for supporting what we believe is a very serious issue. As I have alluded to in my remarks as to why we should be debating this particular issue that we have before us, it is because it is such a sensitive issue and it has such a large impact on all Manitobans, not only the generations that we have now, but future generations. What we are talking about is the heritage funding and who is going to be distributing those funds on behalf of the Lotteries.

The system previously, prior to the budget, was that the Manitoba Heritage Federation, an organization that has been respected for a number of years, an organization that has literally hundreds of volunteers and commitments of thousands of hours towards the preservation of the heritage of the province of Manitoba—and what we have seen happening is that the granting authority has been withdrawn from the Heritage Federation in support of, Madam Deputy Speaker, some political-appointed board, as all we know.

We have seen what they did with the Manitoba Intercultural Council, where they took it away from MIC. They appointed a political board in which workers of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) have been appointed to, now responsible for allocating out those grant monies, and now we see the same thing happening to the Manitoba Heritage Federation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what is most important is perception. The perception on this issue is all wrong because the public, Madam Deputy Speaker, know full well that the government, by taking away the funding allocation from the Manitoba Heritage Federation and adopting a principle of having grants handed out based on politics, based on a politically appointed board, which they have done with the MIC, is wrong.

Not only is it a question of perception in this case, it is also tragic in the sense that the Heritage Federation has done a service to all Manitobans. In return for the hours of dedication that they have put in to preserving that heritage over the past number of years, the government did not even have the basic decency to try to come to some sort of an agreement with the Heritage Federation if in fact they had problems with the Heritage Federation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Heritage Federation was given 24 hours notice to attend a meeting, at which point they were told that they were no longer going to be responsible for the allocation of grants to the different heritage groups and individuals. The Minister responsible for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson) said, and the Premier (Mr. Filmon), from his seat, the reason why is because a third of the costs of the allocated \$712,000, that the minister herself said out in the hallway, is being used for administration. She even made reference to \$215,000 out of the \$712,000. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is not true. In fact, what we have seen is that 94 percent was in fact allocated for grants.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what is going to happen now to all of those who have put in that effort, that time, that commitment, those hundreds of volunteers throughout the province of Manitoba, when they see the carpet pulled from under their feet and are now being told that they did not do a good job, that they did not do a sufficient job? That is what the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship said today during Question Period.

In a question that I asked, she implied that the community now will be better served as a result of

this government's new bold change, that in fact the heritage groups will be better off for it. Well, what do they base that on? The minister herself will say that they do not have anything in place currently or nor do they know, that in fact they want to go out and consult. Madam Deputy Speaker, what they did is they took away the funding authority knowing in the back of their minds what they want to do—they want to make it more political—but just not too sure how they are going to do it because they want to now go out and consult.

Well, ultimately, what we will see this government do is the same thing that they did for MIC. They will come up with some grandiose scream in which they can try to take more political credit. That is the whole problem with this government. Because they did not get enough credit and the Manitoba Heritage Federation was getting the credit for approving the grants, that is the reason why this government has chosen to do it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would be very interested in knowing why the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) voted with us on this issue because it is one of two things. It is either, as often has been referred as, burning the Speaker or it is that he believes that the debate that we wanted in this Chamber was a valid debate, that in fact the arguments that myself and the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) tried to put across, and the member from the New Democratic Party, were correct and the government House leader's (Mr. Manness) arguments were wrong. The government House leader knows that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that if there was a free vote on this, we would have seen a lot more support, and the government House leader had an obligation to recognize the importance of debating this issue today. Because he refused to

allow the debate to proceed, unfortunately, we are not going to get as much time as we would have liked to have had to debate this issue. Plus, he put the Speaker of the Chamber in a hell of a bind. If it is unparliamentary, I withdraw that, but my feelings are the same, that the government House leader has caused the situation that we are currently in, in terms of the procedure, that the minister responsible for Culture and Heritage has done a disservice to the province of Manitoba by the actions that she has taken.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if it is the Heritage Federation that they oppose, well, let us have this other umbrella group, let us have another form of grassroots involvement that has nothing to do with political appointments. That was the third question that I asked the minister today: Give us the assurance that she will not have the decision-making body as to who is going to receive the grants; give us the assurance that it will not be a politically appointed board. Her response was, no, she is not going to give us that assurance.

What that tells me is that this government wants to do the same thing for the Heritage grants that they did for MIC. That is wrong. This government is leading us down the wrong path when it comes to giving out grants in the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. It has chosen to politicize wherever it is possible, and no minister has done the job like the Minister of Culture and Heritage when—
* (1230)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Friday, April 24, 1992

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