



Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS  
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan  
Speaker*



VOL. XLII No. 82 - 1:30 p.m., TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 1993

**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     |
| 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, Cliff               | 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      |
| GRAY, Avis                 | Crescentwood       | Liberal |
| HELWER, Edward R.          | Gimli              | PC      |
| HICKES, George             | Point Douglas      | NDP     |
| LAMOUREUX, Kevin           | Inkster            | Liberal |
| LATHLIN, Oscar             | The Pas            | NDP     |
| LAURENDEAU, Marcel         | St. Norbert        | PC      |
| MALLOWAY, 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      |
| ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.      | Pembina            | PC      |
| PALLISTER, Brian           | Portage la Prairie | 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, Rosam             | Swan River         | NDP     |
| <i>Vacant</i>              | Rossmere           |         |
| <i>Vacant</i>              | Rupertsland        |         |

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 15, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Mr. Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Storie). 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? [agreed]

**Mr. Clerk (William Remnant):** The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees):** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of

Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Development Corporation for the year ending March 31, 1992.

#### 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 from the Rosenort School twenty-five Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Grant Plett. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

Also this afternoon, from the John Henderson Junior High School, we have twenty-eight Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Eric Friesen. This school is located in the constituency of Rossmere.

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

\* (1335)

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Health Care Profession Layoffs—Impact on Patient Care

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Speaker, when the minister and his U.S.-based multimillion dollar consultant said they were going to cut \$45 million to \$65 million from St. Boniface Hospital and Health Sciences Centre, we stated that this would cost hundreds of jobs and would make our hospitals more like U.S.-based, profit-orientated institutions.

Now that the cutting is going on according to the Connie Curran plan—it is right here in the contract,

Mr. Speaker, in the schedule, page 6—going exactly true to form at St. Boniface Hospital, can the minister advise this House how many more caregivers, how many primary caregivers are going to be laid off at Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital before they are finished their cutting, and how can this not help but cut the quality of patient care?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I am rather shocked that my honourable friends the NDP and their colleagues would applaud such an erroneous statement.

First of all, let me tell my honourable friend—and he can contact the president of St. Boniface Hospital to have this fact confirmed—this initiative of layoffs announced today is not connected to the Connie Curran consulting contract.

Let me explain to my honourable friend, because from time to time they wish to have information, and I intend to provide it for them, and they can have this information confirmed by contacting Mr. Litvack.

Firstly, as I explained in Estimates, and this Estimates explanation was given to my honourable friend Tuesday last, Thursday last, and it involves a closure of 39 surgical beds because St. Boniface is now managing surgical patients according to an experimental admissions process, a not-for-admissions process, replacement of inpatient to outpatient, all of the things that a changing health care system demands be done.

They have proven that system will work. They can deliver their surgical slate in the same quantity as before with 39 fewer beds. My honourable friend would not expect St. Boniface to staff empty surgical beds. That is part of the layoffs.

The second part of the layoffs that were announced today is as a result of an investigation internally undertaken by St. Boniface which identified that they had a more generous staffing ratio in nursing, and that was identified a year and a half ago, and the investigation that commenced a year and a half ago was completed approximately a year ago. They have now worked through that process and have established this staffing mix which led to this layoff.

I repeat, Sir, and my honourable friend, if he has the courtesy to do it, ought to check with Mr. Litvack. He will find this is not attached to the

Connie Curran process as he would like to allege and mislead Manitobans about.

**Mr. Chomlak:** Mr. Speaker, we are even more worried by what the minister has stated. That means there are more layoffs and more multimillion dollar cuts as a result of the minister's initiative.

Mr. Speaker, then, if the cuts are not related to Connie Curran, the paper indicates they are related to the budget funding cutbacks of this government. It might be related to a certain extent to some reorganization, but why—and there is \$20 million more cut in the hospital budgets this year.

How can the minister stand up and say this is somehow reorganization and will not affect patient care, when they have cut millions of dollars from the hospitals' budgets?

\* (1340)

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, it is not me who is saying that. It is the management of St. Boniface Hospital reacting to budget realities and program changes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am sure my honourable friend understands not-for-admission surgery, where you move a surgical procedure from inpatient, where the individual is admitted to hospital, occupies a bed, where you shift that surgical procedure to outpatient where there is no admission.

Surely my honourable friend would agree that you do not need the bed. Surely my honourable friend would admit that you do not need the staff who cared for the patient in that bed. Surely my honourable friend would not want to have empty beds staffed, because that is the shift in the health care system that is identified.

That is why St. Boniface is able to say that with a change in admission procedures, where patients are admitted only on the day of surgery, for instance, not the day before, you use fewer beds. St. Boniface has also done substantive work, as other hospitals are doing, in terms of not-for-admission surgery replacing former inpatient surgical procedures. Surely my honourable friend is not disagreeing with that better management of resource.

Now, it is unfortunate, Sir, that in downsizing the beds required for surgery, there are layoffs, but the number of surgeries, the quality of surgery and

patient care is not compromised in that better management of resource.

### **Role of Licensed Practical Nurses**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that only 30 of the 148 layoffs are surgical nurses. Why does the minister keep going off and not dealing with the question?

My final supplementary to the minister is: Why is the minister allowing the virtual decimation of the LPNs at St. Boniface Hospital when he has told me twice in Estimates he is still awaiting a report due at the end of June with respect to the LPNs and nursing mixes, et cetera?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Now, Mr. Speaker, for the second part of the answer my honourable friend received in response to his first question, which I now know he will understand when I repeat it the second time, the staffing nurse mix in St. Boniface Hospital was under investigation internally by St. Boniface Hospital approximately a year and a half ago. A subsequent report indicated to St. Boniface that they could downsize nursing staff across the system and not compromise care. That led to the layoff decisions that are there.

The process will be as it has been in other acute care hospitals, the new staffing mix being registered nurses and nurses' aides versus the mix that is currently in place of registered nurses, LPNs and nurses' aides.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend says, what confidence do I have? I have confidence that the management, the board, the individuals planning care at St. Boniface Hospital, when they say these changes will not compromise the quality of care, I believe them.

I suggest my honourable friend, if he does not, he maybe should enlighten himself by phoning that hospital and having that information provided directly as I have given him here today.

### **Airline Industry Government Support**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, today, upwards of a thousand Air Canada employees came to the steps of the Manitoba Legislature, calling upon the provincial government to take steps to protect and save their jobs.

I know the government makes light of this matter, but this is very serious to these employees. The employees have asked that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) be presented with this Air Canada political action committee banner displaying the signatures of all the Air Canada concerned employees, and I will send it across for the Premier's information.

My question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. What specific steps is this minister and this government now prepared to take to protect the airline jobs in Manitoba since this Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism stated today that he supported and valued only the Air Canada jobs?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** Mr. Speaker, I have to correct part of the preamble from the member for Transcona. I did not suggest that I valued only the Air Canada jobs. I suggested that we value the airline industry jobs in Manitoba from both particular companies.

As I outlined today on the steps of the Legislature, and as the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) has done on previous occasions to questions from the member for Transcona during the Estimates process, this is a process we have been monitoring through the National Transportation Agency. We have been monitoring it through the compliance review that was undertaken.

We are in ongoing dialogue with representatives from Air Canada, from all kinds of individuals in the organization who have met and had discussions with the Minister of Transportation, with the Premier (Mr. Filmon), with myself. The Minister of Transportation has met with an employee group. We will be meeting with an employee group very shortly in terms of this issue.

Recognizing that this is a national issue, the situation affecting the airline industry is not unique to Manitoba. It affects all of Canada, each and every province in Canada.

In terms of his very specific question, he knows full well the emphasis and importance we put on the airline industry and transportation in Manitoba. He knows some of the initiatives we have taken in this province to support that industry, initiatives doing away with some of the harmful things that were done by the previous NDP government, Mr. Speaker, in terms of aviation fuel tax, in terms of our work with Gemini, in terms of our work with the

maintenance facility, in terms of getting more work from Continental Airlines and so on.

We will continue to help the airline industry in those kinds of ways as well, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Reid:** Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer the question when asked what specific steps he was prepared to take to support the jobs in this province.

Since the Minister of Industry and Trade has stated his government will be supporting the Air Canada employees, will he be extending the same offer to the employees of Canadian Airlines, and if so, what form will that support take, or is he only doing as his Premier (Mr. Filmon) has stated and as he just stated a few moments ago, that he will be continuing to monitor the situation as events unfold, and what good will that do for the employees?

\* (1345)

**Mr. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, once again, I have to correct the honourable member. We did not say we were supporting one over the other, and he knows that full well. He has asked questions before.

In fact, he asked questions in this House when the proposal was being put together in terms of Canadian, and they were looking for financial support from provinces. The Province of British Columbia and the Province of Alberta provided financial support along with the federal government. The Province of Manitoba did not intervene at that time. We did not provide financial support even though the honourable member was asking questions along those lines at that particular point in time.

We have indicated we are prepared to meet with the employees of Air Canada. We have also indicated we are prepared to meet with the employees of Canadian.

### **Airline Industry Reregulation**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** My supplementary, Mr. Speaker: Is the government now saying, since they are expressing some form of support here for the airline employees, that this government is prepared to call upon the federal government to reregulate the transportation industry in Canada?

Will the Minister of Transportation be calling for such action in light of the fact that Manitoba has lost

5,000 transportation jobs since they came to office, over a thousand of them in the airline industry in this province?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, the pleasures of being in opposition and the statements you can make is something that is quite puzzling at times.

The member who asked the question of my colleague here just a minute ago made reference to a thousand Air Canada employees out there. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is right outside my office window, and I can pretty well judge how many people are there, and if that is how he assesses his figures, then he has no credibility in terms of the kinds of statements he makes.

Mr. Speaker, during the Estimates process, when this member asked me what our position was with the air industry between Air Canada and Canadian, I asked him what the position of the opposition was, looking for some position they could take. At that time, no position was put forward.

Today, when there are a couple of hundred people out there, the member sees fit to stand up and support the Air Canada group, and here he has changed his position again and is asking if we are going to support the Canadian group as well.

The position we have continually put forward, this government, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), my colleagues and myself is that we are monitoring it. We would be foolish to take a position at this time on either side because we are concerned about what will happen to the economy and to jobs in this province, and that position is still maintained by us.

### **Assiniboine River Diversion Public Hearing Schedule**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment with respect to the Assiniboine water diversion.

Last night, the Clean Environment Commission held its first hearing. One has to question the timing of these hearings being in the month of June when the government knows full well the farmers in rural Manitoba are very busy at this time of year.

The minister's representative was very clear in demonstrating that it was the minister who wanted to have these meetings conducted in the month of June. In fact, Ed Connery, the former member for Portage, said he knew how things worked with this

government and said he believed that the hearings in June were a deliberate ploy of this government in order to push it through.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: Given that this proposal has been in the works for so long, why is the minister holding the hearings in the month of June?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me when I look around on this side of the House that there are substantially more people on this side who have been involved in the agricultural community than I see over there, particularly in the Liberal ranks.

Mr. Speaker, in April, farmers are on the land in many cases. In May, they are on the land. In June, they are probably on the land, and as well, in July, August, September, October, and in November, we are getting into the holiday season.

So it seemed to me when the information was brought forward, when the process was ready to proceed, we recommended to the commission that they begin the process upon receipt of all of the final documentation. That was received in April, and the commission was advised they could begin preparing for hearings.

\*(1350)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the reason why it is occurring in June, to be honest, is because this government is trying to fast track this project. That is the reason why they are trying to do it.

Information on the construction, operation and maintenance of the water storage facility—Mr. Speaker, the minister cannot even tell me where the pipelines are going to be going, yet the CEC is supposed to be evaluating—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Why is this government proceeding with CEC hearings before we even have the necessary information in order to justify a decision?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, for this member to say this is on a fast track, they are pretty slow over there if they think this is a fast track. The fact is this proposal has been around for years. The information was brought forward, and it seems to me about three years ago, the Pembina valley began this process.

But, Mr. Speaker, the more important part of his question is whether or not there is adequate information available to the commission.

Mr. Speaker, I have said before, and I repeat again for the record, this will be a complete, open and unfettered operation on the part of the Clean Environment Commission. If there is information they believe they need to make a decision, then they will request it.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the Portage water treatment plant, itself, the proponent, is saying that there needs to be more environmental study conducted in order for them to base a decision.

My question again to the minister: How can CEC make a decision when, in fact, not all the facts are presented, when the minister or no one from his department can say where the pipes are going to be going, where the construction—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, the Clean Environment Commission will have a number of areas which they will examine to decide if it is appropriate to recommend a licence. I would think the first part of their inquiry will be regarding the volumes of water and whether or not there are impacts or mitigations.

Any other information they want in addition to that, they will be perfectly free within their authority to request, and, in fact, they have power of subpoena if they need additional information.

Mr. Speaker, I am fully satisfied they will seek whatever information they need if it is not already in front of them.

### **Assiniboine River Diversion Information Release**

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Last night, the Clean Environment Commission, as was mentioned, held the first public meeting on the proposed Assiniboine River diversion, and it is clear that the government is reluctant to release many of the important documents concerning this particular project.

Given the admission that many documents are shown only if they are asked for, I ask the minister now, will he publicly release a list of all relevant documents concerning the projects and where Manitobans can view these documents?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table this information which is the entire information from the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources that will be presented to the Clean Environment Commission as these hearings proceed.

### **Assiniboine River Diversion Pipeline Route**

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment.

I want to ask: When will the route for the project be finalized, since the government is asking for approval for the project without people even knowing where the pipeline is going?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, let me address the preamble from the previous question.

It seems to me that all the information that is relevant to this hearing has been made available through the public registry process.

### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, a question was asked. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) responded.

Our rules prohibit debate. I think it is entirely out of order for the Minister of Environment now to attempt to answer the previous question that presumably had already been answered by the Minister of Natural Resources.

I would ask him to answer the current question, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps we can get some more information from this government.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised, I would like to remind the honourable minister to deal with the matter raised.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Cummings:** Obviously, Mr. Speaker, they are a little sensitive on the other side when they are trying to misrepresent what is a very open process.

The process is open and unfettered and you know it. You are trying to reflect on a process that is clear and open to the public. Any information that is required for the process is available.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment has always said any additional information that people

want is available. The records that he is, by a backhanded method, trying to refer to as not being on the record have been made voluntarily available to anybody who wants them.

### **Public Hearings—Selkirk**

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, it is very clear there are a number of unanswered questions concerning this particular project, and it has very serious impacts upon the community of Selkirk.

Since this government has reversed its decision twice and has agreed now to hold hearings in Brandon and in Winnipeg, will it now also agree to hold hearings in Selkirk?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, for a bunch who do not like the hearings and criticize the process, now he wants more of it.

\* (1355)

### **Education System Medical Services**

**Mr. John Plohan (Dauphin):** After that punch line, it is a difficult one to follow, Mr. Speaker.

Last week, the Minister of Education confirmed that she supposedly is the lead minister developing a protocol and a procedure in support services for children in schools with special health needs, procedures such as catheterizations, tube feedings and so on.

After nearly 18 months of supposedly working on a priority issue as this is for the government, we have seen no developments, no results. No action plan has been developed. We do not even have a time line for the protocol or even consideration of how it will be delivered.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Education, in light of this important issue and how important it is to the teachers, health professionals, teachers' aides, school boards and parents, why is the minister wasting so much time in getting this procedure and protocol and services and training in place for medical services in the schools?

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr. Speaker, as I have explained to the member over the several hours we have discussed this, the Department of Education and Training has been the lead department. We have been working with the Department of Health. We



have also been working with the Department of Family Services and the Department of Justice on a co-ordinated approach.

The care and treatment of medically fragile children is one of the issues we have been looking at. I have explained to the member that the method we have used has been a committee, that our deputy ministers have worked together. We have also had a working group that has worked together, and we expect to have information available as soon as possible.

We recognize, however, that it is a very serious issue, that it does require information from more than just one department.

**Mr. Plohman:** Well, Mr. Speaker, lots of working groups and strategies, but no action.

### **Education System Medical Services**

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** I want to ask the Minister of Health: In light of the fact the provision of medical services in schools is cost-effective, is consistent with health care reform, Mr. Speaker, and in light of the fact that the Minister of Health received a proposal from the rehab centre for children on February 4, about four months ago, I want to ask the Minister of Health, why is he not responding to this cost-effective report and proposal that was put forward on February 4 to him? He has not even given so much as the courtesy—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, with all the respect I can muster to my honourable friend the member for Dauphin who talks about cost-effectiveness when he sponsored a bridge to nowhere at a cost of \$40 million to the taxpayers of Manitoba, I cannot accept his premise.

The process this ministry is participating in with the Minister of Education is one with integrity that will lead, hopefully, to reasoned solutions. But for a minister who squandered \$40 million on a bridge to nowhere, I have no time for his—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Speaker, I have a concrete proposal this minister has received.

Why is the minister not responding to a \$200,000 proposal that could ensure these services are

offered throughout the schools of Manitoba for a mere \$200,000 a year? Why will he not respond to this?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, the only concrete that my honourable friend has is the concrete that cost \$40 million in a bridge to nowhere.

### **Licensed Practical Nurses Redeployment Program**

**Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard recently of the layoffs of a number of LPNs at the St. Boniface Hospital, and we have certainly asked this Minister of Health and this government for a strategy for health professional redeployment and retraining.

Given that I am sure that the minister, his staff and the institutions have been aware of these pending layoffs as part of health care reform, can the Minister of Health tell us today and also tell Manitobans what steps have been taken to redeploy the nurses laid off or to ensure they can be retrained?

\* (1400)

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, in the course of the last number of months, the ministry has been a part of a Labour Force Adjustment Committee in which there is some 26 members inclusive of the federal government, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health, along with management of our major institutions, as well as some 11 unions that are part of that committee structure.

Mr. Speaker, some of the goals and mandates of that Labour Adjustment Committee is to attempt to provide redeployment, retraining and opportunities to find alternate employment, alternate opportunities for any individuals who suffer the unfortunate consequences of layoff in terms of some of the restructuring going on in the health care system.

