



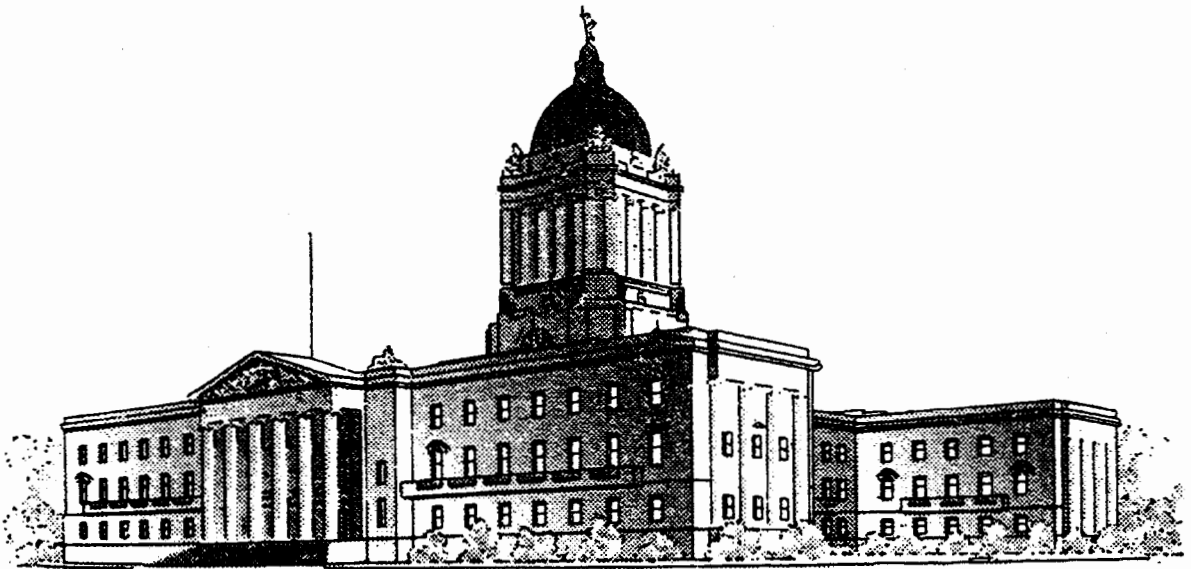
First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



Vol. XLV No. 50 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 18, 1995

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupert's Island	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 18, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of D. Queskekapow, Carlos Yana, Elvira G. de Dios and others requesting the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

THAT emergency health care services are the core of Manitoba's health care system.

THAT Manitobans deserve the greatest possible access to this care.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Economic Development
Third Report**

Mr. Mike Radcliffe (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development.

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

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Tuesday, October 17, 1995, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the financial statements of Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd. for March 31, 1993 and 1992, March 31, 1994 and 1993 and March 31, 1995 and 1994.

Mr. Bob Sparrow, chairman of Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd., provided such information as was requested with respect to the financial statements and business of Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd.

Your committee has considered the financial statements of Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd. for March 31, 1993 and 1992, March 31, 1994 and 1993 and March 31, 1995 and 1994, and has adopted the same as presented.

Mr. Radcliffe: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report 1992-93 for the Co-operative Loans and Loans Guarantee Board; for '94-95, the Cooperative Promotion Board; for '94-95, the Co-operative Loans and Loans Guarantee Board.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have fifty Grade 9 students from Churchill High School under the direction of Mr. Lenzmann. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Winnipeg Jets Provincial Funding—Refund

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, during the election, of course, the government promised to limit the public donations for the hockey team to \$10 million and to cancel the operating-loss agreement effective May 1, 1995.

After the election, as well as committing up to \$37 million and keeping the operating-loss agreement in play, Madam Speaker, the government forwarded a secret payment to the Spirit/Winnipeg Jets takeover of some \$5 million which was not O/C'd and became public later on.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister, could he table in this House the written agreement that he has with Spirit on the forwarding of the \$5 million and the written agreement he has that interest rates would be returned with the money, and when will it be returned?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, first of all, there was no secret flowing of any money to Spirit. The only secret is in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition. I want to tell the Leader of the Opposition that I met this morning with the majority owners and once again have confirmed the agreement with them that we have reached before on previous occasions, that the \$5-million deposit put forward by the provincial government will be returned to the province along with interest, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Doer: I did not hear the end of the statement. If it was with interest, I would like the minister to table that agreement in this Chamber on behalf of the taxpayers.

Operating Losses

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the government stated at the beginning of September that the operating-loss agreement signed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in 1991 as his claim to keep the team here in the city of Winnipeg and pay for the operating losses of a privately owned team, the government claimed that the losses of the team to the province would be \$8.5 million this year, outside of the infrastructure money and other funds in the capital fund that are liabilities for the Province of Manitoba.

In light of the fact that there were only 6,700 fans at the game, regrettably, last night, and the four-game average is now under 9,000 people, Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), what is the new projected loss for the team, and what will the taxpayers of Manitoba be liable for under the agreement that the Premier signed in 1991?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, throughout the whole preparation of budgets for '95-96, there has been a range of what the losses could be from as low as about \$14 million or \$15 million to as high as \$25 million, depending on different corporate support, depending on different attendance and so on.