In the instance of these individuals at St. Boniface Hospital, the abilities of that committee will I think be of assistance.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, well, it is wonderful to hear the mandate of this particular committee.

Could the minister actually tell us and certainly tell the LPNs who will be affected, what exactly has that committee accomplished? What plans do they

have? What can they tell the LPNs in regard to any retraining or re-employment opportunities?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have numbers and specifics, but it is my understanding that there have been some retraining opportunities already investigated and certainly in process for at least a number of the individuals affected at St. Boniface by the layoff notices today.

**Ms. Gray:** I have a final supplementary to the Minister of Health.

Can the Minister of Health tell this House why a number of LPNs have phoned certainly to their MLAs and indicated they are not able to get into some of the retraining programs, into the RN courses at other hospitals? Can he give us an update on that today, please?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot give specifics, but certainly I think my honourable friend would understand that these programs do not have unlimited capacity. That is not a possibility.

To the best of the ability of the system to accommodate individuals seeking retraining, the Labour Force Adjustment Committee, in collaboration with various training facilities or opportunities, are working diligently to try to provide as much support as is possible, given the capacity of training programs and the availability of training slots.

### Public Libraries—Winnipeg Borrowing Fees

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns):** Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Culture.

In just a couple of weeks, July 1 to be precise, we will see the death of a public library system in Winnipeg that is open and accessible to everyone. It is on this day that the City of Winnipeg will begin to collect fees of \$5 for adults and children over 12 and \$2 for seniors. It is the end of an era, and it puts Manitoba right up there with a handful of jurisdictions in North America that actually charge individuals to borrow books.

I want to ask the Minister of Culture, since the province has the responsibility, the jurisdiction and the mandate to oversee our public library system, what is this government's position on the matter of fees and this shift in our publicly accessible library system?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship):** Mr. Speaker, ultimately, the City of Winnipeg funds its libraries with support from the provincial government at about 11 percent. We have maintained the support the previous administration supported the public library system in the city of Winnipeg with, and we will continue to do that.

The kinds of decisions that the City of Winnipeg has to make to generate revenue or to manage its affairs has to be the City of Winnipeg's decision.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Lels:** Mr. Speaker, if it is the City of Winnipeg's decision and their right to make this decision, why then is this government acting in complicity with the City of Winnipeg and initiating an amendment to The City of Winnipeg Act condoning the application of fees for borrowing books in our public library system?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that what the NDP opposition would like us to do is run the City of Winnipeg. It determines the decisions it makes, and indeed it will determine how it is going to tax the citizens of the city of Winnipeg.

Maybe the NDP would advocate that the City of Winnipeg raise property taxes, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what their policy might be, but it is up to the City of Winnipeg, itself, to determine how it is going to generate the revenues to best meet the situation and the financial circumstances it faces.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Lels:** Mr. Speaker, we are simply asking this government to uphold its responsibility and ensure a hundred year tradition for universally accessible public libraries in this province.

I am going to ask the minister, rather than initiating and supporting this amendment to The City of Winnipeg Act condoning fees for borrowing books, if she will instead follow the path of a number of other provincial jurisdictions and initiate an amendment to Manitoba's Public Libraries Act prohibiting the charging of fees for the borrowing of books.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, again, I repeat, the NDP policy might be to be big brother to the City of Winnipeg and dictate and determine how it can raise its taxes and where it can spend its money.

Mr. Speaker, we have indicated in the past that our commitment is 11 percent of the funding of the City of Winnipeg's library budget. We have maintained that commitment. It is the same

commitment that the NDP administration had in place when she was the minister responsible for libraries in this province.

It will ultimately determine how it is going to tax the citizens of Winnipeg to perform the kinds of activities and provide the kinds of services it will provide.

### **Agricultural Marketing Boards Minister's Position**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian producers and farm organizations across the country are rallying in opposition to Charlie Mayer's announcement which is an attack on orderly marketing. In fact, members of the Manitoba Conservative federal caucus are opposed to this move as well.

Since the Minister of Agriculture finally admits that he does support the move to a continental barley market, which will undermine the Canadian Wheat Board, an excellent example of orderly marketing, can he tell us his position today on other marketing boards? Does he support the weakening of these boards as well, just to cave in to the demands of those who want to take control of agriculture away from the farmers?

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, farmers in Manitoba and all of western Canada want more marketing options. They want abilities to bring more revenue back to them at the farm gate.

The Canadian Wheat Board is not being attacked by any change in barley marketing in North America. The Wheat Board will still be able to sell to the United States in competition with the private sector and with farmers.

If farmers choose to sell through the Wheat Board, I am sure they will. The Wheat Board still has total monopoly on barley sales outside of North America. They still have total monopoly on wheat sales inside of North America and outside of North America. The volume of sales involved in the competition part now is certainly less than 1 percent of what the Wheat Board sells in total.

So I do not see that as an attack, Mr. Speaker, and for that member to ask what my position is on other marketing boards, I have stood in this position, in this session, talking about protecting the marketing boards of Manitoba while that member

stood up on the cream issue and attacked the Manitoba Milk Producers' Marketing Board.

It is unbelievable that she stands here today and says that, when she came into this House attacking me because I would not attack the Manitoba Milk Producers.

### **Barley Marketing Government Analysis**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture, since the federal Minister of Agriculture said his department did no studies on the consequences of moving to an orderly marketing board, and this minister said he would analyze all the studies before he made a decision, will he table today any analysis he did and tell us what information he found that made him move toward a continental barley market?—which is undermining the Canadian Wheat Board whether he will admit it or not.

\* (1410)

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the member has to recognize that there are two opinions here. There is a group of producers and producer organizations who are on her side. There is also a group of producers and producer organizations who believe they want to see the opportunity of choice being addressed.

There is a review in six years and an opportunity to change the process if for some reason the opportunity of choice does not work as well as we would all like to see it work.

I do not accept her position that it is undermining the Wheat Board, not at all. I think it is giving farmers an opportunity to have more revenue back at the farm gate.

Mr. Speaker, she stands there day after day saying farmers should accept less and less and less and let the system beyond the farm gate get more and more. If she would just read some of the material that has been published as to what has happened to farmers over the last 10 years where the costs from the farm gate that the farmer has to pay go up and up and up, and he gets less and less.

She constantly supports that position. I do not support that position.

### Mexico Exports

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear the minister has not done any analysis, and he has no proof. We know that the farm gate price is going to go down and so do farmers.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Swan River, with your question now, please.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I want to ask the minister, how can he say only a small amount of barley will by-pass the Wheat Board when it goes into the United States, when he knows that when the North American Free Trade Agreement is signed, any barley going into Mexico is also going to by-pass the Wheat Board and again undermine the Wheat Board and do nothing to improve farm gate prices?

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, we grow a lot of barley in Manitoba and western Canada, and we have to export at least half of it. Now, if we have a market in Mexico, I want to access that market. I want farmers to have that opportunity.

She wants to build a wall and say, we will not allow farmers to sell. She does not want to see us grow at export and bring revenue back into this country, Mr. Speaker.

She constantly says, I want farmers to have less and less opportunity to survive. She says farmers should have less opportunity for choice.

I do not agree with her. I believe farmers need to have a better return at the farm gate, more of the value of their products back at the farm gate and more choice, because farmers can make the right decisions. I believe very strongly in their ability to do that.

### Licensed Practical Nurses Redeployment Program

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, when the minister announced his health reform package, he clearly indicated there would be new opportunities for those who had been deployed from their present opportunities within a community-based model.

Will the Minister of Health today tell the 148 laid-off LPNs what new community positions are available to them?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend might be aware that there are recruitment and opportunities on an ongoing basis in the Continuing Care programs.

What I will attempt to do for my honourable friend is attempt to give my honourable friend some sense of the staff turnover and opportunities that are created there, because I think that would help her understand.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Mr. Speaker, can the minister be very specific and tell the House today how many new positions have opened up in Continuing Care for licensed practical nurses in the past year?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, I am unable to provide that number. Surely my honourable friend would recognize that as part of this year's health care budget, one of the sole and singular areas of increase in budget year over year has been the Continuing Care programs which we have some considerable faith will be able to accommodate some of the shifts and transitions the health care system is going through.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well that they overspent their budget last year and that there is not a real increase.

Can the Minister of Health tell the House how many LPNs laid off today will get work in the new community-based model system the minister laid out for us a year ago, in that there have been no LPNs hired within the last few months in Continuing Care?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, if my honourable friend has the answer as one would conclude from her preamble, why would she pose the question?

My honourable friend is attempting to say that the Continuing Care budget is not increased this year. That is simply not an accurate assessment that my honourable friend would make. The Continuing Care budget is increasing this year.

### Manitoba Mineral Resources Chairperson Replacement

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, today in committee, we heard one of the most bizarre revelations I have ever heard coming from the chairman of a significant provincial Crown corporation.

The chairperson of the Manitoba Mineral Resources attempted to suggest in committee

today that a corporation with reserves in excess of \$8 million, at one time \$24 million, did not prepare a budget for the 1993 year against which to judge the government's decision to grab \$16 million from its reserves.

My question is to the minister responsible. Will he now replace the chairperson and put in someone who is responsible to the Manitoba Mineral Resources corporation and to the people of Manitoba who depend on mining for a living, so we can have some assurance the corporation is being run in the best interests of mining in the province of Manitoba?

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member does not do himself or this House or the committee system any favours when he brings the kind of information to this Assembly that he has.

In reference to the chairman, I think Hansard should be checked. I do not recall the chairman of the board saying they have not prepared a budget for this year, Mr. Speaker. I do not recall that, and I think he should check that and be prepared to apologize to the chairman of the board of MMR.

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

### Nonpolitical Statements

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (River Heights):** Could I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Mr. Speaker, beginning last evening and continuing today, we have been watching with some interest the Peter Gzowski Second Annual Golf Tournament for Literacy. The Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and the Leader of the second opposition party (Mr. Edwards) were all playing in the tournament this morning.

Last year, the Gzowski tournament was successful in raising some \$25,000, half of which was given to Beat the Street and the other to Journey's Education for the purpose of educating those who through their early years were unable to achieve a sufficient level of literacy within our province here in Manitoba.

This year, it is the committee's hope—and I am a member of that committee—that we will raise some

\$40,000 in the province in order to add to the funds of money available to those organizations to fund literacy projects.

I thank all of the members in this House for their support of this organization. I know that members such as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) and the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) certainly played in the tournament last year. We missed them a little bit this year, but we are pleased their Leader was there this morning. I recommend it to all members in the future.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for Flin Flon have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to, on behalf of the NDP caucus, on behalf of my Leader, join with the member for River Heights in expressing our support for the Peter Gzowski invitational, a cause that is extremely worthwhile and one which has gathered support from the Manitoba community, people interested in pursuing the goal of improving the rate of literacy in our province, improving the opportunities for literacy programming in the province, a goal which we hope the government, in its program, will share and will demonstrate a commitment to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable Minister of Education and Training have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I would also like to just make a statement about the Peter Gzowski tournament and also the worthiness of the projects that the funds raised actually go to support.

Last year in Winnipeg, we were very fortunate to have one of our local programs benefit from the funds that were raised through the Peter Gzowski golf tournament. I certainly understand that when he has lent his name to this particular area it certainly has raised the profile and the issues concerning literacy across this country and particularly in this province.

We are very pleased that we are also able to take part and commend him for lending his name to such an important and worthy matter.

### Committee Changes

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey); the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, with a committee change, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

**Motion agreed to.**

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, after discussion with the opposition House leader, it has been decided that rather than going into Committee of Supply today, that bills will be called.

Therefore, I would ask you to call Bill 22.

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 22—The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill 22, The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act; Loi sur la réduction de la semaine de travail et la gestion des salaires dans le secteur public, standing in the name of the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), who has 32 minutes remaining.

**Some Honourable Members:** Stand.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. Leave is denied on that one.

Also standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who has 22 minutes remaining. Stand? Is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. Leave is denied.

\* (1420)

**Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to join in the debate on this very important Bill 22, which is a very regressive piece of legislation that is facing this Legislature and one which gives autocratic power to the employer, namely the government of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it is very regrettable that we are dealing with such a regressive move by this particular government, which has a very important public union to deal with, the Manitoba Government Employees' Union, and one that has tried to negotiate in good faith with this government. But, apparently, negotiating in good faith is not adequate, is not good enough. Those negotiations apparently mean nothing, because now what is happening is imposition, imposition on the public sector of Manitoba of what in effect amounts to a cut in income.

I want to make it clear, however, Mr. Speaker, at the beginning, that the New Democratic Party caucus goes on record in being in favour of a cut in MLAs' salaries. We are in favour of a reduction in the income to the MLAs. We have absolutely no opposition to that. I want to make it very, very clear that we stand totally in favour of a reduction in MLAs' salaries. That is mentioned in this bill. That is about the only thing we would agree with, however, in this bill, because we are totally opposed to the rest of the bill and the unfair treatment that it provides to civil servants and to other public sector employees in this province.

Mr. Speaker, without question it violates the principle of collective bargaining. There was no consultation with the union, with the employees, and it was simply imposed upon them. Therefore, the employees who work for the government of Manitoba believe that they have been treated very unfairly by a government that has acted in a very high-handed autocratic manner. There are many employees who are totally disillusioned with this process, and they are very, very upset with the way they are being treated. I believe this particular bill has led to a great deal of disillusionment on the part of our public service.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are served by an excellent quality of civil servant. We have one of the finest, if not the finest, civil service complements anywhere to be found in Canada. I

say that as one who has been in the Legislature for many years, but also one who was in the cabinet for 15 years, where I have from personal experience known hundreds of employees in many departments. I am always impressed by the fact that we have very competent people, very well-trained people, very dedicated, very loyal civil servants.

I think it is a tragedy that we are treating them the way we are in this particular bill, Bill 22. The employees are demoralized, and I can tell you that based on conversations with many employees who have come to me to complain about this particular bill. I have also received a fair share of correspondence from employees who believe that their fundamental rights are being violated by this particular bill, that indeed they believe that some of the basic values and some of the basic principles that hold Canadians together are being challenged by this particular legislation.

The employees believe, and I agree with them, that the basic principles, values and beliefs that have evolved in Canada include democratic negotiation. It includes respect and support of collective agreements between employees and employers under the auspices of numerous unions and, indeed, involving the Canadian Federation of Labour. This is something fundamental to democracy, that there should be freedom of collective bargaining, and it should be done in good faith. Once an agreement is reached, it should be honoured.

The government, by proposing 10 days off without pay, has imposed a change on this contractual agreement without due democratic process. Therefore, it has acted in direct violation of the very laws enacted to prevent the occurrence of such a situation.

What this bill does is it deprives employees. It deprives civil servants and other public sector employees of monies, of needed income, either through a shorter workweek, noncontracted holidays without pay, or through wage rollbacks.

So without question, Mr. Speaker, the government is violating contracts with its employees. It is also, through the auspices of this bill, forcing other agencies, Crown corporations, such as the Manitoba Telephone System and Manitoba Hydro, to also violate contracts that they have with their employees.

The many, many workers, many, many civil servants believe that this is in contravention of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The proposed mandatory 10 days off without pay is certainly not a democratic procedure, and, indeed, Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out, the general population was neither consulted nor allowed to vote on the policy.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have this bill before us, and I am sure there will be many organizations who will want to be heard at the committee stage. I believe that we will be here for some time listening to various groups who will be complaining and who will be making suggestions with regard to this bill.

Another feature of the bill or a consequence is that what it does is lower the level of service to the public of Manitoba. There are many examples we can cite where we are forcing a reduction in the level of service to the public which is not in the public's interest, which is not in the interest of the general well-being of the population of Manitoba.

I use as an example the Child and Family Services agencies that we have, who are doing a lot of emergency work, but they are also doing a lot of preventative work. I have been told that through the forced holidays that are being required through this legislation, that are being brought about because of this legislation, that a considerable amount of preventative work may not be able to take place, and indeed on certain days the staff will not be available.

There may be families who in the end, who are in trouble, who may be suffering with some difficulties, who may be having problems, who will have indeed more problems and who will in the long run end up costing us more money in terms of requiring more staff attention, more service from the Child and Family agencies that we have. In other words, the argument is that it is false economy.

I think there is another example we could look at and that is in MPIC, the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. Many members may not know this, but it also offers, beside the basic Autopac insurance that we are all required to take, risk-extension insurance which is sold on a purely competitive basis with the private sector.

MPIC has done an excellent job in competing, but now because of this policy they are being required to close down on certain days. I believe

they have already had some closures. On those particular days, and there was one Friday, I remember the first Friday that occurred a couple of weeks ago, in effect, they were not available, staff were not available to answer queries from particularly trucking companies who buy a considerable amount of extension insurance.

\* (1430)

They get calls from companies and their clients throughout Manitoba, but also some of them happen to be on the road travelling in the States and so on, and the corporation is simply not available to serve them on that day. I think, therefore, that this limits, it handicaps the ability of that corporation to be able to compete effectively in that particular area of insurance.

I think this is absolutely foolhardy and foolish. I think it is absolutely foolish. In the end, it could cost the corporation profit. Therefore, instead of accomplishing the end or the objective that the government seems to be intent on and that is to save money, you may be indeed causing a very important Crown corporation to make less money, to make less profit, and therefore we are going backward instead of forward, Mr. Acting Speaker.

There are other examples, as well, as to how this legislation is going to impact on the quality of service. I have no doubt in my mind that the quality of service is going to be reduced by simple logic. The people of Manitoba will have less service on account of this particular legislation. So, Mr. Acting Speaker, this is yet another reason why members of this Legislature should oppose the legislation.

One could look also at all kinds of details of the legislation whereby it seems to be unfair with regard to employees at various levels of income. Indeed, one could look at other details that causes it to be unfair in the way it would be administered and the impact of it.

But basically, Mr. Acting Speaker, we are looking at the principle of the bill, and without question, it is a bill that really I guess fundamentally challenges the whole matter of trust. It is a question of trust. What is the word of a government to its employees, when it can come along and do what it is doing in this bill? There is absolutely no trust whatsoever left because of the actions of the government.

There is absolutely no consultation whatsoever, and as I have said before and as other members on this side have said before, it is a clear and direct

attack on the collective bargaining process which is presumably one important element in our democratic processes, in our democratic procedures.

So this bill, therefore, can be seen as an attack on labour, just as we have had other attacks on labour by this government, the loss of final offer selection, the laying off of 1,400 provincial workers plus other public sector layoffs in health care, some of which were reported today in St. Boniface Hospital, LPNs.

There were others laid off in other institutions including the Brandon General Hospital, the layoffs that are occurring with the dental care nurses. That is a real shame as well, Mr. Acting Speaker, where we had an excellent school-based program of dental prevention and dental care, prevention of dental disease, and dental care administered very efficiently and at a low cost throughout Manitoba, throughout rural and northern Manitoba, which enabled families to obtain dental services that they would not have obtained otherwise for two reasons: one, because of insufficient income, and secondly, because of not being handy, not being proximate to dental services.

There are many people, particularly in remote areas, that simply will no longer obtain the dental service for their children. So that is another example I use of this government reducing public sector service, and in this area, children's dental care service, a very important area, we have had another blatant example.

We are creating a legislative environment which is more hostile to labour in this province than ever before. I do not know what the long-term consequences are going to be, but there are other consequences as well in terms of the economy. I talked about consequences in terms of the individual employees losing income. I talked about consequences in reducing the level of service to the public, but I also talk about consequences in terms of the economy itself, because there is absolutely no question in my mind, or anyone's mind who gives some thought to this, that this bill will have an impact of dampening the Manitoba economy which, God knows, is dampened enough already.

In other words, our economy is very weak; it is stagnating. The fact is that this bill will take tens upon tens of million dollars out of the economy and



will, therefore, have a negative impact on many areas of this province.

I think particularly of some of the rural towns where there are many public sector workers. There is no question that there is going to be a reduction of purchasing power. There is going to be a reduction in the retail sector, and with the multiplier effect we are going to see millions and millions of dollars of reduction in purchasing throughout the year because of the forced layoffs and the reduction in salary created by this bill.

As a matter of fact, there are specific estimates of the amount of reduction that is going to occur, and it is going to mean—I know in the Westman area, we are looking at 40 or 50 million dollars reduction in purchasing power because of this particular bill.

So it does nothing for the economy, which is already very, very weak, the economy which has an unemployment level of 9.6 percent, Mr. Acting Speaker. That is higher than it has been for the past decade, in fact even beyond that. It is an historic high level of unemployment. I think we are probably at the worst level we have been since the Great Depression of the Dirty Thirties.

Month after month, the figures come in. We have 50,000 or more people unemployed, and those unemployed workers certainly are not in a position to buy goods and services. They are suffering a great deal, and many of them are living in poverty today. We have got this high amount of unemployment, and now we are going to add to the problem by reducing the amount of income that is available out there for the economy as a whole.

So this is a bill that is causing the Manitoba economy to become even more stagnant than it has been, and for that reason as well members of the Legislature should oppose this particular piece of legislation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we could go on at some length dealing with other aspects of the bill. However, my colleagues on this side have spent some considerable time in debating the bill, so I do not intend to repeat some of the arguments that they have made.

What I will repeat once more is what I said, the only part of the bill that we can agree with is the reduction in the MLAs' salaries portion. We are, as an NDP caucus, in favour of the reduction as it affects members of the Legislature, but we are certainly opposed to the rest of it, which we believe

is not fair, which violates the fundamental principle of collective bargaining, which is antidemocratic and which is causing a great deal of demoralization in the civil service of Manitoba.

For that reason, Mr. Acting Speaker, I, along with my colleagues on this side, will be opposing this legislation. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak on this particular bill, Bill 22, The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act. I would like to make it very clear at the outset of my debate that I support the provisions to reduce our salaries. However, the rest of the bill, we reject in its entirety.

A couple of years ago, we debated the repeal of final offer selection, and I listened very carefully to the speech of the Minister of Labour, and in fact, I dug it up. He spoke in debate on November 9, 1990, The Labour Relations Amendment Act. The reason that I was listening and found his speech so fascinating at the time was that the Minister of Labour clearly defended the principles of collective bargaining. So what he said then makes for fascinating reading now in the context of Bill 22.

For example, right at the outset of his speech, the Minister of Labour said, and I quote: "Mr. Speaker, the fundamental strength of the collective bargaining process is an agreement which incorporates the different positions of labour and management while allowing for a win-win solution which both sides can accept and live with." Page 998 of the, I believe it was, second—no, it was the first session of the 35th Legislature.

So three years ago, the Minister of Labour and his government were defending free collective bargaining and talking in the loftiest terms about the wonderful benefits of free collective bargaining, something that they thought was worth defending at the time of withdrawing the final offer selection legislation. [interjection] Well, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) says, it is not free; you pay dearly for it. Well, the minister has his own bias, of course, and now his government has figured out a way to make workers pay. They call it sharing the pain, but if you look at their budget, there is very little equality in sharing of the pain of this budget and of their legislation.

\* (1440)

What they are doing is they are making civil servants and the poor pay for their inability to budget adequately for this province and, in fact, running up the highest deficit in the history of Manitoba of \$862 million. [interjection] The Minister of Urban Affairs wants me to discuss the policies of the Premier of Ontario, and I would point out that in Ontario they are attempting to do this by discussion and negotiation rather than imposing legislation. In fact, they have extended the deadline to August 1. So it is not too late for a negotiated settlement in Ontario, but in Manitoba they did not even try. They did not even try. They just brought in Bill 22.

The principles in this bill are totally contradictory to what the Minister of Labour said in debate on November 9, 1990. For example, he said: "... are the benefits of this method of dispute settlement so miraculous, so wonderful that it is worth compromising a basic and fundamental principle of collective bargaining? Members on this side of the House answer clearly, no, it is not. Let me point out to all Members that there has been a tradition in this province which respects and supports free collective bargaining, a tradition on both sides of the House."

In fact, the minister said there is nothing free about it. Well, that was the expression that the Minister of Labour used in debate, free collective bargaining, but they have totally repudiated this defence of collective bargaining with this piece of legislation.

The Minister of Labour goes on in his speech in the very next paragraph to make another quote, and it is from someone else. In fact, it was a quote from the Honourable Edward Schreyer in an address to the Manitoba Federation of Labour in October 1972, and I will repeat this quote that the Minister of Labour used. "It is our conviction that the parties themselves should have as much freedom of action as possible to develop their own collective bargaining and dispute-settlement procedures. We believe that this approach will produce more acceptable results than would rigid legislative procedures that would inhibit the parties from exercising their own ingenuity in finding, developing and refining ways of resolving the difficulties."

Well, I am really quite amazed that the Minister of Labour would talk about the advantages of collective bargaining as opposed to rigid legislative procedures, and now in June of 1993, less than

three years later, his government, and he as the Minister of Labour, are doing exactly that. The only difference is that the bill today stands in the name of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) instead of the Minister of Labour, but this is exactly what this bill is doing. I would be interested in knowing what the Minister of Labour thinks, that the Minister of Labour who, on November 9, 1990, defended free collective bargaining, as he called it, and now in this debate he is totally tossing out his views out the window. They are no longer relevant. He does not believe in collective bargaining anymore. He believes in imposed settlements which he quoted as calling rigid legislative procedures, and that is what he is doing today. He has forgotten all his lofty principles that he enunciated on November 9, 1990.

The minister goes on and on in this speech defending collective bargaining. I was listening to that speech. I remembered that speech. I looked it up today. [interjection] Well, I am sorry that the rules prohibit me referring to the presence or absence of a member; however, I have already talked about that in my speech in response to some heckling from the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst). [interjection] Well, I am sorry but you missed that. I did address that.

**An Honourable Member:** No. Do not say too much because if . . . .

**Mr. Martindale:** Well, I do not think there is any danger of you quoting back statements that we made about collective bargaining, because unlike you we are not going to change our position on collective bargaining, unlike what you did between November 9, 1990, and the present.

I will read some more comments from the Minister of Labour. I quote: "Yet I still maintain that free collective bargaining is one of the best means available for negotiating contracts that are equitable and generally acceptable to the parties directly affected by the outcome of collective bargaining."

He was quoting somebody well-versed in employee-employer relationships. That is what he said on November 9, 1990, and by supporting this bill he is totally repudiating all his quotes about the good things about collective bargaining.

I have one more quote from the Minister of Labour to remind him of what he said. On page 1002 he said: "One need look no further than the

1968 Woods Report to Parliament in Canadian labour relations to find compelling arguments which support the necessity of respecting the fundamentals of the collective bargaining process." Then he went on to quote that report: "In a system of free collective bargaining, employees must be free to organize into unions, have a right to require the employer to face them at the bargaining table through their union representatives and, in the event of failure to agree over the terms and conditions of employment, have the right to refuse to work without permanently quitting their employment."

So that is what the minister said. [interjection] Now the minister is saying they could have laid off 500 employees.

Well, in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, they entered into collective agreements with their employees. They said we are going to guarantee your job security, and we are not going to lay off any employees. We are not going to roll back your salaries. They were able to do that without imposing and without using this bill. Some school boards are not going to use it. They are going to make an imposed settlement because that is what this government permitted them to do.

The difference between the Premier of Ontario and this government is that they tried a negotiated settlement. This government did not even try, did not have the courage to even try. In Ontario they have extended the time period to negotiate a settlement until August 1, and it is still not too late to negotiate agreements between now and August 1 in Ontario. But this government did not try for six months. They did not try for one day.

The minister wants to talk about the exceptions. The minister does not want to talk about his speech of 1990 or about Bill 22.

I would like to talk as well about the taxation implications of this legislation, not just the collective bargaining implications. This really represents a regressive tax levied on the broader public sector.

This government has singled out civil servants and asked them to shoulder, unfairly, part of the deficit of this government, a deficit of \$862 million, one year. The largest deficit in the history of Manitoba.

This legislation gives autocratic power to the employer. It provides for imposed settlements where previously people had to come to

agreements, something that this minister used to believe in, apparently does not believe in anymore. In spite of that, other jurisdictions are able to come to agreements, but not the Province of Manitoba. The City of Winnipeg, voluntary agreements; Saskatchewan, British Columbia, negotiation, negotiation.

This is also enabling legislation which means that some employers, particularly school boards, are going to use this legislation. Teachers across the province will thus be treated differently from school division to school division. They have different employers, but all of them have negotiated settlements. They have different rates of pay which they negotiated with school divisions. [interjection] My understanding would be that normally parties would agree to go to an arbitrator. People did not agree to Bill 22.

This bill is really a flat percentage reduction in salary. Leave days are to be imposed without any consideration for existing wages, unlike Ontario where anyone under \$30,000 will not be affected by the legislation if the government there has to bring it in. Whereas here, people who are earning \$20,000 will have the same percentage rollback as people earning \$70,000.

This minister knows there are great differences in salary pay among civil servants and that the reduction in pay for a deputy minister is much, much less as a percentage of their take-home pay than a civil servant making \$20,000 a year.

Well, let us consider the total impact on the total income of those individuals. This minister used to believe that the right to negotiate a contract, the right to negotiate hours of work, the rights of seniority, all union rights, were won with a struggle. Now, those are all out the window during the time that this bill is imposing settlements on people. To win those rights, workers put their jobs on the line. They gave up either wages during a strike or in lower settlements, and all that has been taken away by this government—[interjection]

\* (1450)

The government has their own rhetoric which is that we all share the pain, but what about the private sector? Is this government asking the private sector to share the pain? Are you asking your suppliers to the government to take 4 percent less? No.

This bill is also going to impact directly on government service to individuals. Many of us are already aware of that, because we have already had civil servants not working on a Friday.

If you have tried to phone a government department, in fact, I phoned a government department last Friday and asked them to do something. They said, well, phone the other department. I did, and they said, well, we cannot do it because it is in the department that you just phoned. You will have to wait till Monday.

Now that is a very small inconvenience for me because I am paid to be here five days a week, but for individuals who are trying to get service from government departments, that is a problem.

It is a severe problem when it comes to Child and Family Services, when children, for example, might be apprehended on a Thursday night and normally they would go into court on Friday morning, and they cannot go into court until Monday.

What this government is doing is they are putting children in Place Louis Riel and the costs are estimated at \$200 to \$400 per day. They are stuck there from Thursday night till Monday morning. In fact, there are many, many examples of where this legislation is going to cost the government more money. A number of them have been brought to my attention, for example, people whose hourly rate is \$22 an hour being called into work on Saturday and paid \$44 a hour. I believe that this government's calculations about the amount of money they are going to save are totally out of whack and inaccurate.

Unfortunately, there may be an expectation that people make up for on Monday the work that was not done on Friday. Now fortunately, some people are benevolent employers, and they are saying to their employees, we do not expect you to make up on Monday for what did not get done on Friday. In fact, that is what I was told by one of the Child and Family Service agencies, and I am glad that some agencies have executive directors who are reasonable, unlike this legislation of this government.

We know that this is going to negatively impact on universities and colleges. In fact, there is a concern from some faculties at the universities that it may impact on their ability to be accredited or to continue their accreditation.

This is going to impact on health and personal care homes. This is going to affect Family Services staff. This is a thoughtless policy that was hastily thrown together, and the impact on essential services was not considered, not thought out.

This government is hurting the people who are the poorest the most, because poor people depend a lot more on government services than the rich. For example, I represent an inner-city constituency. Most of my calls have to do with welfare problems or housing problems. I suspect that many people in the suburbs do not phone their MLAs, they phone the right government department because they know where to phone, they know where to get help. That is not true of people in the inner city and low-income people, and so this legislation impacts more on my constituents than it does on suburban constituents. [interjection] It is true that I take the calls. I will grant the minister that, but we are—

**An Honourable Member:** Just ignore him. I know how hard that is.

**Mr. Martindale:** I am being advised to ignore the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik). It is not easy for me to do.

It is obvious that this bill impacts more on low-income people than on more affluent Manitobans, because they are much more likely to be involved with government departments—social assistance, for example, where we have 18,000 cases on city welfare. How many on provincial? Something like 40,000. [interjection]

Well, the minister wants to talk about Easter Monday. Well, we are talking in the past about a small number of statutory holidays. Now, we are talking about 10 days for this year, and possibly 15—[interjection] Well, that also is a matter of contention. Some people think that civil servants should not get Monday, but there is a reason for that. In fact, the reason they got Monday was because it was part of their collective bargaining. It was something that they won through negotiation, something that this minister used to believe in and does not anymore.

**An Honourable Member:** What about service? What about the service to the public you are so concerned about?

**Mr. Martindale:** Well, the minister wants to talk about service to the public. You are the ones who are saying there is going to be 10 days less service to the public now, and next year possibly 15

days—[interjection] I did not say I was in favour of that, I said some people that talked to me questioned that, and there is a historical reason for it, which I just explained to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik).

This government is on a collision course with labour, and of course, they have been doing this for a number of years. The repeal of final offer selection is one example, Bill 22 is another, where this government used to believe in collective bargaining, and they used to have a relationship of trust with the government, and they used to be able work things out through negotiation.

Now they are giving up on this relationship of trust, and they are on a course of confrontation. What they want is confrontation with labour, because they do not have the skills to negotiate with every public sector union. You negotiate with one or two unions, you do not have the skills to negotiate with all of them. You did not even try. This government could not negotiate its way out of a paper bag. They have imposed this with no consultation.

This government likes to talk about partnerships, partnerships particularly with business. Sometimes they even talk about partnerships with labour, like the Crocus Fund, for example, but then when it comes to labour negotiation there is no partnership. They are imposing Bill 22.

I think the real impact of this legislation is that they are going to expect many workers, particularly health care workers, to do in four days what they used to do in five days, if there is not a reduction in service. In fact, I was at a meeting where there were home care staff, and they did not know what the impact of this bill was going to be yet, about a month ago, but they suspect that there will only be emergency service on Fridays, that there will not be any delivery of basic services or standard services on the 10 days off. So that is a real cut in service to Manitobans.

I think that this minister and his government are going to get complaints when people are unable to get the kind of service that they are accustomed to. This minister should not lecture us about being able to afford something when they cannot deliver a balanced budget and have the highest deficit in the history of Manitoba, \$862 million.

**An Honourable Member:** Do you support balanced budgets?

**Mr. Martindale:** Well, I point to the example of governments like that of Allan Blakeney in Saskatchewan, who had a balanced budget.

\* (1500)

I point to the budget of Manitoba of 1988 where you inherited a surplus of \$55 million, and in a space of five budgets went to the highest deficit in Manitoba history. [interjection] Well, the Provincial Auditor has admitted to the \$55 million surplus. It is this government that will not acknowledge it. It was the result of NDP budgets that you passed. You passed that budget in 1988 with very few changes, and the deficit is your responsibility because you cut back on revenue.

I think one of the fundamental problems is that we have a basic disagreement between what is a reasonable level of public service, and how your party and how our party looks at public service, because I think a lot of your supporters see public service as the public trough.

One of the examples of that is the Fraser Institute and other right-wing groups that talk about tax holidays. What do they call it? Tax freedom day, which is near the beginning or the middle of July, I cannot remember, and they say, oh, all our income for six months is used up in paying taxes. Then finally we hit tax freedom day and then the rest of the money that we earn for the rest of the year goes into our pocket instead of government's pocket.

What they are saying is we do not believe in all those services that they pay for. But if they thought about it, they would believe in it, because their children go to university and they pay for that partly through their taxes. They drive on provincial highways and they pay for that through their taxes. There is hardly a thing that people do not do from morning till night that does not involve taxes that pay for services that those people enjoy. Yet when they talk about taxes all they do is complain, as if they did not benefit from it. [interjection] Well, you should not be taxing my poor constituents to pay for it, but you are.