The best information we were provided several weeks ago, I believe, Madam Speaker, still remains to be the best information today, that the projected losses

for the upcoming season will be in the vicinity of about \$17.5 million, of which the provincial government is responsible for half of those losses.

I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition that by June of next year, at the end of this hockey season, when you factor in direct taxes to the provincial government versus what we will have paid out in terms of covering our share of losses, Madam Speaker, our Treasury will be ahead by \$8 million, and that does not include the fact that our Treasury will also be ahead by approximately another \$10 million as our share of the net proceeds as a result of the sale that was concluded today of the Winnipeg Jets.

* (1340)

Barry Shenkarow Salary

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Yes, that is why the minister promised to cancel the operating-loss agreement effective May 1 during the election campaign and broke his promise after the campaign, because it was going to save us money, Madam Speaker.

The losses will be up to \$60 million, Madam Speaker, counting infrastructure. The proceeds for the sale of the team will be about \$31 million, and none of these hockey players in 1996 will be paying their taxes in Canada.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), Madam Speaker, under the operating-loss agreement and the capital liability that we have as taxpayers here in Manitoba, what is the annual salary to Mr. Shenkarow under this agreement, the annual salary?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Well, Madam Speaker, I notice the Leader of the Opposition is smiling, and I guess for him this is a happy day, because today the official agreement to sell the team and relocate it outside of Manitoba has occurred.

We know what the position of the Leader of the Opposition and the NDP has been through this entire issue. They have never tried to be a part of finding any solution, never worked with the community to provide

any solution, even though thousands and thousands of Manitobans worked very hard to find a solution to keep the Jets here in Manitoba for the long term. We know they have no vision, and they certainly were not in step with what Manitobans were attempting to accomplish.

In terms of the specific compensation for the president of the Winnipeg Jets Hockey Club, Mr. Shenkarow, I will take that part of his question as notice.

Mr. Doer: With a supplementary question, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, Madam Speaker—and I think his comments about the team and ourselves, the only difference between ourselves and the government opposite is we told the truth during the election campaign.

The government made a number of commitments. [interjection] Nobody is happy this team is leaving Winnipeg. We just thought it was the role of the private sector to pay for the losses of the team, not the taxpayers of Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, what was the annual salary for Mr. Shenkarow in the '93-94 hockey season year paid for in part by the agreement signed by the Premier, and in the '94-95 year?

The numbers are in. The minister knows the number. Let us let the public know those numbers.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition knows that there is a process in place to review the budgets of the Winnipeg Jets Hockey Club. There is an interim steering committee chaired by Mr. Del Crewson that reviews the budget on an annual basis. There are also certain limitations and restrictions around the budget of the hockey club, that they have to operate in the bottom one-third of the NHL franchises and hockey teams.

So those are some protections in terms of the costs of the operating of the hockey team. The interim steering committee goes through the detailed budget, Madam Speaker. Some of that information can be made public. Some of that information is confidential.

I certainly will take this very specific question that the Leader of the Opposition has asked as notice and determine what information can, in fact, be provided to him.

University of Manitoba Labour Dispute

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Labour stated it is not an appropriate time for government to interfere in the free collective bargaining at the University of Manitoba, a statement undermined by his government's action in the sugar beet dispute and Bill 22 attack on public sector negotiations.

Professors are out of work, students are being hurt and it appears that this government does not care. They do not care. [interjection] Madam Speaker, I know members opposite are sensitive on this issue.

My question is for the Minister of Labour, Madam Speaker.

Can the Minister of Labour indicate, now that the U of M strike has occurred, has he contacted the parties in the dispute to determine their willingness to commence voluntary binding arbitration, and if he has not, why not?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, the government is very concerned about this strike, and we want to make sure that the appropriate thing is being done. We do not, however, feel that it is necessary to interfere in negotiations at this time.

There is a mediator who is available to the parties on a 24-hour basis. That mediator is free to discuss any of the issues that the parties may wish to raise with him.

* (1345)

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, is the Minister of Labour aware, now that negotiations have broken down and are not taking place, either involving the conciliator or not, is the Minister of Labour aware that in the negotiations in the process, the Faculty Association is willing to allow an arbitrator to consider the financial condition of

the University of Manitoba in conjunction with public accountability, academic integrity and fair procedures?

Is the minister aware that this was one of the conditions that was placed on the table by the Faculty Association to allow the university to be treated in a fair manner as the professors themselves wish to be treated?

Mr. Toews: Yes, I am aware of that.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, can the Premier, who appoints over half of the University of Manitoba governors and considering that the University of Manitoba forms an important piece of our economy in this province, indicate to the students—like the one who wrote to us, and I quote: As a student, my entire stake is already on the table. I have nothing further to ante up so I guess I lose. What is the Premier prepared to do to ensure that the students are not losers in this dispute, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I know that the member for Transcona takes great glee in having this kind of major public issue so that he can—

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I believe it is entirely inappropriate, if you would review Beauchesne's, for the minister, particularly the First Minister, to impute motives to members on this side of the House who are trying to do their part to prevent discord in our society, not fomenting it like the Premier is.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, I will review the tape and Hansard and report back to the House if necessary.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I appreciate your taking this under advisement, and I will ignore the grinning of the member for Transcona when I respond to him.