You are raising their taxes more than you are raising the taxes of the rich. That is one of the things we object to. [interjection] Look at the property tax increase. By having a flat \$75 reduction amounts to something like a 7 percent impact on low-income people in constituencies like Burrows compared to about a 2 percent in constituencies like Tuxedo. [interjection] Every time

I introduce a new issue the minister wants to change the topic on me.

First of all, I was talking about the benefits of public service and the fact that we pay for them through taxes, and then I was talking about the impact of your regressive taxes.

What this minister should be doing is defending the public services that our taxes pay for, many of which are equalizers between the rich and poor in society, particularly when it comes to health and education, because if you look at the cost to my constituents, none of them could afford to send their children to private schools like St. John's-Ravenscourt that charges over \$7,000 a year for a student in junior high school.

That is why 99 percent of my constituents go to public schools. This minister would agree, I am sure, that education is one of the levellers in society, and we do that through our tax system.

The same is true of health, and you only have to look to the United States to see how medicare in Canada is a leveller in our society because everybody is entitled to accessible, affordable health care, unlike the United States, where something like 30 million Americans have no health care insurance and where many millions of Americans have very limited health insurance, and if they become sick, it is a major catastrophe. Particularly, it is a financial catastrophe for them. That is why we as Canadians are proud of our health care system.

I would suggest that all three parties, at least in their rhetoric, defend our publicly financed health care system. We know that for decades people like Senator Kennedy have been promoting a publicly funded health care system, and now President Clinton is looking at a publicly funded health care system for those people who are not covered.

That is one of the things that distinguishes Canadian society from American society, is the things that we voluntarily pay for through our tax system. In fact, one of the reasons why there is pressure to change in the United States is because corporations do not like paying health care premiums for their employees.

I remember seeing, I think it was, on W5 they did a story about medicare in the United States, and one of the executives, I think it was, of Chrysler said that they were paying \$6 an hour per employee for

health insurance benefits. So no wonder private corporations in the United States want to have a publicly funded system. They do not want private corporations to be paying premiums for their employees.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in conclusion, this bill is really about an attack on organized labour. It is an attack on collective bargaining.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer):** Order here, please. The honourable member for Burrows has the floor.

**Mr. Martindale:** Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. I would really like the Minister of Labour to get up and participate in this debate and repudiate the things that he said on November 9, 1990, since he is supporting this bill and totally disagreeing with what he said on November 9, 1990. He should get up and participate in the debate, but members on the government side do not even get up and speak on their own bills.

**An Honourable Member:** When we do, you tell us we filibuster . . .

**Mr. Martindale:** Well, I remember one day when you did filibuster because you did not have your members here, and you had to put up speakers and delay the vote until you got all your people in here. That is the only time you get up and speak. [interjection]

Well, stand up and put up one speaker; then we will not accuse you of filibustering.

In conclusion, this bill is really an attack on collective bargaining and on organized labour. This government is unwilling and unable to negotiate collective agreements with its employees, because it is eager and it is easier to impose settlements on people and do it by way of this draconian piece of legislation.

Finally, we will be supporting the cut in our own salary and voting against the rest of the bill. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in the debate today on Bill 22, The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act. First of all, I would like to begin my comments by stating, although I am opposed in principle to the bill, I do support the clause pertaining to the reduction in the salaries of the members of the Legislative

Assembly, and I support the reductions in our constituency allowance as well.

It is unfortunate, though, that our constituency allowance is being cut at this particular time when, because of government actions, there is added pressure upon our constituency offices to provide services to many individuals that are in problem situations mostly because of the results of policies of the members opposite, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Once again, I will begin my comments by stating that although in principle I oppose the legislation, I do support that particular clause in the bill.

As was mentioned by many members earlier, I remember my colleagues earlier on in different speeches here in the Chamber, there are many, many things that are wrong with this particular piece of legislation. They have provided you with a very solid reason why all of us in this Chamber should be worried about this piece of legislation, why we as members of the broader community should be voting against it. I know that we shall on this side. Some of the arguments brought forward by some of my colleagues, I am certain the members opposite would see the wisdom of their remarks and they too would be anxious to see the end of this particular legislation.

One of the more obvious problems is that it has no respect for the needs of individual employees; it has no respect for the collective needs of employees. This piece of legislation has no respect for the negotiated agreements with many of the employees.

There is a clause which states that the employer simply tells the employee what they are going to do and under what circumstances they are going to do it, and that is it. It is very heavy-handed. It is dictatorial in its approach to managing the public affairs of this fine province, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Of course, this particular piece of legislation affects provincial Crown corporations, and I want to go into the Manitoba Telephone System in particular. It affects the employees of the provincial government, hospital employees, personal care homes, municipalities, school boards, universities, colleges and so on, all groups, of course, that are funded by the government as well.

I want to mention the friendship centre movement in particular. I had the pleasure of attending the banquet of the Selkirk Friendship Centre this past weekend. The friendship centre in

Selkirk is 25 years old. It has represented the interests of aboriginal and Metis people in the community for a quarter of a century. It has done so under some adverse times in the past, but nothing like it is going through right now, when this particular government chose to blatantly attack aboriginal and Metis people by cutting their funding by 100 percent.

\* (1510)

They were willing to accept a freeze. The employees that were working there were willing to accept a freeze or a wage reduction similar to this particular legislation. They were willing to accept that, but they were not prepared to accept what actually happened, which was a 100 percent cut of their funding. All the fine programs that the friendship centres offered in Manitoba are now abandoned by this government.

They had the unfortunate situation, unfortunate problem of having to lay off three very talented, very caring individuals in the community, individuals that cared a great deal about the plight of aboriginal and Metis people in Selkirk and the surrounding areas.

Again, I attended that banquet. Then on Sunday there was the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres. They held an annual meeting in Selkirk. I attended that particular function. Again, they raised issues about government funding, having their funding slashed by 10 percent by the federal government and now a 100 percent reduction by this particular administration. They were willing to accept a freeze or a reduction but were unprepared to accept a 100 percent reduction in their funding, and as such these communities, where these friendship centres are, have lost a valuable member of the community.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the members opposite were talking about Crown corporations. I wanted to talk briefly about the Manitoba Telephone System, for example. The minister I believe mentioned that there is an agreement in place, and that is true. I understand now that there are some issues that the management has been imposing upon the workers. The original agreement called for 10 days, that the Manitoba Telephone System would be closed 100 percent for 10 days, 10 consecutive Fridays. Now we are finding out that it will not be doing that. It will be open longer but half-staffed during those Fridays which is not, obviously, bad in itself except

the Manitoba Telephone System is preparing to deal with an application brought by the Unitel Corporation to compete with the Manitoba Telephone System in terms of the long distance market here in Manitoba.

Now the CRTC recently ruled that competition would be allowed, and so the Manitoba Telephone System is preparing for that. If the federal legislation was passed—I am not 100 percent certain if it was passed—but if the legislation is passed, MTS falls under the CRTC which will now govern how Manitoba Telephone System operates.

One of the features is the deregulation of the telephone industry. One of the features means that MTS will now have to compete with Unitel, compete with other companies which—

### Point of Order

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs):** I understand, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the member speaking has kind of a one-track mind and so on, but we are talking about Bill 22 and he should be relevant.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer):** The honourable minister did not have a point of order, but I would mention that they are debating on Bill 22.

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**Mr. Dewar:** I did not hear what the Minister of Housing had to say, but I generally accept that it was of absolutely no value to myself or anyone else in this Chamber, because very few things he says actually are.

The reason I am talking about Manitoba Telephone System taking off 10 days is they are going to make it impossible for them to compete against Unitel, because we know that Unitel will be open on Fridays. Unitel will not be closed on Fridays. Unitel will be competing with the MTS which will have to close on Fridays. This is why it is going to be negatively affecting the MTS. We are concerned that what the government is hoping to do with it, of course, is put it into a very difficult financial situation, one that unfortunately it is in right now.

They anticipate losses up to \$100 million per year because of the members' opposite love of deregulation and competition and other Conservative buzzwords. It will not be able to

compete, and as such we feel that there will be an attempt by the members opposite to privatize this Crown corporation. This is one of the beginning elements within that privatization scenario, and we are concerned about it over here. We feel that the 10-day reduction will only, unfortunately, lead to this.

Getting back to this particular piece of legislation, what this is, it is clear that this bill is an increase in taxes. It is an increase in taxes on the backs of the public service in this province. The government's economic effort so far has been a dismal failure. It is fairly obvious that all can see that.

They have now recorded a deficit of \$862 million, a record deficit, as it were. They now have the distinction of having run up the highest deficit in the history of the province, Mr. Acting Speaker. So bear in mind what this is, is that they are going to try to recoup some of their losses, as it were, on the backs of the public sector. The public sector generally in this province fit within the middle class, so it is a basic tax on the middle class in this province.

They have mentioned, in fact—I imagine they will be running on this in the next election—that they do not raise taxes. Well, that is obviously inaccurate. We have seen taxes come in the last number of years. They are disguised as this, and they are disguised as that, but clearly they are taxes nonetheless, Mr. Acting Speaker.

In the past budget, as a matter of fact, the government imposed approximately \$435 worth of taxes on the average Manitoban. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) did not actually state they were a tax increase. What they were saying was they would be a reduction in disposable income. That is the term he used. He would not say they were a tax increase, but they were a reduction in disposable income.

Again, this legislation is a form of taxation. The average public servant in the province will now be paying between \$1,500 and \$1,600 more. That will be, obviously, a very large net impact on the reduction in the disposable income of public sector workers in this province.

In my particular community, there are, I have estimated, around 1,000 public sector employees. When you work out the mathematics on that particular problem, you find out that it represents \$2 million that will be withdrawn from the community, a



community that is already suffering under the decision making of the members opposite with the closure of the school of nursing, the closure of the Human Resources Opportunity Centre, and many other negative decisions by the members opposite, Mr. Acting Speaker, would have a negative impact upon the community.

Many businesses—at least between 12 and 15 businesses have closed in Selkirk since the government took over opposite. This particular legislation, if passed, will even extract more money from the local economy. The government opposite pretends to be the friend of the small-business person in this province. They all recognize that small business is a generator of new jobs in our economy. Yet they are willing to extract millions, absolutely millions of dollars, in potential earnings from that small business. Obviously, the effect would be a very negative one on the small business.

In communication I have had with businesses in my area, they acknowledge this and they reinforce this in their comments. They know that a public sector employee will now be going through a 4 percent reduction in pay, a 4 percent reduction in disposable income, and will not have the ability or the luxury to spend on certain items that may not be considered a necessity, such as an evening out in a local restaurant or a video or many other potential impacts upon the community, upon the local business. Yet this government pretends to be such a friend of small business, but it is fairly obvious that they are not. They are paying, the public sector in our province, for the government's economic failure, for the government's economic and fiscal failures of the past.

\* (1520)

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), as I mentioned earlier, has the distinction of having the highest deficit in the history of the province, Mr. Acting Speaker, and he has chosen to take it out on the backs of public sector employees in our province. It is a tax increase to public sector employees. It is an unfair tax. It is a dishonest tax. They are not up-front with the people of Manitoba. It is a hidden tax and, again, it is primarily on the middle-class groups within our community, those public sector employees who make up a large, large portion of our workforce.

We are now seeing this government in its frontal attack upon them increasing their taxes by 3.8 percent. Instead of raising a surtax on some of their high-income earner friends, they decided to attack the middle class, much the same as their federal cousins have done with the introduction of the GST and the other unfair taxation methods and systems brought in by the federal government.

Another aspect of its unfairness is that it hits someone making \$20,000 significantly more than it would someone making \$100,000. Granted, the amounts they would be giving up are larger, but the difference between those two levels is quite large. The effect to someone making \$100,000 is marginal, so there is an inherent unfairness in that particular issue. Again, it is a tax increase on the middle class and it is unfair.

It reminds me of some of the issues surrounding Sunday shopping, and members opposite are supposed to stand up for rural Manitobans. We have many members opposite in prominent roles within the government who have failed to stand up for rural Manitobans. Again, this is just another example of that particular piece of legislation.

Another reason why this legislation is wrong is that it does not respect the collective bargaining process here in Manitoba. The government could have, and has in the past—other previous administrations have reached a zero percent increase with their public sector employees, but this government decides not to. They decided simply to impose it upon the wage earners of the province, those in the middle class.

I would argue that negotiated agreements are more successful. Negotiated agreements even at the zero percent level are for more successful than this. This, again, is unfair. It is autocratic. It is unfair to low-income earners. It is unfair to the employees of the government, and it is unfair to employees of the Crowns, particularly Manitoba Telephone System which will now have to compete with Unitel which will be open on Fridays grabbing away at the customers of the Manitoba Telephone System, while the MTS will have their doors closed. So you try to phone, you phone to reach the Manitoba Telephone System to find out about service and, unfortunately, you will get a recording saying, due to government cutbacks our offices are closed today. But you can phone Unitel. Unitel will be open on Fridays. Unitel will be able to grab that business away. They are coming into the market

with an unfair advantage to begin with, 15 percent less than what MTS has to pay, just to begin with.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, as I mentioned before, the legislation is clearly wrong. Although we do on this side of the House support the MLA wage rollback which, as the members opposite remember, we volunteered to accept two years ago with Bill 70, a freeze. Now, we on this side of the House are willing to accept the wage rollback of 3.8 percent.

Again, it is a form of unfair taxation on the middle class, on the public sector employees, on teachers, on employees of the Crowns. It does not respect the collective bargaining process and it does not really reflect an understanding of the fine services that are provided by the many men and women who work in our public sector, and now are told that they have to take 10 days off because of this government's economic and fiscal failure.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Well, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I will now yield the floor to my colleague from Swan River.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, I feel that it is very important that I take a few minutes to put my concerns about this bill on the record as well.

When we look at this province, we have a province that has been known, in many cases, for co-operating with its employees and treating them fairly and negotiating with them. Unfortunately, that is not happening at this time. Employees of government have negotiated in good faith, and they have had those negotiations broken.

We talk about this province and we talk about this country, and in fact we are in difficult times in this country. We are in an economic recession that is critical for many people in this country. But why are we in this situation?

This situation has been created by Tory governments, Tory high interest policies that have had our debt balloon. We have seen deficits going out of control by Conservative governments who talk about restraint but do very little with it except choose to attack the workers. They do this in a very difficult way. They choose to do it without consultation, just as in other areas this government

has made decisions without consulting those people who are affected by this decision.

Mr. Speaker, they did have a choice. They could have gone to the workers and their employees and try to negotiate, but instead they chose to bring in legislation that dictated what had to happen. As other people have said, we will oppose this legislation because of the impact it will have on the employees of this government but also the impact it is going to have on many communities and the impact it is going to have on services in many of the rural communities as well as urban centres.

I want to say, to begin with, Mr. Speaker, that there is a clause in this bill that deals with our salaries as members of the Legislature, and I want to make it clear that, even though there has been much discussion on this matter, we will not oppose the clause that deals with the members' salary, but we will oppose the other parts of the bill because we feel it is very unfair and very confrontational.

\* (1530)

Mr. Speaker, we have to look at what the impacts of this are going to be. I would like to look at how it is going to impact on the residents of my constituency and the people that have raised concerns with this. The large majority of the people in my constituency are very low-income people. I have a large population that is unemployed at the present time because of policies of both this government and the federal government who choose not to address the real concerns, choose not to invest in jobs, but just choose to cut services, so let us look at what the impacts will be.

As I said, one of the areas that I have had people raise concern about is the areas of Family Services, health care services. We wonder how much money is actually going to be saved in the health care field, in the personal care home field. If some people are taking a four-day workweek, and if they are an essential service, someone else is going to have to come in and fill these jobs.

We are not sure where this government is going on essential services. They have not made up their minds which ones are going to stay, which ones are essential and which ones are not. But in my way of thinking, the health care and personal care home services are essential, and people will have to be replaced in them.

Mr. Speaker, looking at Family Services, now to have these offices closed down on Friday, when we

know that many people face very difficult situations on weekends or towards the end of the week, what are they going to do for services on those days? Of course, that probably does not matter to many of those members across the way. The impacts of these services will, in most cases, hurt the poor. Rich people will always find alternatives. They have the money to buy alternative services when they need them, but we have to think about those people who need the services.

The other thing that is very hypocritical in all of this is to call this a holiday, to say people are going to get a long weekend and can go fishing. It is a long weekend for everybody.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are many people who are on very low incomes, and this reduction of pay is going to hurt them dramatically. Single parents who have the responsibility of children will not be able to take a holiday, and I would love for all people to be able to take a holiday—[interjection] But the members across the way do not recognize that the majority of the people and a large number of the people in my constituency cannot afford to go golfing and they cannot afford to go fishing either. That day off, all it is going to do is put additional pressure on the family on how they are going to feed those kids, let alone go fishing.

When I talked to some of the people who are working in Family Services, when we refer to this long weekend, in actual fact, they are told that they have to stay in their community just in case there is an emergency and they are going to get called back. So they have to be on standby, without pay, and cannot leave the constituency—[interjection]

The minister is saying that is not true. Well, there are people who work in Family Services who have indicated that they have to decide how they are going to do this, but some of them have to be on standby in case there is an emergency, so it is not a long weekend.

Mr. Speaker, this government may be implying that it is long weekends, but civil servants are being told that they have to be on standby in case there is an emergency, and they can get called back in. So in actual fact they will be on call without pay. [interjection]

The member across the way referred to my brothers, and I can assure him that they are very honest people and would respect those people who had negotiated contracts with the government far

more than they respect any of the people that they have negotiated with when they bring in legislation like this. When they were in government, they treated people fairly, far more fairly than civil servants are being treated by this government.

Mr. Speaker, this government is a lazy government that has no idea what they are doing and what the long-term consequences of this legislation are going to be. They have no idea of how this is going to impact on low-income workers and how it is going to affect those people who are in crisis and in need of service. They have not thought through this legislation very well, and I am disappointed that this is the route they would take in dealing with people and in dealing, particularly, with people who depend on government services. They have no understanding of people on low incomes, and they do not know how to listen to people.

A good example, as was indicated by my colleague just earlier, was on the idea of Sunday shopping. Although people across rural Manitoba and people in the cities have said they do not want Sunday shopping, this government does not listen. They have got an idea, and they are going to push it through. Well, Mr. Speaker, they will pay the price of that. The same thing applies when we look at the farm issues that are very important to the farming community right now, and although that is a federal issue, the provincial government can have influence on them. They should be listening to the people on them as well. They should be thinking about what the impacts are, but instead, they are going to push through legislation that fits in with their ideology. They really do not care about what the consequences are. There are very serious ramifications of this. There are very serious consequences to the legislations that this government is supporting.

Mr. Speaker, one area that I want to touch on that affects all of us very much is the whole area of education. Through this legislation, we will see that some school boards may decide to implement the elimination of professional development days, and what will be the consequences of that? Is this government saying that professional development days are not important? What is the long-term ramification if over two years professional development days are gone and teachers do not upgrade their skills to meet the needs of our children?

I think that with the ever-changing technology it is necessary for teachers to have that opportunity to upgrade their skills. In fact, just a couple of days ago, there was an article in the paper that indicated that many teachers do not have the skills to bring in the proper computer services to teach the children, which is a very important part of our society today.

So I think that as you take away these professional development days from teachers, we are going to see a reduced quality in education, and education is the basis of our society. Particularly when this government talks about how much they are in support of education, I would think that they would be in support of having teachers get every skill that they could to educate our children better.

One of the modern technologies that rural people are very interested in is distance education. It is necessary for teachers to get those skills as well. Some of those skills can be gained on those professional development days.

So I think that it is a very short-sighted move to say that on one hand it is up to the school boards, but on the other hand, open up the doors to take away professional development days which are essential for the improvement and to have a high standard of education here in this province, Mr. Speaker.

So those are some of the points that are very important, and I think that we will see a reduced service. But I want to refer back to the health care system and what is going to be the impacts of this. How will personal care homes be maintained on a four-day workweek? There are many areas also that will be affected. How will our laboratories work in hospitals? Are they going to be kept open Friday? Are they going to be considered an essential service?

When you look at the statistics of accidents, Mr. Speaker, many accidents, the majority of accidents occur on weekends, and how will this be addressed? Are they going to call in emergency services, and what is the cost of those emergency services going to be if the person is on standby and has to provide this service?

In reality, we will probably see that there will be no saving of money, but we will see a tremendous reduction in service. This government has put together a very hasty plan that they think is going to address their needs, but in reality this is something

that they believe in and it is an attack, it is an attack on organized labour. That is not something that this government believes in very strongly, Mr. Speaker.

\*(1540)

So I think that there will be negative effects by this legislation, and I do not think the government has thought through what the impacts will be on those lower-income people. To say that it is a fair legislation is not true, because those people who are at a low income are going to be affected much more dramatically than those people on a higher income. The employee who is making \$20,000 versus the employee making \$70,000 will certainly feel the consequences of this legislation much more severely than the higher-income people, Mr. Speaker.

That is what we have to think about. We have to think about fairness and how we can be sure that those who are on low income are not affected more severely than those on higher income. We have to look at what the impacts will be on services in rural communities and remote areas where there is limited service as is right now. To have that service further reduced through this legislation will do nothing to enhance the quality of life in those communities.

Mr. Speaker, this government has, with one stroke of a pen, transferred to employers a very great power. They have the ability to now just decide without any negotiations how much time, how much salary they are going to eliminate from their employees. In many cases, the employees are going to be expected to do the same amount of work. That work is going to have to be done.

We have talked to many of those people who have said that is happening already. They are feeling the consequences of it. We talk to people who work in Highways departments, talked to people in Agriculture. We talked about this in Estimates for Agriculture, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) said that if there is an emergency those people will have to come into work, do the work and take the day off somewhere else.

So they will have the reduced salary. They will be expected to pick up the work. They will not have the holiday long weekend, because many of them will have to be on standby to do the work, and the work will have to be absorbed as well.

As I say, we have talked to other people in the Highways department, many jobs that have not been filled. These employees are carrying a very high workload as it is right now, and these extra cutbacks will only delay the work, and employees will be expected to carry on with it.

Mr. Speaker, this government could have much more easily sat down with its employees, worked through this and come up with some sort of a negotiated plan rather than using a broad brush to try to cover off everything in one move. In other provinces they have sat down at their table, provinces that are facing difficulties as well, and they work through negotiations. But they have not dictated what should be.

That is what this country is all about. That is a right employees have, they have the right to negotiate. Government has the responsibility to negotiate in good faith. This government has not done that. They have destroyed a very important part of our environment here in this province by eroding the collective bargaining process and destroying that co-operative spirit that we have come to know in this province.

Mr. Speaker, that will have a serious impact for many years when we try to negotiate with employees and have a harmonious climate in this country. I guess I wonder what will happen to those people who choose not to follow this legislation. Will the government intervene in those areas? There are a lot of problems that could be created by this, and I find it difficult that this is the route that they should have taken.

It relates very much to all areas that this government is working in. They do not have an understanding of the people who use the services. It is just as in other areas. They have cut back in funding, in programs that impact mostly on poor people. Now they are cutting back on services that impact on poor people. They have not looked at the consequences of the whole broader picture of what this is going to do.

To a degree, that does not surprise me because, as I say, that is just the same thing we have had with this government in the farming community. This government implies that it listens to people. They go about holding public hearings and pretend that they are consulting with people, so in that sector at least we had the image that they were

negotiating and willing to listen, where we have not had that in the public sector.

Mr. Speaker, in the farming community they said they were out listening but have not listened. Again, the federal government, with the support of this government, has taken away services and not listened to the people in the rural community and with the public sector they have not even pretended to respect the wishes or the concerns. There is no respect for the collective needs of employees; there is no respect for the negotiated agreement with employees; they basically do not respect their employees and that creates for a very bad climate in this province.

When people are dealt with confrontationally, there are ways of reacting, and we will see that reaction in many areas of the civil service.

You walk into some of the government service offices now, and if you talk to some of the people, they are very frustrated that they have been dealt a piece of legislation, and in fact I refer to the Department of Family Services, where I talked to some of the people who got this legislation, who had told them, well, here, this is what we have, you figure out how we are going to deal with it in each individual office. This has happened in other offices as well: You decide how you are going to work out this shorter workweek.

You also have to figure out how you are going to handle those emergencies. Yes, somebody is going to have to be on call during the Christmas holidays and that long weekend you have over the summer. We saw the beginning of it last week when the offices were closed down the first day. In fact, there was quite a disarray when you tried to phone into one office to get some information and you could not get it there. You ended up having to phone to another office with nobody there to answer the questions. To me that sounds very ridiculous.

I wonder what people from out of province think if they happen to have business to do in this province, and they call in on a Friday and they are told that government is shut down. I do not think that sets a very good image for the province.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the government has made a mistake with this legislation, because they could have dealt with it by sitting down to the table. As we have said before, we will not be supporting this, because it goes completely against the

collective bargaining process. In the long term, the government may think they are going to save some money, but what they have done is set up a confrontational environment. They are not dealing co-operatively with their employees, and we will see the impact on services right across the province.

\*(1550)

I am particularly concerned about what the impacts will be in the services in the rural communities, in the health care services, in the schools, and how the quality of education is going to be impacted when we have the ability to reduce two years of professional development days. I believe that the government has not thought this through very carefully and will pay the consequences for it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I want to start by asking the simple question in terms of why it is that we have this particular Bill 22 before us here today.

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance):** People want it.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** The Minister of Finance says that people want it. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that people are disappointed in this government's inability to be able to come to an agreement with the civil service and other government-sector employees, to be able to come upon a negotiated, in the free bargaining process, an agreement in which all sides will in fact win. I go back to debates that have occurred in this Chamber over the last number of years, whether it is the final offer selection debate, whether it is the freezing of the employees of the MGEU before, and I am concerned, very much so, about labour relations in the Province of Manitoba, that this particular government has consistently done what it could to disrupt labour relations in the province in terms of the public employees. [interjection]

The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) talks from his seat about Premier Clyde Wells. Well, I know one thing that this government has not done that Clyde Wells did do, and that is that he went to the people. He felt so strongly on the issue that he brought it to the people.

**Mr. Manness:** We are going to the people.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says that we are going to go to the people. When are we going to be going to the people? This government is not even calling the by-elections that are out there, Mr. Speaker. We have had a vacant seat for over six months, and the government does not even have the tenacity to call a by-election. I watched the Minister of Finance set up this model while he was in the press conference room, he and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik). They seemed quite happy and quite content; we have come up with a plan, a model, this wonderful model in which, not only is it good for our government, we want other governments, local governments in particular, your school boards and your municipalities, to emulate, to come to grips with the problems that the provincial government says that it has come to grips with and implement something very similar to it.

Then the government went and they started to talk about how fair this particular bill was and that they are treating everyone equally, that the public sector itself has to put in their fair share, and given the financial situation or status of the province, that this is really the only option that this government has.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can recall a few months prior when the Minister of Labour was somewhat—well, I hesitate to use the word "boastful," but was somewhat happy in the sense that they have achieved an agreement with the union, and it had an increase for the government employees. You know, the first thing that came across my mind is that, well, here we have a minister that goes out, enters into an agreement. Three months later, we have the Minister of Finance saying that this agreement that you entered into, we are not going to be able to keep for the simple reason that our financial picture does not allow for it to occur.

Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing in the sense that one would have thought that the Minister of Labour would have known the financial picture of the province prior to entering into an agreement with Mr. Olfert and the Manitoba Government Employees' Union. So it is somewhat of a surprise in terms of the Minister of Labour not being informed on what the current situation of this government's financial picture was.

But I want to address some of the issues in terms of fairness. The government says that it is fair. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not convinced that it is fair.

I believe that it is very unfair. If you take a look—and let us use some specific examples—at government agencies or Crown corporations or departments and you look at the services that are being delivered, whether it is with this government, whether it is a school board or whether it is a municipal government, you will find that the staffing complements of each of these different organizations and departments differ substantially.

Now, if you take a look at a school division as an example and you say, well, if you have a 2 percent cutback or you say that you have to give a certain number of days off to a school division, in some cases, if you have the luxury of having a larger civil service or working group or number of public employees, you are better able to be able to compensate to ensure the same service or same quality or standard of service is in fact being delivered; you have a better chance of minimizing the negative impact in terms of the service and the quality of service that is being implemented.

In terms of fairness to the individuals that make less than \$30,000 a year compared to those civil servants that make in excess of \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year, Mr. Speaker, the impact is much more severe on the individuals that have the lower-end civil service or public jobs.

I recall during the freeze in committee when there was an MTS employee that came before the committee. She had alluded to the fact, and I cannot recall the exact amount of dollars, but I believe it was in the low \$20,000s that she was making. She had said that the impact that it was having on her herself was very significant, and what frustrated her, and I had the opportunity to talk to some of these individuals afterwards, especially if you look at MTS, you will see that on the one hand you have the substantial increase at the upper level, in the chair of MTS. On the other hand you have this freeze on someone that is making, let us say, \$25,000. There is no fairness when things of that nature occur.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), when the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) was standing up and he was speaking about this fairness or this aspect of being fair, the member for Burrows said, well, you have someone that makes \$30,000 and you compare that to someone that is making \$100,000. The Minister of Labour cut in saying something to the effect, well, the person that is making \$100,000, the percentage of a cut will allow

more real dollars being taken away. No one disputes that, that those individuals that are making more are going to be paying more or, what the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) likes to refer to, contributing more.

But the bottom line is, those individuals that can least afford a move of this nature are going to be hardest hit. That is not fair, Mr. Speaker.

Someone that makes \$25,000 a year that is on a single income or relies entirely on this one particular income is going to be much more severely impacted than someone that makes \$70,000 or \$80,000 a year. When the minister talks about fairness and that this is the only way of ensuring that there is fair play, I have to question that.

The Ontario government, from what I understand, has at the very least acknowledged that those that are on the lower end will be exempt from the legislation that they are going to be introducing.

\* (1600)

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there are some things that this government can do to make this bill a bit better in terms of some amendments that could be brought forward. Even coming from their philosophical approach to labour relations, I believe that there are a number of things that they can do to make it better and still stick to that philosophical approach.

During final offer selection and during the wage freeze, I sat for hours and hours, as many members of this Chamber did, and listened to the government, in particular, talk about the free bargaining process and how very important it is. That was, in essence, the reason why they were removing final offer selection. At least, that is the argument that they were putting forward at that time.

I personally disagreed with most of the stuff that they were saying but at least believed in principle that what they were talking about was something in which the Minister of Labour at the time did sincerely believe in, in the manner in which he presented himself and the amount of times he repeated himself on the importance of the free bargaining process.

Mr. Speaker, to see the government backtrack on that is somewhat unfortunate. They can say whatever they want; whether it is Newfoundland,

whether it is Ontario, whether it is B.C., they will point to what other government administrations are doing and try to say, because they are doing it, there is nothing wrong with us doing it, and that for anyone to stand up and criticize it, they are being somewhat hypocritical, because if they were in government, they would likely be doing the same thing because, after all, other governments of different political stripes are implementing it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that might be the case, but it does not necessarily justify the government doing what it has chosen to do because, as I say, I believe that there are a number of things that they could do.

The Minister of Labour also made reference to the fact that this government is trying to negotiate agreements, and the Minister of Labour and Minister of Finance pointed to, I believe it was, the nurses and MTS, and said that here are two organizations that have reached a collective agreement, that Bill 22 would not be necessary.

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to hear those sorts of comments when the fact of the matter is that the government has introduced Bill 22, just like putting it to the union's heads and saying, well, it is either you have to renegotiate—or read Bill 22, and you are going to find out that you are not going to have any choice, because Bill 22 is fairly clear. It is the employer, ultimately, that gets what it is that they want on this particular issue.

So I do not think it was a fair comment from the, in particular, Minister of Labour, from his seat to say that here we are getting all these agreements today not even having to use Bill 22. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would have encouraged the Minister of Labour and the different Crown corporations and so forth to go out there and give a sincere attempt at resolving some of these issues so that Bill 22 would not have been necessary.

I know, in terms of Bill 22, that this government did not even consider looking at individuals that would have quite possibly opted to take days off without pay, Mr. Speaker. Does the government have any idea in terms of the numbers that they would have been able to save in terms of dollars or hours from individuals that would have voluntarily given up a day's pay for those 10 extra long weekends?

I do not believe that this government even considered that, because we did not hear anything

about that from the union representatives that I have talked to and the many different government workers. There are a lot, a significant number, of public sector workers that do want to be able to help, not only this government, but other, the Crowns and the other local governments, in terms of coming to fiscal reality or facing or looking at some of the fiscal problems, and would have volunteered, Mr. Speaker, I believe, giving up on some of these days—not everyone, but I believe that there would have been a significant number of individuals.

But rather than coming to grips with the problems that this government has, it chose to bring in a piece of legislation as opposed to negotiating some form of compromise, because compromise is what labour relations is all about. As the critic for Labour, I have had the opportunity to read, at least in part, The Labour Relations Act. If you read the preamble, it talks about harmony in the labour force and how very important it is. I had argued at one point that this government was, in fact, in violation of its own act, at the very least, the preamble to its act, because it was not adhering to some of the very simple arguments that are put forward in support of the free bargaining process.

This is the reason why I am most upset with Bill 22. I, too, recognize the importance of being able to save money where you can, but I do not believe this is the best way of going about doing that.

You know, it was interesting in terms of when you go through the bill itself and you find out what it is that the bill does and, obviously, it is fairly clear, but Part 1 applies, despite any other act or regulation, on collective agreement, contract or arbitration award or arrangement of any kind.

There are other parts that go to it, but it basically applies to everything from Crown corporations to hospitals, school divisions, universities.

It was interesting in terms of the MLAs and the amount that MLAs are receiving in the sense that every New Democrat that stands up will comment to the fact that we support the MLAs' reduction, and I commend them on doing that. In fact, if we go back to some of the discussions that have occurred about salaries of MLAs and so forth, I believe there was an overall consensus.

I do not think there is any MLA inside the Chamber that I am aware of that in fact disagrees with the 3.8 percent cutback on the MLAs' salaries.



I believe the government in itself knew it did not have a choice. As politicians, we do not have a choice. We have to agree to the 3.8 percent for the simple reason that you cannot say one thing to the civil service or public workers and do something entirely different as the elected officials. That would be outright irresponsible, Mr. Speaker, and I do not believe anyone inside this Chamber actually opposes that, given the action that the government has decided to take on the civil service.

Now, there are some principles of this legislation, five basic principles. The first one is a mechanism for public employers for fiscal management without layoffs; the second is, the decision is left to the individual employers; third, the 30-day consultation process with employees; four is the consistent treatment of employees; and fifth is, the benefits are protected. That was very important, Mr. Speaker, in terms of going over the bill. You do not want benefits that in fact have been negotiated through the free bargaining process to be put into jeopardy because of the government's decisions.

There are other aspects of the legislation, in particular why it is this government decided to go for two years as opposed to one year. I think if the government was wanting to have a serious attempt to be able to negotiate or to allow the different Crowns and so forth the opportunity to negotiate in good faith that at the very least there was no need to go the extra two years.

\* (1610)

I hope or I trust at least that the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Labour will go into why it is they felt it was necessary to have the two years as opposed to the one year.

Having pointed out some of the technical parts of the bill itself, I did want to enter into the discussion about labour relations overall because, as I say, over the last number of years and particularly the last year and a half or so, as the critic for Labour, I have had the opportunity to listen in and talk to a number of different representatives both on the management and labour side. There has been, through me, a significant amount of interest expressed about this government and the actions that they have taken and, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that this government would look at labour relations in the future in a much more positive light. I want to make reference to some of the concerns that have been expressed to me. One of those

concerns has been in terms of the consistent treatment of the public sector workers from this government—and one of disappointment—because many perceive the government believes that civil servants generally are overpaid and underworked.