We on this side are very concerned with the fact that the decision that has been made by the Faculty

Association utilizes the students as pawns in this battle, that it is the students who are the ones who are being asked to bear the consequences of this dispute, that it is the students who have invested in their education, who have taken, in many cases, accommodation here in Winnipeg as they come from outside the city and who are being left in jeopardy of completing their programs.

That is a terrible situation, and we, obviously, are very concerned about it, Madam Speaker, very concerned about it and very concerned about the fact that in issues of this nature the students are the ones who suffer and whose views and whose concerns are not being taken into account when a decision is made to walk out on them like this.

* (1350)

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, a final supplementary for the Premier: Since the Premier, as the head of this government, as the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council which is his responsibility, as well, and which has the power to appoint the majority of the members of the board of the University of Manitoba, in his powers as the Premier, will he undertake to ascertain whether or not there is a willingness on the part of the parties involved in this dispute to commence the process of voluntary binding arbitration, so that the teachers can get back to teaching and the students can get back to their classes and not disrupt the activities and the economy of the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, you know, as members opposite who try and portray themselves as protectors and guardians of the collective bargaining approach, the free collective bargaining approach to settling disputes, they ought to know that the professors could walk back in today, this afternoon, and begin to teach the students if there was a will on their part to do so.

They ought to know that that is open to them at any time, if they really care about the students.

Concordia Hospital Emergency Services

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Concordia Hospital Emergency is the most highly used

community hospital in Winnipeg. In addition, Concordia Hospital receives a disproportionately high number of emergency cardiac arrests, and this hospital has developed efficiency and expertise in dealing with cardiac life and death situations.

I want to ask the Minister of Health, given that the thrombolytic agents necessary to deal with cardiac arrests must be given in the first 20 to 30 minutes to save people's lives, how are the people in northeast Winnipeg going to be ensured that they will receive adequate treatment to save their life under a heart attack?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, Concordia Hospital has joined with all the other hospitals in Winnipeg to develop an integrated emergency services plan for the city, and as recently as yesterday, all the facilities met as part of the steering committee to develop not only the ongoing implementation now but also the plan for emergency services for the future.

I can tell the honourable member that all facilities confirmed that since the last meeting on October 13, the situation is satisfactory. Each facility stated that the weekend, this past weekend, was manageable and that staff were pleased with the changes agreed to at the last meeting.

Facilities also agreed to work co-operatively to ensure that patients have timely access to beds, Madam Speaker. This is done to ensure that the tertiary centres do not get backlogged with patients, particularly during the weekends.

Health Care System Emergency Services

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): What is the 24-hour emergency plan for heart attack treatment in the city of Winnipeg, and what will happen to the expertise from Concordia Hospital in this area?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, each community hospital, as a group they have all addressed the issue raised by the honourable member.

They have all agreed that each community hospital will have a registered nurse assess all patients who happen to appear at their facilities in the nighttime hours. Individuals requiring immediate attention will be seen by the in-house physician. All nonurgent patients will be advised of alternate services available.

Ms. Cerilli: I want to ask the minister why he is closing both the Concordia Hospital emergency at night and the Seven Oaks Hospital, when a report from a task force dealing with emergency services says the two hospitals are situated relatively in the same area of the city and are linked by two bridges. If one ER curtails night activities, the other should remain active for at least a six-month period to evaluate any shift in patient load.

Why is he closing both hospitals when it is going to jeopardize the lives of Winnipeggers?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the question the honourable member asks today would have been just as appropriate the day after Labour Day, when 42 physicians left their posts at community hospitals in this city and 14 pathologists left their posts and left us with the necessity to develop a contingency plan to safeguard the interests of Manitobans.

* (1355)

University of Manitoba Labour Dispute

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Earlier he stated in Question Period that the Premier is concerned about the students in the province of Manitoba, and for good reason, Madam Speaker. In excess of 20,000 students, spending millions of dollars in tuition and books, are looking at what is happening and are being very frustrated.

This government took a lead role on the sugar beet industry. They were concerned about the producers.

My question to the Premier is, will he express the same sort of concern that he had for the producers

during the sugar beet potential strike, the same sort of concern for the students of the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I have expressed that concern. I have indicated that I think that it is highly unfair that the professors are walking out on the students at a time when they have made major commitments, major investments, and, in fact, are in many cases expecting to graduate and have jobs waiting for them.

All of this is being thrown aside by the decision that has been made to walk out by the professors.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, does the Premier believe that this government has any role whatsoever in trying to expedite and get the students back in the classroom? Does this government have any role, and if so, what is it?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, obviously, we have the resources of the government available to them. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) has indicated that there is the availability of a mediator to work on it with the two parties to try and help lead towards a solution.