I do not personally believe that is in fact the case, that being in the civil service, much like being a politician or any other occupation that is out there, both in the private and public sector, you are always going to have individuals that will—we would term them as workhorses or workaholics or whatever you might want to call them. Other individuals are the last to punch in the time clock, maybe take the extended coffee break and extended lunch break and then the first one out and the first one to ask for a cheque, but that happens in every occupation that is out there—to at least try to give the impression—and in part this government is attempting to do that—that there are civil servants out there that are not being productive. That is the reason why they believe, at least in part, that this model will not have an impact on the service that is being delivered to Manitobans.

It will be interesting to see at the end of the day the impact that it has had on the civil service or the different services that are offered to the public through the civil servants, in particular, our education and so forth, because I believe that you will see a significant difference.

One of the more interesting ones is the fact with the education and asking the teachers to take their professional days as the 10 days off without pay. Well, there are a number of things that occur during those days that I would argue are to the benefit of the children that are being taught. It is very shortsighted for a government to make a decision that those 10 days are not essential days, that those 10 days could be done without for the simple reason, this government has decided that they are not productive days, and there is a substantial amount of money that could be saved.

Mr. Speaker, in different areas of the civil service—and you could virtually go through each and every department, but some will have more of an impact. If you take a look at the Department of Family Services, you know, abuse, whether it is spousal or children's abuse, it does not take breaks for the summer. When you have these extra long weekends, you are going to find that you are going to have backlogs of sorts and at least calling into

question the impact on the children and abused individuals that are out there because services have been closed down for that Friday.

The government no doubt will argue that impact will be insignificant, but I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that I think that the government is trying to oversimplify the whole issue and that if the government was wanting to do it in a much more fair way that they should have been looking at the different departments and the different sizes of the civil service, by making a straight statement of whether it is the 3.8 percent or the 10 days off without pay, that it is a lot more complicated than just saying that this is the way it is going to happen and there is not going to be any negative impact.

I do not believe, in fact, that this government sat down, the different ministers sat down with the civil servants and their department heads to see in terms of how they would be able to implement a government policy of this nature. As a direct result of that lack of communication, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that there are going to be a lot of shortcomings of this particular policy, and that is going to be somewhat unfortunate in the sense that it could have been minimized through a number of different vehicles, first and foremost through the free bargaining process in good faith and sitting down.

Unions have agreed to zero percent increases in the past, and if you feel that you have such a strong case, that you were in such a financial bind, that these individuals, I would argue, would have been more sympathetic to government and you would have seen agreements that would have been achieved without putting into jeopardy the level of service that is being administered through our public sector. That has been clearly demonstrated by some of the public union organizations that have already come to an agreement with the government. What you need to do, Mr. Speaker, is to look at some of these organizations, such as the nurses' union. These individuals have come to an agreement.

It is not because of the government in a sense of good will and good feeling. It is more out of frustration from a government that is prepared to do absolutely anything in order to be able to achieve their bottom line. I think that in itself is unfortunate, because there are many different professionals that are out there, professionals and nonprofessionals throughout the Civil Service that would have in fact

sat down and come to an agreement in which the government would not be losing faith with those civil servants.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that ultimately public servants are not going to forget, that there is no doubt going to be a significant number of them that feel that the government is doing the right thing by introducing Bill 22, but there is also going to be a significant number of individuals that are very much going to resent what this government has chosen to do.

Those individuals are the individuals that one has to be concerned with, because you need to have a civil service that in fact feels good about what it is that they are doing, and good employer-employee relationships. Mr. Speaker, if you do not have that, you are not going to have good worker productivity. You are going to make individuals feel less than what they are, and whether it is an individual that works within the Department of Health or the Department of Housing or a nurse at a local hospital, or a teacher in the classroom, it will have an impact in terms of the manner in which they approach delivering the service that they do.

All of them are caring individuals and want to do their part, I believe, Mr. Speaker. By the government taking the action that they have done, I am concerned about what is going to be happening tomorrow with these individuals, and what it is that this government is going to do after the two years has expired. If you take a look in terms of the hard feelings that were generated when the wages were frozen, we have not even gotten over that and the government has brought in another piece of legislation to ensure those individuals who were upset back then are going to continue to be upset.

\*(1620)

Mr. Speaker, that is, as I say, what I find most unfortunate. I sincerely do believe that even though you have other governments and other jurisdictions bringing in legislation of a similar nature, it is ultimately not the way that we have to go in the province of Manitoba. There is a process that is there that does allow for the free bargaining process to occur. I believe that Premier Clyde Wells used that process in part, at least in part, when he was being challenged on it and felt on principle that it was strong enough or big enough of

an issue that he had to bring it to the people of Newfoundland.

At least that government had the integrity to go to the people as opposed to going around and saying that this is what the people want, and we are doing what is in the best interest of the public. Not only the first time, but this is second time that this government has approached the civil service in such a manner.

If I were Peter Olfert, and the next round of negotiations came up, what am I to think? I negotiated an agreement in good faith and what is going to stop this government from doing it again? They have already done it twice. What is going to prevent them from doing it again? I think that is a legitimate concern.

What is Mr. Olfert or his successor supposed to do in terms of future negotiations with the government? Because, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is legitimate to believe that this government does not have any respect for the Manitoba Government Employees' Union. It has demonstrated that very, very clearly, even in the remarks from the seat of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), to the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) when he talked about Mr. Olfert, that Mr. Olfert was the only one who was not going to negotiate, but other individuals and other unions are, in fact, negotiating.

Is there any wonder why Mr. Olfert might feel uncomfortable sitting down and talking to the government? [interjection] To the dean of the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, I would put it on his lap in terms of—if the dean of the Chamber was Peter Olfert and he had negotiated on behalf of our largest union an agreement, and months later that agreement is being torn apart because the government of the day has had a change in heart, what type of an approach would he have in terms of the next time he sits down with the government negotiators, knowing full well, whatever you might negotiate might not come to fruition for the simple reason that the government has its own strategy in terms of how it is going to deal with the public sector workers? That does not necessarily mean that it is going to be doing what is in the best interest of the public sector union, in particular, the Manitoba Government Employees' Union. So it would be very hard.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I like to believe that the government acts in the best interests of Manitobans, but I would ask the minister, if in fact this is in the best interests of all Manitobans, the individuals that earn less than \$30,000, the individuals that are going to be much more hard pressed as a direct result. Had the government, as I say, had the will, it could have done a number of different things, Mr. Acting Speaker, to ensure that at least in part it would have been able to achieve what it is that it is hoping to achieve through Bill 22. We are not even convinced of that.

Where was it—I believe it was MPIC. They had their first Friday off. The following day on the Saturday some individuals were working overtime as a result of having the Friday off—it was Autopac that had that particular incident. So on the Friday they are at the golf course. On the day off, on the Saturday they are in claiming time and a half.

I am not too sure in terms of if in fact that matter has been clarified within government, and there was a certain amount of money that was left in the department for overtime, but I would suggest to you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is defeating the purpose of this particular bill that the government has introduced.

Again, I believe, I sincerely believe that this government brought in Bill 22 not knowing what the impact was going to be on the different departments and agencies and Crowns and so forth, because if it did know what the impact was going to be, it would have been better prepared and better able to answer a number of the questions that were being put forward.

We asked, on a continuous basis of the government, how this particular model was going to have an impact on the different government departments, on the agencies, on our prisons, on other departments, Mr. Acting Speaker. The government was unable to provide us with any form of a response that would have been able to alleviate the concerns and legitimate concerns of individuals that have been posing questions to us as members of an opposition and in turn posing to the government, unsuccessful in answering many of those questions, especially in some of the more remote and smaller communities outside the city of Winnipeg.

If you have a small hospital in rural Manitoba and it only has three or four individuals working at it and

you automatically take away individuals or have them take this mandatory 10 days, it is going to have an impact on the quality of service. I do not believe the government can stand up and say otherwise.

You could virtually go through department by department and talk about what are essential services and what is the government doing to ensure that the essential services would be maintained, and that you would not see the quality of service being dropped, especially in areas of essential services, Mr. Acting Speaker.

That is, at the very least, what the government should have been prepared to be able to tell us. This is why, as I say, the government, I do not believe, has done its homework on this particular bill.

I do believe that they know what it is that they want to be able to do. They want to be able to save dollars and nothing more than that because they have a fixation on the deficit. They believe that this is what we have to do in order to address the deficit.

It does not necessarily matter how they go about doing it or the resultant effects. But let me suggest to you that there is a number of things that the government has done because of that fixation that are going to result in more money having to be spent, more public tax dollars that are going to have to be spent.

I had the opportunity, for example, to raise one in Question Period about a constituent of mine who could not get a daycare position and was offered a job. As a result of not being able to get that daycare position, she had to say, no, to this particular job. She was on social assistance.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, there it is fairly clear in terms of action that government takes that does not result in the savings of money. It might not necessarily be as clear overall for government to say that we are going to save so many millions of dollars by reducing the work year by 10 days. But there is no way that they have demonstrated to us that, in fact, they are going to be saving money. In some cases they are going to spending more money.

These are the type of questions that the government should have been prepared to be able to answer before they brought in Bill 22, Mr. Acting Speaker.

\*(1630)

**Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin):** Mr. Acting Speaker, we are getting the hoots from the yellow dogs across the way.

I want to, first of all, say that Bill 22 is an imposed solution, an imposed solution that indicates probably better than any other decision of this government, any other action, the admission of failure of this government.

It epitomizes the failure that has characterized this government in its inability to develop partnerships with the people of Manitoba, to develop consensus and decision making in a viable way that will withstand the test of time.

This will not do that, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is clear, and I say that at the outset. There are many examples where they have taken this power upon themselves. It is clear in Bill 16, in education, for example, that they did that with the school boards. They could not come to any agreement or develop a partnership. So they imposed a solution.

They did not even try to negotiate, as they did in Ontario, with the whole issue of wages. They failed because they did not even make an attempt to negotiate in a viable and reasonable way.

Mr. Acting Speaker, therein lies the genesis of our opposition to this particular piece of legislation because of this government's failure to develop a partnership and to negotiate. Now, we are not talking about this bill as it applies to MLAs. In the situation of MLAs, clearly up to this point in time at least, MLAs have agreed upon the various levels of remuneration, the levels of support services allowances that were made for MLAs. Of course, we can agree to reduce those. So I am not objecting to that agreement that we have in this Chamber with regard to MLAs' remuneration and allowances. We do advocate an independent commission would set these, though, and we hope the government will be looking at that piece of legislation, if it is required, and move swiftly to ensure that kind of solution is in place.

But when we are talking about negotiated settlements, free collective bargaining and this government's lack of respect for that process, then we have a fundamental difference with this government. The failure to negotiate, the failure to respect and to recognize the democratic right of the working people in this province, the right to free collective bargaining and respect for the process that it involves and the results of that process, that

is what is missing here by this government. They cannot hide from that fundamental difference, and that is why I am saying that the actions they take now will not hold them in good stead. They will not be able to withstand the test of time in this province of Manitoba.

Ontario, as I indicated earlier, at least undertook a negotiating process, and they also—[interjection] Well, their negotiations will be ongoing. [interjection] Well, that is interesting. Listen to them hoot and holler again. They put in place mitigating programs to ensure that certain people would not be hurt by it. They put in place provisions of a social contract, something Tories know nothing about. They only look at it as one thing and that is cutting wages. They do not look at all aspects of it. A job security fund is part of the provisions that they have. Redeployment. Training and adjustment assistance for employees subject to layoff. A low-income cutoff. Where is that in this bill by this government? Nowhere. There is no consideration about low income.

This Tory government has no sensitivity to working people and especially low-income people. We see that in the decisions that they have made across the board in many different agencies in all departments of this government, where they have hit the poor the hardest, those most vulnerable the hardest, and they have not put in place any mitigating programs or supports for those who are most vulnerable in society. That is what epitomizes this government. That is how this government can be described.

So they have not considered pay equity as Ontario did. They did not consider the issue of low income. They did not consider the issue of a job security fund. All of these things were omitted by this government, and therein lies the difference. Let them not try to misrepresent to the people of Manitoba that what they are doing in this province is in any way, shape or form the same as they are doing in other provinces, in Ontario particularly, where there is a New Democratic government.

They tend to want to do this, Mr. Acting Speaker, with many programs, just like with the student loans, for example, or student bursaries. When they eliminated student bursaries, they said, oh, Ontario did this, but they did not consider that in Ontario they put in place provisions to ensure those who were most needy would continue to get student bursaries.

You see, what this government fails again to recognize is any sensitivity to those in the lower echelons of the economic scale in this province. That is the difference. Clearly, this government will be tested on that in the next election, their failure to ensure a caring and responsive society to those most in need in this province. That has been eroded by Tory governments nationally and certainly by this provincial government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we can look at examples when New Democrats have been in power, the Ontario government, I mentioned some of the social contract aspects. Even right here in Manitoba, Winnipeg School Division No. 1 negotiated a zero and zero percent—negotiated, something this government knows nothing about. They do not know how to negotiate.

They can only use the heavy hammer and the power of legislation. Where is the negotiation, as Winnipeg No. 1 did with many of its—[interjection] Well, we have many New Democrats on the school board of Winnipeg School Division No. 1. This government knows that. There is no revelation in this House on that aspect. They know that. They have been shooting at Winnipeg No. 1 continuously. We all know that. All of a sudden, this is some great revelation for these ministers. Wow, they just learned something. I will tell you they have been aiming at Winnipeg No. 1 for the last while.

Now, that example of collective bargaining is something that these people, if we can call them that, in government could in fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, take a lesson from. They could look at how it was done, how trust was built up, and how through negotiation you can arrive at a partnership. You can arrive at decisions that are not imposed, like this government chooses to do time and time again, to impose solutions rather than to negotiate. There is their failure. They do not like that when we point that out because it attacks them at their soft underbelly. It is clear this is where it hits them, because they are weak here, they are soft here. It is one of their weaknesses, and we will point that out time and time again.

Now, let us look at the impact of Bill 22 as it applies to school divisions in this province. Bill 22 is inequitable in its application because it encourages school boards to cut days, to force teachers to take unpaid days from their professional development and in-service days. It

encourages them but does not require. Therefore, depending on the relative wealth of one school division versus another, some will require, like Mountain, eight days of unpaid leave for its teachers and other employees, where Assiniboine South, for example, will take five days. Others will take three, two, one, or none, as in the case of Winnipeg No. 1, which I just mentioned earlier. That is no coincidence that they have done that.

What we have seen there is an application of this legislation which is imposed on the collective bargaining system in this province without regard or respect for it, imposed in a way that hits many employees in different ways from division to division. There is an inequitable application as to how it applies. I see that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) says in the Estimates—

\* (1640)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer):** Order, please.

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Acting Speaker, I wonder if my knowledgeable friend from Dauphin might entertain a question which I know he will be abundantly able to answer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer):** That is not a point of order. The Minister of Health did not have a point of order.

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**Mr. Plohan:** Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Health has ample opportunity to question me after I finish my remarks here this afternoon. I have no difficulty with that. He certainly is not knowledgeable. We know that from the answers to the questions we got this afternoon. I have no difficulty with any of those questions.

Let us look at the situation with regard to school divisions. We are seeing tremendous inequities division to division as a result of this government's policies. I say that, while the minister claims that she is maintaining the in-servicing dollars in her budget, she knows very well, if there are no days left to take those in-servicing days, to take that professional development, that in fact she is just going to lapse that money. She might have been more up-front if she had cut the money to reflect what actually is going to happen, but because of her inability to project the kinds of impacts of these

hastily made decisions, naturally there is no change in that particular line.

We will see the results of that this coming year when, even though in-servicing is so important and professional development and ongoing training is so important, as I will demonstrate to these members who say they believe in time and again in this House, that in fact learning is a life-long experience. We have to stay internationally competitive, and people have to adapt and innovate.

All of these slogans by this government are in direct contradiction to this bill, because this bill attacks professional development head on in the school system in this province. That is a contradiction and shows this government for the hollow rhetoric with which they talk about innovation and the ability to be flexible and compete and adapt to the changing world situation. There is no legitimate effort on their part to in fact do this when they bring in acts such as this which directly contradict that kind of policy.

We can look at some of those examples. We look at the recent article that talks about computer illiteracy: Public school system flunking the test of computer revolution. These members in government are failing to ensure that new technology is introduced into the school system. They are failing to provide the resources, Mr. Acting Speaker, for that, for the technology that is required for us to compete. Why talk about being competitive internationally when you are taking actions that directly oppose what you are saying? It is hollow rhetoric. That is all it is. You do not believe in it. Well, let us take a look at it. [interjection]

The members opposite are hooting again, Mr. Acting Speaker. I would assume they do not agree that we are falling behind with regard to the computer literacy, that we have to put more resources into new technology to ensure that we are competitive. They talk about being competitive. Where is the action? There is no action. They are falling behind. They are standing alongside when it comes time to meeting these essential needs.

How do we ensure that teachers are able to teach what is required in terms of new technology if we are going to remove the in-servicing opportunities that they have, the professional

development that has been in place? How are we going to ensure that in fact they are going to meet these needs of students? Where are they going to do it?

Now, the minister said she provides the money but there are no days left. Some of the poorer divisions, eight days gone, no in-service, no professional development days. And now the government says they are concerned about computer illiteracy, they say they are concerned, they say we have to be competitive.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Where is the action; where is the meat? There is nothing here from them because they are not putting in the resources; they do not believe in what they say. Just like with sustainable development, it is talk, talk, talk, all rhetoric and no action.

The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) continuously talks about education reform. She talks about education reform; she talks about new curriculum, new changes to the curriculum. Now, when that happens, you need to have professional development for teachers because you want them to be able to reflect that new curriculum to ensure that students will learn the latest skills and requirements that are outlined in the curriculum, do you not? Is that not what the government believes in? So then why will they not ensure that there is provision for professional development so that this new curriculum can be passed on in terms of the skills?

That is the difficulty. We see the contradictions by this government. They introduce a Skills for Independent Living course, but now suddenly there will not be any professional development time for teachers. Now there is an example. You see, they want to cut these days out in the schools and at the same time they say they want to have the latest methods and they want everyone in the professions to keep up and change and be innovative and ensure they are meeting the latest needs and ensuring that the province's labour force is competitive.