Obviously, there are resources that are available to the two sides, Madam Speaker, but this is a free collective bargaining process, and it does require the will of the two parties to try and solve this problem.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, will the Premier show his concern for those 20,000-plus students by asking his Minister of Labour to attempt to convene a meeting between the professors and the administration to see if there is anything at all that this government can do in a proactive way?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, as I understand it, the major issue that is of concern probably for both sides in this issue is their continued academic freedom. This government, if it were to intercede and impose a solution would be immediately accused by both sides of interfering with academic freedom in this province.

This is a situation that requires obviously both sides to work within the bounds that they have available to them. We have resources available by way of

mediation services from the Department of Labour, and those resources are available to them, Madam Speaker.

* (1400)

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the emergency room function in any hospital is absolutely integral to the overall role of an acute care hospital. In Victoria Hospital, there were 33,000 total visits of which 3,600 were emergencies—11 percent, not 4 percent as the Minister of Health has said—and 74 percent of their visits fall into either the emergency or urgent category.

Madam Speaker, I wonder if in the light of these statistics which are clearly different from the statistics that the Minister of Health presented in the House, averages from American studies perhaps, in the light of these statistics, will he tell the people of Fort Garry and the people of all parts of Winnipeg that their emergency departments will be reopened until his study is completed?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member often expresses, I believe, support for an integrated system of health care delivery and emergency services delivery, but in the preamble to his question all he talks about is individual hospitals.

Madam Speaker, we are talking about an emergency system comprising seven hospitals and getting seven hospitals to work together to integrate and make efficient the services that they make available to Manitobans so that we can give Manitobans the best service available within the resources that are at our disposal.

So, Madam Speaker, the studies with which the honourable member quibbles are not American studies. As usual, honourable members have the U.S.A. on their minds. I do not know why.

But, Madam Speaker, the numbers that we have are taken from the hospitals themselves, and one hospital

will have a different number than the other, and they all come together to make an average.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, can the minister explain how telling people to take their emergent and urgent health care needs to Health Sciences Centre or St. Boniface Hospital is even vaguely consistent with his government's oft-repeated policy of decentralizing emergent and nonurgent health care needs to community-based hospitals? How is it consistent?

Mr. McCrae: It would be very nice, Madam Speaker, if the honourable member would be consistent in his approach to his critique on health issues and social issues in general.

Madam Speaker, I remind the honourable member that we have capacity in seven Winnipeg hospitals—two tertiary centres and five community hospitals. After the doctors returned to work, we began a resumption of the services in those community hospitals during 14 hours of the day. We have put in place and are putting in place even more resources as necessary at the Health Sciences Centre and the St. Boniface Hospital, and we are having seven hospitals working together which is something we did not have in the past to the extent we have today.

The honourable member should be pleased about that, instead of coming forward one day with one point of view and the same member coming forward with another point of view on a different day.

Provincial Council on Youth Crime Membership

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question is to the Minister of Justice. The minister's statements about, first, the Provincial Council on Youth Crime, second, the Crime Prevention Council, third, the Youth Advisory Council and, fourth, all of that surveillance of gang members by the Winnipeg Youth Crime Intervention Team are haunting this Legislature, Madam Speaker. I say haunting because those initiatives actually do not exist.

My question for the minister is, while we are impressed with the minister's vivid imagination, will

she tell the people of Manitoba who have growing and legitimate concerns about their safety when she might get around to announcing the membership for the Provincial Council on Youth Crime promised by her—and I quote from Hansard—"no later than the fall"?

That was, by the way, Madam Speaker, the fall of 1994.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, the initiatives that this government has taken on behalf of youth crime are numerous. Just let me speak about the position taken on the Young Offenders Act, the changes in the area of Corrections, the addition of more police officers to the street, the close working relationship with initiatives of the Winnipeg Police Services.

But, Madam Speaker, we do believe that the community should become involved. We think that no one group can provide a solution alone, and that is why on the community and prevention side, as well, we have been very active with Street Peace, the youth gang line, with the No Need to Argue program which brings young people into both the identification and the solution.

Another way we would plan to have the community become involved is in the process of two youth councils, Madam Speaker, which have been spoken about, a provincial council on youth crime and a youth council.

The member seems to have misunderstood the intention. I made it clear during this session that I will be announcing very shortly; however, it did require visits around the province to determine what was needed.

Youth Crime Intervention Team Gang Surveillance

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My supplementary: When will the minister then turn her mind to announcing the surveillance strategy of the Winnipeg Youth Crime Intervention Team because she promised, and I quote from Hansard: "I am looking to be in a position fairly shortly to make an announcement

about that strategy," back in May of '94. Of course, that is when we had half the number of gang members in Winnipeg.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, as I have said in this House as recently as a couple of days ago, the surveillance team is operating. The purpose is the sharing of information.

The member would like greater specifics around exactly what information or how that information is shared, but there is some requirement of confidentiality both in terms of process and the kind of information which can be shared. However, the initiatives which he has spoken about in terms of the youth gang line, the surveillance team, they are operative.

Madam Speaker, I would just like to say around the youth gang line called Street Peace, the Winnipeg police have identified this as a very valuable tool in dealing with offenders of all ages but particularly gang offenders.

Youth Advisory Council Membership

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Well, let us try this one. When might the minister actually announce the membership of the Youth Advisory Council, because she told the House she was aiming to have it finalized, and I quote, by the early summer, end of quote—being, of course, the summer of 1994?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The naming of members to those councils has been a process, one which required the— [interjection] Well, you know, the members across the way have had trouble with process in every question that they have asked.

Madam Speaker, the process has been that there has been an individual who has visited Youth Justice Committees across this province. That person has met with the Youth Justice Committees and through those committees identified exactly what needs are to be met by the purposes of this council, because Youth Justice Committees wanted to have some input into the kind of

advice that would be offered to them. That process is now complete and the availability of individuals whom we would like to appoint to those councils is now being worked out with those individuals.

But, Madam Speaker, the member seems to have had slip his mind all of those other initiatives that he has disagreed with on a regular basis, failing to come forward with a position on the Young Offenders Act, failure to support Street Peace, failure to support the Youth Secretariat, so let there be no confusion about the number of initiatives which have been put forward by this government.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. If Madam Speaker could hear over the roar from all sides of the House, people would be recognized when they are on their feet.

Point of Order

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I refer to Beauchesne's 417, which points out that answers to questions should be brief and should not provoke debate, and I ask the Speaker to keep this in mind and remind honourable ministers of this rule. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order, I thank the honourable member for Burrows for his advice, and I would remind both parties posing questions and also in responding to questions that, indeed, we have some very—I will not say definitive, but we have some agreed-to guidelines, and I would appreciate the co-operation of all members in adhering to those agreed-to guidelines.

* (1410)

Western Grain Transportation Program Payment Guidelines

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the Western Grain Transportation program which is the result of the cancellation of the Crow benefit has not been without its problems.

There have been problems with the sign-up date having been delayed. There have been problems for owners of small parcels of land which have been addressed, and landowners and renters are now facing problems because there are no guidelines as to how they should share the payment.

Will the Minister of Agriculture recognize that there is a problem and call on the federal government to put in place guidelines for landowners and renters on how the money should be shared, as well as call on him to put in guidelines for the arbitration board that is supposed to be dealing with the problems between landowners and renters.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member for Swan River that for the better part of a year, I, along with the support of all major farm organizations in this province, tried to provide the best advice to the federal minister on this very matter.

The federal minister and the government of Ottawa chose to ignore that advice that came not just from the Department of Agriculture of this government but from Manitoba Pool, from the largest farm organization in Manitoba. They chose to ignore that advice.

The questions that she refers to—and I happen to agree with the issue that she is making about some of the problems. They are all of the federal government's making, and it is their responsibility to try to resolve them.

Ms. Wowchuk: I realize that these are federal issues, but I am asking the minister to address them on behalf of Manitoba farmers. I want to ask the minister if he will address also the concerns of many farmers who have converted a portion of their land into hay production. That has been done to promote sustainable agriculture, but these people will not receive payment.

Has the minister raised this, and will he take it again to the federal government to tell them that producers are not being treated fairly?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge where the federal government has accepted some

advice, particularly from the province of Manitoba because of our unique land holdings, historic land holdings, I might say, some of the Francophone lots along the Assiniboine River and the Red River. We have an abundance of these small acreages that were originally excluded.

I wrote directly to the federal minister, and the federal minister of government has responded and alleviated that particular problem.

Madam Speaker, the issue that she raised, again, I agree with her, and again, we suggested, along with Manitoba Pool, that we simply use the permit books, the permit system, that acknowledged all improved acreages, because she is right. Farmers in their rotation have changed and had been advised to change and encouraged to grow forages in their rotation from time to time. Regrettably, under the system that the federal government has imposed, if the farmer had forage in the ground in '94, he is not eligible for any payment.

Again, this complaint has been made very clear to federal officials, but I seek the support, quite frankly, of her federal colleagues in Ottawa. I seek the support of the nine Liberal colleagues in Ottawa on these kinds of issues. They are very silent on this issue.

Education System Language Arts Examinations

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Education claimed that she as minister had no knowledge of Manitobans' concerns about the loss of 250 classroom teachers for 12 days for the marking of Grade 12 exams.

I want today to refer the minister to a letter sent to her on October 5 by the Beautiful Plains School Division which outlined precisely such concerns and to refer her, as well, to the same issues raised by the Lakeshore School Division and reported in the Interlake Spectator on October 2 and to similar issues posed by the St. James School Division and reported October 17 in The Metro.

I want to ask the minister today, as each of those school divisions have, would she reconsider the timing

and the method of the marking of these Grade 12 exams?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, let us make clear the implications the member is trying to leave, because after Question Period yesterday I did go and check, having invited her to provide me with copies of letters, which she did not.