Where does this start? It starts in the schools. You have to be competitive in the schools, and you have to ensure that the teachers are providing the kind of information that will ensure that students are flexible, that they can adapt, that they are thinking, that they are able to change and adapt to new situations. If you do not have teachers who are

informed of the latest developments, naturally you are not going to have that imparted to the students. I am saying to the members opposite that time and time again their actions contradict what they say is important, and their actions in education are in fact a very good example of that.

Mr. Speaker, I think that they are following the agenda of the federal government when they talk about Inventing our Future, An Action Plan for Canada's Prosperity. In here it is simply a matter of skills that they talk about, about being internationally competitive and yet the government here preaches that, but does not practice it.

When we look at Inventing our Future, they talk about innovation almost throughout. The government has patterned its so-called reform after the federal government's paper on Inventing our Future, yet when they are practising their policies in terms of the results that are done, we see nothing happening in the school system. The cutbacks that are epitomized in Bill 16 and Bill 22 reflect that lack of understanding and the need to ensure that teachers are dynamic, that they are learning the latest techniques and latest skills and latest information so they can pass that on to the students. That is what is missing. The government has not put this together.

\* (1650)

Now, we look at other places where the government has provided incentives, private training dollars, because they believe, theoretically at least it seems, that there has to be training provided for young people, for workers. So they say, well, we are going to provide tax breaks on the payroll tax. The federal government does it with the GST for companies, for corporations that are providing training.

Yet, in our own schools, in our public school system—a fundamental contradiction. There it is not important suddenly to have lifelong learning and adaptation and innovation. Suddenly, it is not important. So now how does this government explain that contradiction to the public?

They talk about this on the one hand and, yet, when it comes to the public school system—no examples of it. As a matter of fact, they go the other way. They cut the opportunities for professional development.

The government has to look very closely at the contradictions it leaves on the table and they hope

that people will not see. I know that the public is becoming more and more aware of this government's hollow rhetoric in the area of training and innovation as it applies to the school system. It is not there, and in terms of reform, it is not there either.

When we press the Minister of Education on reform, do we get any concrete answers? Do we get any direct and specific answers? Can she show us what she is doing with reform? Nothing. She talks about a series of fora that we are going to have this fall, but she has no timetable for reform. She does not know if she is going to have major reform, minor reform or any reform. We pressed her in the Estimates on this. There is no answer.

As a matter of fact, that is one of the reasons why we are very unsatisfied with the way this minister has been responding in Estimates. Her colleagues may wonder why we move motions of non-confidence on this minister. She is failing to answer questions specifically and directly in Estimates. She talks in circles.

I have had many people who have come to me that have read Hansard, these Estimates. They say, you certainly do not get any direct information, and I am sure the minister prides herself in not giving an answer to a question. I think she is actually proud of it. I think that is a shame. It is a shame that a minister would be proud that she does not answer a question in the Estimates.

It demonstrates to us the closed nature of this government, the government's—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Manness:** On a point of order, I believe that the member must have misspoken himself. I know he would not want to leave on the record the impression that the Minister of Education does not provide answers, because in my attendance at the committee meetings, the minister is answering fully the questions of the member opposite.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable government House leader does not have a point of order. That is clearly a dispute over the facts.

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**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Speaker, there once again we see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) riding to the rescue. This is what we have seen.

Rather than allowing the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) to stand on her own two feet and let her actions and her work stand the test of time, stand the test of the people of Manitoba, we have the Premier (Mr. Filmon) running into the Estimates and spending an entire afternoon answering questions for the Minister of Education.

Now we have the Minister of Finance standing up in this House and feeling he has to ride to the rescue—[interjection] Now, another minister is going to stand and ride to the rescue.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, just for clarification, because I know the member for Dauphin does not want to leave wrong information on the record, when I have been in Estimates for the Department of Education, it is very difficult to understand what the line of questioning is because he does not know how to ask questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order, and I would remind all honourable members, a point of order should be used to bring to the attention of the Chair a breach of the rules, not an opportunity to try and clarify the record.

The honourable Madam Minister did not have a point of order.

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**Mr. Plohman:** I thank you for raising that with government members who are here because they are clearly abusing the points of order. It is interesting that they have to rise, one after another, to give testimonials to the minister here on the record to leave the impression they are supporting her.

We know the Minister of Finance is just clamouring to get that Education portfolio as soon as he can. He is just waiting to get out of Finance and into Education. I know that those words he just put on the record, and his colleague, are hollow words, simply to leave the public impression that they are supporting the Minister of Education and that she is doing a good job. It is embarrassing to see that, Mr. Speaker.



Do you know why I say that? Do you know why I believe that? I believe he is waiting because we know there has been a massive miscalculation by this government on the education front. They are going to have to find a scapegoat and, unfortunately, or fortunately, it is going to be the Minister of Education because, in fact, the public will not stand for this attack on the public education system. They are going to need a major change to show a change in direction, and that is what we are going to see.

We get 4,000 people rallying at the Legislature. We get 2,000 teachers. We get hundreds of students in Stonewall, in Grandview and in River East, and we know there are going to be more parents and students rallying in the Minister of Labour's constituency in Beausejour on Saturday. They are going to be there because they will not put up with this attack on the public school system.

What we have seen is one set of rules for the private schools, one for the public schools. They will not tolerate an attack on the public school system. They know the continued preoccupation with the private school system at 10 times the rate of inflation increases over the last five years, 10 times as much as the public school system received from this government, is undermining the public school system. They know that and they are not going to stand by while this government destroys a very good public education system in this province.

That is why this government is in trouble. That is the evidence that they have miscalculated. That means, Mr. Speaker, the government is going to have to take some drastic action to turn this around, because this issue is getting away on them and they are not controlling it. They are not on top of it.

Bill 22 reflects a massive mistrust by the government of the people who work for them and is resulting in a massive mistrust by the people who work for them of the government, a mistrust of this government, because there has been no effort— [interjection] Now, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) comes in at the eleventh hour here to talk about Bob Rae.

I covered that about Ontario. They have negotiated as well and they continue to do so, and they are putting in mitigating programs to ensure that those people who are the most vulnerable will be protected. I talked about elements of the social

contract that are foreign to this Tory government. They know nothing about it. I believe that this bill and Bill 16 and other measures taken at the eleventh hour by this government were hastily thrown together, poorly prepared, with no consultation and no effort to develop a partnership with the people of Manitoba prior to them bringing this forward.

It is an attack on working people in the public sector. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you that they will say: Well, what choice did we have?

We know they had choices. They left hundreds of millions of dollars on the table. They gave it back to high-income earners and the corporations in this province. They have a choice. They could have chosen to take that money back, to regain that lost income—hundreds of millions. As a matter of fact, some people will project that the money they have left on the table, that they have forgone, that this Minister of Finance has forgone in a vain attempt to stimulate this economy with his trickle-down economics is in the area of a billion dollars in the last five years. I am not saying it is that high; it may very well be.

There are those who say, and I agree with them, that this government could have used that money to fund the public school system rather than the private school system, so they would not have had to bring in such draconian measures as they have done here without consultation. An admission of defeat, a failure to negotiate, a failure to develop a partnership with the people of Manitoba. That will ultimately lead to their downfall, Mr. Speaker.

It reminds me of a Vander Zalm B.C. That is where they get their agenda, turning the clock back to Vander Zalm in B.C., when he fired 25 percent of all the workers in the public sector in the province of British Columbia, fired school boards in the province of British Columbia. This is where this government is leaning, and we will do everything we can to stop them from doing that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Dauphin will have 10 minutes remaining, unless the House is willing to waive private members' hour.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, okay.

\* (1700)

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

#### Bill 200—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), Bill 200 (The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Also standing in the name of the honourable member for the Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) who has one minute remaining.

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

#### Bill 202—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), Bill 202 (The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation), standing in the name of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister).

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

#### Bill 203—The Health Care Records Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), Bill 203 (The Health Care Records Act; Loi sur les dossiers médicaux), standing in the name of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner).

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

#### Bill 205—The Ombudsman Amendment Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), Bill 205 (The Ombudsman Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman), standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

#### Bill 208—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), Bill 208 (The Workers Compensation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail), standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

#### Bill 209—The Public Health Amendment Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), Bill 209 (The Public Health Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

#### Bill 212—The Dauphin Memorial Community Centre Board Repeal Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), Bill 212 (The Dauphin Memorial Community Centre Board Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le Conseil du Centre commémoratif de Dauphin), standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Mr. Speaker:** Are we proceeding with Bill 214? No. Are we proceeding with Bill 216? No.

## PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 34—Workforce Revitalization Strategy for Manitoba

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), that

WHEREAS it has become undeniable that Canada is falling behind most industrialized nations in worker training and retraining; and

WHEREAS the skill level of the workforce is key to the prosperity of the workers, companies and to the Canadian economy as a whole; and

WHEREAS this government has demonstrated in recent budgets its lack of commitment to retraining; and

WHEREAS this government did not undertake an analysis of the potential impacts of the Free Trade Agreement before lending its support to the deal nor has it studied the impacts since the agreement was concluded and therefore no action plan exists to facilitate adjustments in the Manitoba workforce that would allow it to respond to the problems posed by free trade, and no plan exists to safeguard threatened Manitoba jobs, to retrain workers facing layoffs, or assist businesses threatened by free trade; and

WHEREAS no joint labour force strategy exists between the two levels of government; and

WHEREAS the report of the Skills Training Advisory Committee was a scathing indictment of the lack of action by this government and the Pawley administration in the area of job retraining.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recommend that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) consider undertaking an in-depth analysis of the Manitoba economy and its workforce needs, particularly the requirements for basic education and retraining in order to develop an action plan for positioning the

labour force to meet successfully the challenges of the international economic environment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly recommend that the Minister of Labour consider establishing a system to track industries in order to predict those facing a shortage of qualified workers, and those facing business closures and job losses, and use that information in planning worker retraining programs.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, since 1988 and the Free Trade Agreement, we have seen some 61,000 manufacturing jobs in 1988 in the province of Manitoba dropped to below 50,000. What has this government done?

They can say that free trade with the United States is not the reason why we have lost all those jobs, and I will give them that. That is not the only reason why we lost these manufacturing jobs in themselves, but what I will argue is that this is a government that has not been addressing the labour needs of the province of Manitoba. It has not been taking a proactive approach in terms of dealing with labour shortages that do exist in the province of Manitoba, and with the unemployed and those individuals that need the training, and with those individuals that need the retraining, as a direct result of the so-called global economic changes that are occurring across the world.

Mr. Speaker, when the resolution itself was drafted, there was no agreement with our federal counterparts with respect to labour training. Last night, in the Estimates, I did have the opportunity to ask some questions of the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) with respect to the agreement that was, in fact, achieved from this government and have to question in terms of what it is that this agreement is actually going to do, what ray of hope it gives to the unemployed or to the individual that is looking at a shutdown of a factory or being laid off or anything of this nature.

I do believe that the government did not need as long as it did to get an agreement put into place, because I believe it is very important that government does what it can to ensure the workers in the province of Manitoba are continuously being upgraded and trained and retrained where it is applicable, so that we do have a skilled workforce.

Now, we talked in the resolution in terms of asking the government to look at certain industries,

to try to develop priorities. Coincidence has it, I had the opportunity again last night to talk about that with the Minister of Education. One of the industries that I had talked about last night was the garment industry.

The garment industry, I believe, is an industry in which this government is blowing a wonderful opportunity to see additional jobs coming to the province of Manitoba. We have an industry that does have good potential for growth. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) himself, Mr. Speaker, a number of years back, talked about this particular industry and the labour demands that are there from the industry, that in fact that there were jobs available.

Mr. Speaker, when I was raising the question with the Minister of Education last night, I said to her that I quite often drive by a garment factory and I will see experienced sewing machine operators are required. After having that discussion, I did take up Notre Dame and I did see another sign that did request experienced sewing machine operators.

The government has tried to address, different governments have tried to address this particular issue through different means. In the '70s, we had an immigration wave that filled—actually, the Fashion Institute went out and recruited individuals to come to Canada to fill those jobs, because we did not have individuals, whether it was who were wanting the job or who were qualified or had the experience in order to get the job.

Mr. Speaker, I asked questions again last night on this specific industry. The Minister of Education talked about, well, now they have one course that is going to be expiring and I believe it was somewhere in and around 150, and there is another one where there is 70, but both of these things are very recent.

If you take a look at the garment industry, it does a great deal to add to the province's GNP in terms of numbers of products that are actually exported. What you do is, if you provide a skilled workforce in an industry that has good potential, chances of being able to create jobs is that much more enhanced.

I use the example of the garment industry, because it is fairly clear in terms of what type of action this particular government takes when it comes to providing jobs for Manitobans, for upgrading skills and so forth.

The only real response that I got from the Minister of Education on this particular issue was the fact that she said, well, this is an industry that has a high turnover, and, yes, she believes that they are doing what is necessary in order to have labour market for this particular industry.

\* (1710)

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Minister of Education that, no, they are not doing what is necessary, that they are in fact doing a disservice of sorts to that one particular industry by not ensuring that there is training that is available for individuals that do want to enter into that particular industry.

Even though I talk about the garment industry, we could talk about the different industries and apply the same principles to those different industries. Last night, again, I made reference to the aerospace industry. One can make argument in terms of our agrifood industries that the government does have a role to play in establishing those industries where we have a good opportunity, good potential for real growth. Those are the industries in which government has to ensure that we have the expertise or the trained individuals, skilled individuals, to meet that labour demand.

The minister made reference to tourism. I agree, Mr. Speaker, tourism is in all likelihood one of the greatest potential growth industries in the province of Manitoba. What is this government doing to ensure that we capitalize on it? I have met with individuals; they talk in terms of how nice it would be to have the courses at an affordable rate in which individual industries, in particular, say, a hotel industry or restaurant industry, where they can actually have waiters and waitresses attending courses. [interjection] The member for Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans) has a good one. I will be waiting for it.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, by providing the courses that will enhance the service to would-be tourists that would be coming to the province of Manitoba. It can be the simplest things of how you serve individuals in a restaurant, to mannerisms, to whatever it might be; but, once you have established those industries, I think that the onus then becomes on government to work in co-operation with our post-secondary institutions, training facilities, the private sector, labour, in

coming up with ideas that will, in fact, see these industries maximize the potential growth. Quite frankly, we do not see that occurring.

You know, the government can talk about what it is that it is doing, and saying that we are attracting businesses, that we are, in fact, moving in a positive direction, but you have to ask them in terms of, well if that is in fact the case, why are we not hearing of the concrete results? Why is it that our unemployment has not been going down? Other areas of Canada have seen a significant drop at least in part, Mr. Speaker.

If the government had a plan in labour force strategy—what a wonderful term—if there was a labour force strategy that this government had, many of the industries that we have today would, I would argue, be that much more healthy and better off and better prepared and able to provide or to enhance the number of workers in our workforce. Because the government has felt that inaction seems to be the order of the day in terms of training, to leave it up to the individuals to belittle the role of government, as a result, Mr. Speaker, we are not maximizing. That is unfortunate.

It is not to say that only industries that are designated from government are the ones government should be concentrating on, or putting efforts into, I should say. There are other industries that are out there. I was really pleased, for example, with McKenzie Seeds. Here we have a viable company that actually brings in seeds, packages them and then sends them away.

I think this is the sort of thing that government needs, also, to look into, and how it is that training dollars could be spent to ensure that things of this nature occur.

I am thinking in terms of processing plants. In Manitoba, at least in the Prairies, in part, we are known as a hinterland of sorts. They take out the resources and, yes, we do get some money. In the case of wheat, it is virtually nothing for our resources. Then the processing, where there are real jobs, is done elsewhere.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you had a more proactive government, at the very least, trying to provide a labour force that would be able to take advantage of those resources that we have in terms of processing—and you are talking about management. Training courses do not have to be all labour-intensified. There are other areas in

which government can also ensure that there are industries that are not necessarily there today, but would do very well tomorrow if they were given the opportunity.

Those are industries in which, again, I believe the government should, at the very least, be talking about, because we do not see that talking, that discussion, that debate occurring inside the Chamber.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, when I had asked the question in terms of, tell me some of these industries, the minister alluded to the service industries. She alluded to some manufacturing industries or manufacturing as a whole. I guess what I was trying to get out of the minister was a few more specifics, what it is that this government is doing to enhance industry A or industry B, and so forth. But we did not see that.

Had the government taken an approach of more openness in terms of, this is what we are doing and this is how we are doing it, I believe what you could see happening is more constructive opposition—and when I say opposition, opposition parties—in terms of some of the ideas that we might have. We also consult outside of this Chamber, some would argue more than what the government does. We do have a number of ideas that we believe would enhance Manitoba's economy, because we need to have a healthy economy. We need to have training and retraining.

In the leadership bid that I attempted to win, Mr. Speaker, the major plank in my campaign was education training and retraining, because if we do not come to grips with that issue, Manitoba is not going to be able to compete by the turn of the century on the global economy. We will be destined to ever being a hinterland to whomever has the financial resources to be able to purchase what resources we have.

When you take a look at some of the resources we are selling off, the world is becoming more competitive, and we are not going to be getting the same sorts of prices potentially that we are getting today.

So I think there is more than ever a need for government to sit down with all of the stakeholders and come up with what it is that we want, or what type of direction we want the province of Manitoba to go into. I would hope it would be one of diversification in getting people into the many

different opportunities that are out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this resolution because I am very pleased to take an opportunity to put on the record the skills training initiative of this particular government.

\* (1720)

When the member across the way, in his doom and gloom, speaks of Manitoba as a hinterland, he certainly has very discouraging words for Manitobans and he certainly did not have the opportunity, I suppose, to listen very carefully to the information that was put on the record in our discussion last evening.

So I am pleased to speak about the initiatives we have. I would like to start with an historical reference to the Skills Training Advisory Committee, which was a committee that put forward some goal statements for Manitoba to look ahead. In those goal statements, they spoke about establishing No. 1, a training culture.