On my desk, Madam Speaker, was one letter dated October 5, received in my office October 16, processed and placed on my desk October 17, which, of course, was yesterday. I read that letter. I have not been inundated. I had two earlier letters from school divisions saying they could not release the number of teachers that we had requested.

That is not an inundation as far as I am concerned, when yesterday I was inundated, she said, for months by letters from parents and students. There was a false impression that was left. It was somewhat misleading, and that is a perfectly allowable thing because I am not implying she intended to mislead.

But, Madam Speaker, I will say that the marking will take place. We are going to have tests and examinations. They will be measured against a standard. They will be marked by qualified and experienced teachers who will be available to mark those papers, and students will not lose instructional days as teachers mark those papers.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I will say for the record that it is the minister's language that says inundated. I asked about the concerns of Manitobans, and it is very clear. It is in yesterday's Hansard and it has been printed. I do not know what she is going on about.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley was recognized for a supplementary question.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, will the minister tell us what legal basis she has for requiring school boards to provide teachers for marking and to require them, as the Beautiful Plains School Division maintains, to work for 19 consecutive days?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I already indicated to the member and perhaps she did not hear my answer, and that is that we will be hiring qualified teachers, qualified markers, to mark examinations, to mark tests for students. These will be centrally marked so that the measurable standard can indeed be measured on a standard.

Teachers were hired to teach. Teachers were hired to mark. School divisions were asked to release teachers. Many school divisions have indeed complied with that request and said they will release teachers. They have contracts with their divisions, and the division has made a request of them to work as teachers.

Energy Audit Program Reinstatement

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy and Mines. Energy conservation efforts elsewhere, in other jurisdictions, have reduced energy costs by over one-third. The Toronto school boards are retrofitting 525 buildings, resulting in savings of over \$20 million per year, and that is on their utility bill. Manitoba has over 700 public school buildings that are in similar conditions.

Given that this government has previously cut its conservation and energy management programs including energy audits, contrary to promises made by previous ministers of this department, will the minister reassess his government's cutback of this valuable program in the interests of all Manitoba taxpayers?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, as the member should know from her past experience involved with the Winnipeg School Division as a trustee, those who administer public buildings, whether they be the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister), whether they be school divisions, whether they be buildings owned by public Crown corporations, have ultimately a responsibility to manage within their budget their decisions on what steps they take in terms of conservation of energy. Retrofitting of buildings, et cetera, are ones that they make as managers of those

buildings, and where we have the resources to provide information assistance, we obviously do.

I refer to, as well, that one of the largest providers of energy in this province, Manitoba Hydro, operates a very widespread and effective program in the Power Smart program, so there is a lot of effort being done, but the responsibility for making those decisions rests with the managers, the people who are in charge of those specific buildings.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) for Thursday, October 19 for 7 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I request leave to make a nonpolitical announcement.

Madam Speaker: May I have the indulgence of the member for Osborne to recognize the member for Gimli for committee changes first?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Madam Speaker.

* * *

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources for Thursday, October 19, 10 a.m. session, be amended as follows: the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for the member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer).

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing

Committee on Economic Development for the Thursday evening, 7 p.m. session, be amended as follows: the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger); the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine); and the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

Motions agreed to.

* (1420)

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Person's Day

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I request leave to make a nonpolitical announcement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Osborne have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, 66 years ago today the British Privy Council agreed that Canadian women were to be considered as persons in matters of rights and privileges and not just in matters of pains and penalty. Obviously, October 18, 1929, was an historic and important day for Canadian women. October 18 is now celebrated as Person's Day and today in recognition of Person's Day, I ask the House to join me in honouring the famous five who initiated the person's case—Emily Murphy, Irene Parleby, Henrietta Muir, Nellie McClung and Louise McKinney. Thank you.

Condolences—Walter Walsh

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

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

Mr. Jennissen: Madam Speaker, I rise today to express our sorrow at the death of Walter Walsh of Leaf Rapids who died tragically earlier this week as a result of a mining accident at HBM&S's Ruttan Mine.

All of us feel sympathy for the Walsh family and relatives at this their most painful hour, and we are reminded once again that mining has long been recognized as one of the most dangerous occupations in this country. Walter's death confirms that. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Would you please call Bills 17, 6, 23 and then the balance of the bills as listed on the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 17—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2)

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Reimer), Bill 17, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and join in the debate on Bill 17, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2).

The member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) has already addressed the pellet gun issue and the city's desire to establish an amendment which would permit the city, by means of a by-law, to regulate pellet guns, BB guns and air guns. I think that many of us believe that these weapons are currently being misused. Some of us wonder if there is a proper use for such firearms, other than perhaps for target practice or shooting. Some of us wonder indeed whether these firearms serve any useful practice. Personally, I do not know.

What I do know, Madam Speaker, is that in my neck of the woods, that is in the Osborne constituency, especially under St. Vital bridge and at other places along Churchill Park in the Osborne constituency, places where I walk every day along with my dog, I know it is not uncommon here to encounter young boys with pellet guns who are out there basically to shoot pigeons. This is especially true in winter when the

river is frozen and these young people go out on the river with their guns.