In the establishment of a training culture, that means Manitobans would see the issue of training as one which is an ongoing one. Within a training culture, it would not just be those individual Manitobans who are seeking that training but it would also involve private sector, because business, industry and labour also recognize that the skills Manitobans have may continue to be developed throughout their working life and they continue to be enhanced.

As those skills are enhanced, in partnership with the private sector as well as with government and the employee, then we recognize that the business or industry those individuals are operating in will in fact continue to be successful. Employers and employees will also have a greater level of skills, and should they wish to move around and apply those skills in other places, it will still make them extremely employable.

Secondly, in the STAC Report, there was a recommendation that the community colleges move to the governance model. I am very pleased to say to the member across the way, in terms of the action taken by this government, that as of April 1 this year, our community colleges have moved to independent governance. They are now governed by a board of governors.

It allows the community colleges to negotiate directly with the federal government for market-driven training. It allows them to speak directly to employers across Manitoba who wish courses to be delivered by our community colleges, and it allows for a two-way relationship so that information from the communities and the required needs and training requirements can be then given from the community directly to the colleges. The colleges also are able, through their boards of governors, to put the information back out into the community about the kinds of skills training that is being delivered. So we have accomplished, as a course of action, that particular issue.

Secondly, the STAC Report also spoke about consolidation. I would like to point to another piece of action that this government has most recently done within the Department of Education and Training. We have most recently consolidated programs that relate to skills training for Manitobans. We have brought into the Department of Education and Training the Apprenticeship area, formerly in the Department of Labour, because we have recognized that the needs and issues that present themselves in the Apprenticeship area are very important for us to be aware of on our K-12 side and also very important to integrate into the whole Advanced Education and Skills Training area.

We have also integrated into the Department of Education the Employability Enhancement Programs that were previously within the Department of Family Services. These are programs such as the Single Parent Job Access Program, the Gateway Program, where some Manitobans need some particular assistance and counselling and also some work experience opportunities as they gain their skills training.

So that consolidation has been accomplished, and now we have renamed that division of the Department of Education and Training, Advanced Education and Skills Training. Now we can offer, within one area, the spectrum of training opportunities.

In addition, the STAC Report also spoke about the partnership of the private sector with government. I am very pleased to speak about the initiatives, again an initiative that is already ongoing, Workforce 2000. Workforce 2000 is a very concrete example of partnership between government and business, industry and labour.

I point to the most recent statistics as of the end of May 1993, where over 54,000 Manitobans have received training through the Workforce 2000 program. That program, through the funds that government has put in, has also levered funds from the private sector. So it is not government alone trying to support the total training, but we have developed the training culture. We have involved the private sector. The private sector has put money on the table to assist in the training of their employees.

The fifth area that was recommended by the STAC Report, and that we have already, this government, taken action on that area, was the issue of vocational education credits. With our new funding formula, we now allow students in the K-12 system to take a single vocational education course. Previously, students had to be totally within that program, or they were unable to take vocational education courses. Now we have said to students, this is an opportunity that all students should have and all students should be able to take a single course. That might lead them to areas of study and training that previously they had not considered. So certainly we have taken a great deal of action that has arisen from the goals that were outlined within the STAC Report.

Then the member has referenced the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement. I was very happy to sign that on behalf of the government of Manitoba. That signing was accomplished in April. We waited to sign that agreement until we had an agreement that we believe spoke directly to Manitobans about the issues in Manitoba. We were not content to simply sign an agreement, an overall agreement as anyone would sign, that did not speak directly to our province.

The member has asked about the timing of that signing, and it seemed to have taken some time. Yes, we considered what we were signing. I would also remind him that, from the summer of 1992 through the end of October 1992, there were constitutional talks which were ongoing. In those constitutional talks, one of the major areas of consideration was training. There was an opportunity to look at whether or not there would be a devolution of some of the training responsibilities that have traditionally fallen to the federal government, if those responsibilities would fall to the provincial government. That was not

accomplished in a formal way through an agreement at that time, but we had to wait before we signed the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement to see if there would be any changes which needed to be incorporated. Within that agreement, the signing of that agreement now changes the way that we do business.

Previously, these agreements have focused on buyer-seller agreements. We have had these buyer-seller agreements since the mid-1970s, where the federal government flowed their money through the province, and the province looked at administering it; however, places like the colleges, for instance, were not able to have direct negotiations with the federal government.

In this new agreement, we now have some changes. Now, we are looking at a shared planning and a shared co-ordination within the agreement. We recognize that two parallel systems need to be working together in the area of planning, we need to co-ordinate the kind of work that we are doing. We need to collaborate, and we also need to look at complementarity. We need to look at what the federal government is offering and the provincial government is offering. We need to see, is there duplication? What is the most efficient way for us to put forward training funds so that they will benefit Manitobans?

This new agreement also looks at economic development, and it looks at these developments as a partnership. One of the areas that I covered last night was the fact that we now have action in this area as well. The provincial government and the federal government are now working together in a joint-management committee, and we are looking at the joint planning. We do now a number of pieces of joint work.

One is the planning for the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development boards, and we are looking to enter into a consultation process. I will have an announcement about the process of consultation and how we will move ahead into the formation of those boards fairly shortly.

In addition, however, the member has asked about a labour force strategy, and what I have described so far is the action that we have taken, things that are already in place. But in addition to that, the labour market part of my department and the labour market part of the post-secondary area

of this department is working with the analyst from the federal government. In the past, they did separate work. They simply may have used the same figures from the Canada census, but they did not work together. Now, they work together.

The research areas are looked at together, so that when we look at the figures and when we look at the reports, we know that there has now been some actual discussion about the kinds of programs that are being put in place. So we are very pleased with that kind of sharing that has been occurring.

As a result of that, there is a great deal of work that is being done within the Department of Education and Training on behalf of the labour market. Last evening, I focused on a couple of publications which the Department of Education and Training have put out. Last evening, I looked at the high-demand occupations in Manitoba.

I had an example last evening of the May 1993 high demands in Manitoba occupations, and what Manitobans are able to do as a result of this is, when they are looking at what kinds of skills they might like to enter into, they can look to see what are the high-demand occupations, and what might they look at for an area of skills training that will actually lead them to employment.

When I spoke about this book last night, I said that in the development of this book we look at the demand from the employers within Manitoba, and we also look at the supply. We look and see how many individuals currently already have those skills, and then when we put those two areas together, we are able to see, do we have a shortage? If we have a shortage, let us let people get the message about that shortage, and let us also help people look at where they can then obtain that skills training.

\* (1730)

Also, in terms of planning for the labour market, I spoke last evening about Manitoba Prospects. This was a tabloid publication that was put together in co-operation with the Department of Education and Training and the federal government. We looked at making sure that Manitobans would be well acquainted with information about skills training.

There is one section in here which looks at job title, work description, what the job outlook is for each of the jobs described, what the educational

routes are and what the high school courses recommended are. So that is there to assist Manitobans. It has had a very wide distribution and has been received very well.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those publications, with the signing of the Labour Force Development Agreement, with the concrete actions from the staff report, I move an amendment.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), that Resolution 34 be amended by deleting all of the words following the first WHEREAS and replacing them with the following:

WHEREAS the Manitoba government is committed to providing a skilled labour force in support of economic development; and

WHEREAS the government has a number of policies and programs which predict and train for skill shortages; and

WHEREAS common labour market interests and program principles of the two levels of government are embodied in the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has been tracking the performance of industries to predict skill shortages and high demand for occupations for several years;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the government of Manitoba on its active work on behalf of Manitobans in the area of labour force development and skills training.

#### **Motion presented.**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this motion and indicate at the outset that I do not support the amendment to the motion. I must say, the Conservatives must have developed a new software program, the pat-on-the-back software program they take at private members' hour. They input the title and then out spits an amendment to the motion that says that we pat ourselves on the back. That is not the purpose of private members' hour.

I must say that I particularly find it difficult here when you have a member of the Treasury benches coming in and bringing in this kind of an amendment. I would like to hear from some of the members of the upper benches, as it has been designated, because I think it would be far more appropriate for them, Mr. Speaker, to be speaking



on this particular issue because it is something that affects all of us.

I must note that once again the Conservative caucus is attempting to turn private members' hour into an extension of their caucus meetings. There is a difference in terms of what this House is all about and what private members' hour is about. I do not believe that any item of business in private members' hour should be dealing with a motion that is amended to say that "the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the government of Manitoba on its active work."

We have opportunities in this House to have votes of confidence on the government, Mr. Speaker, on the throne speech, the budget, concurrence, on key legislation. Private members' hour is an opportunity for us to go beyond that, and I really have some problems with the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) to bring in this kind of amendment. I am really surprised that the Conservative members in this House continue to bring in this kind of amendment on private members' hour.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the Liberal motion is one that could be supported necessarily without amendment. There are some difficulties with the motion. But, instead of just gutting the entire resolution and bringing in a pat-ourselves-on-the-back type of motion, I mean, we are here to have some debate on important issues. This is an important issue. We need to have some reasoned debate. This motion does nothing to contribute towards this—this amendment to the motion.

I therefore say that we in the New Democratic Party and I as a private member will not support this kind of motion. I would ask if perhaps government members could be a little bit more creative when they bring in amendments to motions. The only result in this amendment is to pat the government on the back, period.

Mr. Speaker, we do that when we debate the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. We have discussions. We have motions. We have the opportunity there. We do it on throne speech. We do it on the budget. We do not need to have private members' hour distorted for this type of opportunity.

If the government is so insecure, it feels it has to turn private members' hour into an opportunity, with its majority, to prove that it has the support of the

majority of this House; that goes without saying. This really distorts the purpose of private members' hour, which is to get some reasoned discussion and debate on these kinds of issue.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I return speaking as I do on the amendment to the original motion, to point to some of the features that I think are commendable in the original resolution and to some of the problems with the particular motion. First of all, I think that the motion that is brought forward is an important subject. I do not think we can disagree with that.

There is some mixing in here between training and retraining because they are two rather different components, and I will address that. They are related, obviously. Retraining is training, but there are two different types of clients that are dealt with in terms of training and retraining and there are two different types of mechanisms for delivery, et cetera.

I want to say at the outset, though, that I have some difficulty with particularly the WHEREAS that talks about the report of the Skills Training Advisory Committee as "a scathing indictment of a lack of action" and refers to this government and previous governments. I think that, by framing that motion in this particular kind, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has set up a particular amendment because the member for Inkster has attempted to politicize in a very obvious way the resolution. I do not agree with the particular statement, Mr. Speaker.

There are a number of other statements—well, we could amend it accordingly, but there are a number of other statements in this particular motion I do not think are accurate, including comments on the government. I am critical of the government in a number of areas of Education and Training, but I think it is clear that systems have been in operation for a number of years to track industries in order to protect shortage of qualified workers. That is contained in the result. That has been in place for a number of years. I do not think it is particularly new to this government. It is not new to the previous government.

The Department of Education and Training has always tracked that, as has the federal government through Canada Employment Centres. I mean, there has always been some degree of planning to a greater or lesser extent. We can be critical about

the degree in which it is done, and we can be critical about decisions, but I think that is a redundant statement.

\* (1740)

Now, in terms of those businesses facing business closures, job losses, I am not sure what the member was referring to. I do not know what one can predict beyond those that have given notice that there is going to be closures other than in a general industry and general trends, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously one cannot go around and predict that such and such a business is going to go out of business. I assume the member was really referring, not to those businesses that are facing closure, but those industries that maybe, through the development of certain trends, are in a position where they might find there will be a declining demand.

We have seen, over the last number of years, a reduction in the manufacturing sector, in particular, some of us feel, as a result of the Free Trade Agreement. Obviously, if NAFTA continues to go through, there may be job losses, job shifts in certain areas.

Mr. Speaker, I think the better statement in this resolution, on behalf of the Liberal members, would have been to say that we were referring to declining industries. I think that is something that I would say could go even further. I point out that in this Legislature, I have introduced on a number of occasions legislation that would provide greater notice and provide clear mechanisms when plant closures do occur, to ensure proper retraining. We do not have that mechanism now.

We have limited notice; it needs to be expanded. We do not have severance pay. We do not have an opportunity for workers laid off to be able to buy into the plant. There are a lot of opportunities, I think, to improve on the way we handle plant closures.

I note, by the way, that it was not just the Conservative government that rejected that legislation; the Liberal Party rejected that legislation. The former leader suggested it was too draconian on business. I note that it is certainly not present in this current resolve.

The resolve portion, and this is always the key portion of any resolution, also refers in the Liberal original form to the Legislative Assembly

recommending the Minister of Labour consider undertaking an in-depth analysis of the Manitoba economy and its workforce needs.

I would say, in terms of the current situation, that it is being done in a routine way, but one of the concerns I have expressed, going back to the introduction of the Free Trade Agreement a number of years ago, was the fact that there was no monitoring mechanism set up in place to assess the impact of the Free Trade Agreement, to assess the impact of changes in the economy.

In fact, when I moved the plant closure legislation in 1988, I predicted at the time there would be significant increase in the number of plant closures and layoffs to the province because of Free Trade, because of the recession.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, that has happened. At the time, there was no analysis. There has not been any analysis since. We are seeing now in terms of NAFTA, while the government is sort of against NAFTA, there has been no analysis, once again, of the impact this may have.

I think that is something that perhaps, if it had been stated a little bit more clearly in the resolution, we could all have agreed to it. Surely we have to be recognizing the dynamic nature of the Manitoba economy and the impact that an agreement such as NAFTA can have, or the Free Trade Agreement.

We can debate the benefits or the lack thereof, but everyone agreed, I know, in 1988, there would changes because of the Free Trade Agreement. Certainly there have been. It is the same thing with NAFTA. There are sectors that will suffer. There may be others that may benefit, but you need to assess the changes in the Manitoba economy.

So I think that the statement in the motion could have perhaps been a little bit clearer in terms of that. This reference to the requirements for basic education and retraining, developing an action plan for positioning labour force to meet successfully the challenges of the international economic environment. I think that, Mr. Speaker, is something of a platitude, but I think it is something that all members certainly could agree with. I think that is important.

If one looks at our international situation, one may recall, for example, the United Nations that said that on a combination of factors they rate us as being, for this year, the second best country in the

world in terms of quality of life, standard of living, et cetera. We were first last year.

One of the reasons, by the way, that we are upgraded from our, I think, ninth position on income, our 11th position on gender equality, on a whole series of measures, Mr. Speaker, where we are not anywhere close to the top is because of our education system. We rise from ninth or 10th or 11th in terms of income to No. 1 and No. 2 in this current year because of the emphasis we put on education. Very few industrialized countries spend more money on education than other countries, but I sometimes feel that is a bit misleading.

I, by the way, think that Canada does have one of the best standards of living and quality of life in the world, but we do have a great deal of lack of co-ordination in terms of education and training between the federal and provincial governments in different jurisdictions. I know there has been some talk recently in addressing it.

I, having had the opportunity of having most of my schooling in the Manitoba system through junior high and high school, but having spent a year in Ontario found that the adjustment, the year I spent in Ontario, was quite significant, Mr. Speaker. There is often very little co-ordination in terms of programs between different provinces. I think that is something that does hurt the system. We have an increasingly mobile workforce. I have seen that in Thompson, because we have a mobile population. The bottom line is that these kind of issues are not being dealt with. We may spend a lot of money on education, but we often do not spend it effectively.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the unfortunate thing is that where we had previously some federal-provincial agreements of substance, in terms of education, now those are declining. We are seeing in terms of the decline in funding for post-secondary education because of the lack of cost sharing, particularly under the current federal government. It has declined significantly in terms of transfers to the province, particularly for post-secondary education.

We are seeing the elimination of such federal-provincial agreements as the Northern Development Agreement, which funded education to the ACCESS programs in northern Manitoba. We have seen the elimination of other programs that have provided direct funding. We are seeing

governments now making some very draconian decisions in education and in training that are predicated on the lack of a federal-provincial commitment to long-term education and training in this province. I think that is something that we should be dealing with in this particular motion.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that what we really need to be looking at is going back somewhat to what we had developed a number of years ago which was I think a far greater sense of this country, a far greater sense of federal-provincial co-operation. I think, because of some of the problems that have developed constitutionally, we have seen a tendency to want to splinter this country when it comes to education and training. Education and training is the key to the future in the international economy.

We can debate Free Trade Agreements and NAFTAs, and we can debate what happens to our economy in Manitoba, but if one looks at the economies that have been successful in the world, it is those that have had some of the better, more efficient, training systems, the more flexible training systems.

I, by the way, Mr. Speaker, am critical of some of the government measures in terms of education and training, particularly the privatization of our education system. I think the key to retooling the economy in terms of the context of this resolution is to make sure that business takes far more of a responsibility for training than it currently has, not by giving out rebates on the payroll tax, but by requiring and developing sectoral agreements that require increased training.

The Japanese spend far more on education than we do in terms of within the workforce which is one of the focuses of this resolution. The average company in Canada spends one day a year on training in the workforce. Japanese businesses spend 20, 25, 30 days a year on training. Is it any wonder they are more flexible, in many cases, in retooling their economy? Is it any wonder? I think that is the key we have to look at, and I know the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) often talks about this, and many other members of the House.

We are used to retooling plants on a regular basis, modern technology. Every five or 10 years, we have to retool plants to make them competitive. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, the same concept applies to our human capital, the people. People

have to be ready for being retrained. I throw this as a challenge to the government, because I know even in terms of within their own domain there are concerns that have been expressed.

I have had people contact me from the Children's Dental Program who are now out of jobs who are looking at retraining, and they are very frustrated with the lack of follow-through on earlier commitments to that. I see it today in terms of LPNs at St. Boniface; I have talked to LPNs in Thompson. I know the situation in The Pas. What retraining mechanisms are put in place for those very capable and committed LPNs who are now

losing their jobs because of budget decisions that are being made, Mr. Speaker?

We can argue back and forth those budget decisions. We will do that in another context, but I feel the measure of our ability as a society to develop our human capital is in that.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 15, 1993

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