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

This seems to me both a violent and an inhumane practice and one that is not conducive to citizenship, but, I think, as well, it is a very dangerous practice and I am going to explain why.

The park that I am referring to is in an area where small children, seniors, families, as well as not-so-senior people like me go for walks, bike rides, stop to fish, take the kids to swings and, in winter, enjoy the sports of that season.

Obviously, the presence of firearms—and no firearm is innocuous—does nothing to add to the atmosphere. Certainly, constituents of Osborne feel uneasy around these weapons, and then, of course, there is the moral issue associated with these weapons.

Certainly I hope that if this amendment is accepted by the House, that the city moves very quickly to enact the new by-laws which will indeed work to protect citizens and increase the possibility of public safety.

After the terrible incident with a pellet gun in Libau, Manitoba in early October—I am sure most of us recall that incident—some of us on this side of the Legislature are wondering whether we need some legislation which would include all of Manitoba.

I know that I, as the critic for the Status of Women, have consulted with our critic for Justice and both of us believe that we need to be vigilant in monitoring reports of abuse which involve pellet guns, BB guns and air guns.

Certainly, if any additional incidents of misuse of these weapons begin to emerge from other areas of Manitoba, we will certainly be calling for a careful reconsideration of the current legislation.

We believe, of course, that rural and northern Manitobans deserve and need the same kind of safety—both safety and the sense of safety—that urban centres like Winnipeg need.

Just to wrap up this section on weapons, I want to note that pellet guns, BB guns and air guns are not the kinds of guns used to put meat on the table in order to feed a family. As I said earlier, some of us wonder if there is any reasonable use for these firearms and if they have any valid role in our province whatsoever.

Anyway, the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) has already spoken about pellet guns, and undoubtedly the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) will address the entirety of this bill. My main focus is the part of the amendment which permits council to establish a program of tax credits and grants for renovations to heritage buildings and amendments to the planning and development legislation.

So I want to turn to the question of tax reliefs for heritage buildings. When the minister introduced this bill in the House, he made the point that there were a large number of heritage buildings in the city of Winnipeg, and he pointed out that these buildings were an asset and a legacy to the city. I could not agree with him more.

Some of us who have lived in Winnipeg for a long time regret that some of our heritage buildings have vanished; they have been demolished or generally worn down in states of disrepair. I am going to return to that and talk a bit about it later.

I think when the minister introduced the bill into the House he also made mention of Winnipeg's history and its reputation as the Chicago of the North. I believe he made mention of Winnipeg's rapid expansion during the late 19th and early part of the 20th Century. I think he pointed out that because of this rapid expansion great numbers of buildings went up in the city of Winnipeg, particularly in the areas that we know as the Exchange District and Market Square.

I think we all have our favourites in these areas or along Main Street. Some of our heritage buildings of course exist in other areas of the city. Some of them exist in the Osborne area. This is true along Roslyn Road where there are several fine heritage properties, homes. I also point out the Roslyn Apartments which is at the corner of Osborne and Roslyn Road, that very famous red brick apartment which most of us I think

have been in at one time or another and recognized as a beautiful heritage property.

* (1430)

In speaking about this bill, I want to congratulate the City of Winnipeg on its excellent work and research on heritage buildings. I refer specifically to this report called A Report on Proposed Municipal Initiatives to Promote Retention and Use of Heritage Properties in the City of Winnipeg.

I believe it is this particular report that gave birth to these particular sections of Bill 17. I would also, as well as congratulating the minister, like to congratulate Giles Bugailiskis who is the urban planner for the City of Winnipeg and has his office in a very fine heritage building, 395 Main Street, the old Hamilton Bank, and also Councillor Glen Murray who has been extremely active in heritage planning and heritage work. In fact, I am told by Mr. Bugailiskis that without Glen Murray the city would not have done the work that it has done.

So congratulations to all these people, to Heritage Winnipeg, as well, particularly to its president and people there who have tackled many heritage issues like the Union Tower, the elevator in the Bate Building, Greenway School, and this is just to mention a few.

I want to point out too that early work in heritage was done by Eugene Kostyra in the 1980s. I think that the work undertaken by Mr. Kostyra at that time was very, very important in formulating and subsequently moving heritage policy.

The point that I am making here is that Winnipeg has recognized the need to preserve its heritage buildings, and this is certainly something that we can be proud of.

Sadly, of course, there has been the loss in historic buildings, which I mentioned earlier. We have not always protected our buildings. We have not always recognized the historic importance of our buildings.

Personally, I regret the loss of the old City Hall, that famous gingerbread building, and I am sure there are members on both sides of the House who share my

regret. I also point out the loss of the Alexandra Hotel, which was an embodiment of a historical era in Winnipeg, and it is shameful that we no longer have that building; also the loss of the Childs Building, that beautiful building that we used to have near the corner of Portage and Main.

These are classic buildings and in losing these buildings, we lose not only the buildings, but of course, our heritage and our culture because these buildings are irreplaceable manifestations of Winnipeg's character and Winnipeg's history.

Most of us, I think, are familiar with the fact that several years ago Winnipeg's steam plant shut down, and certainly the closure of that steam plant did nothing to further heritage buildings in Winnipeg. The closing of that plant left many downtown heritage buildings and their owners not only high and dry but, one assumes, in winter very cold.

The shutting down of the steam plant also left the owners of these buildings in an economically unviable position because how could they sell the buildings without heat, how could they use the buildings without heat and especially since there appeared to be no hope of heat.

Two examples here are the Capitol Theater and the Metropolitan Theater. These are buildings that I remember from my past. They certainly have a place in my personal history, and of course, they have a place in Winnipeg's public history. We hope that this kind of legislation will do something to assure that those buildings will not go the way of all flesh. In other words, we appear to have lost much, and it is important to protect the rest and so the legislation is most timely. It seems to me that the minister is behaving responsibly in introducing this enabling legislation.

As to the value of historic properties and buildings, I do not think I probably have to convince people on this side of the House or on the other about the value of historic buildings. I would probably be preaching to the converted. I am sure that we all know, love and value Manitoba's history and these visible manifestations of its history, otherwise why would we undertake to serve our province as legislators.

The old buildings in Winnipeg have the elegance, the craftsmanship of earlier eras, particularly the buildings that were put up at the turn of the century. The warehouse buildings in Winnipeg have been acclaimed as the finest grouping in terms of style and variety and size in Canada, so I think it is important for us all to know and recognize that these are not just old buildings but are buildings of continental significance.

I think it is important too, once again, to recognize that these buildings are outward and visible signs of our cultural ethos. They are part of the informing spirit of a historical period. History is given specific and concrete shape in these buildings. To lose the buildings is not to lose a few acres of bricks and mortar but to lose our cultural and historical roots, to lose part of whom we are. My side of the House's respect for who we are is clear in our defence, among other things, of Grade 11 history in the school system.

I want to add in passing, and some of this has already been done, that government at all levels could perhaps be more active in honing and preserving our image as protectors of heritage buildings if we would set an example, if we would move into heritage buildings, if we would actually use these buildings and I know some of this has been done here and some of it has certainly been done elsewhere in Canada.

I have been speaking a little bit about the cultural value of our buildings. I think it is important to recognize that our heritage buildings also have economic value. It would indeed be foolhardy to speak of heritage buildings without pointing out their economic value. Historic buildings and properties have a wonderful record in attracting tourists and generating revenues. Historic buildings are fascinating; they appeal to our curiosity, our fascination with the past. All of these qualities are embodied in our historical buildings. When we think of the relationship between the economy and historical buildings, we can think of places like Halifax's Historic Properties, the Old Town in Quebec, Gastown in Vancouver, Old Montreal, and, of course, for Winnipeggers, we can think of The Forks in Winnipeg itself. These are all wonderful examples of partnerships between business and historical properties and they have all been extremely successful, in fact, incredibly successful.

But let me add again that the economic argument is not the only one, and indeed the economic argument may not be the most important one. Nonetheless, a thriving and vibrant business and commercial district, as experience shows, does attract tourists. It does bring added capital to our community.

I am sure that many of you, as I have done, have attended the Cobblestone bicycle race, for example, on July 1 in the Market Square, Exchange District. It is not just tourists who attended that, but, of course, citizens of our city interested in going to the core of our city to see what was happening.

One of the other, I think, important reasons for supporting this amendment and supporting tax credits for heritage buildings is the revitalization of the core area. I know that a program of grants has already been established, but certainly a program of grants and tax credits would be valuable in bucking the trend, or maybe I should say the race to urban sprawl, which seems to have characterized this government's policy.

The government's urban policy seems to have been a duel between developers and planners, with developers invariably winning. Since most of our heritage buildings are in the core of the city, tax credits would be one way, and perhaps an important method, of revitalizing the inner city areas, creating interest in the inner city, filtering some funds away from the outlying areas to the core of the city.

* (1440)

As I have already said, tax credits may assist in filling—I guess I want to look at the metaphor of the doughnut—in the hole of the doughnut. So important here, I think, also is the question of safety, or, at least, the question of perceived safety. If our downtown buildings are restored and so bring retailers, business offices, government offices, if these areas are renewed, if the garbage is picked up, then people will begin to feel safe in the inner city, and then people will begin to go to the inner city. Citizens, I think we all agree, have the right not only to be safe but to feel safe.

If citizens conclude that an area is safe and interesting, as well as offering a variety of goods and

services, then there is no stopping people, as we have already said, The Forks, the historic properties in Halifax. Trying to park at The Forks on Saturday morning is increasingly difficult and, I think, attests to the fact that people love The Forks. People want to go there. It is attractive to them.

Having been in Halifax this summer and having spent a lot of time in the historic properties in the core of that city, I can certainly attest to the fact that it is almost impossible to move. In Halifax there is this wonderful meeting of natural beauty with careful and intelligent planning, the same kind of meeting, I think, of natural beauty and sound planning that we see in The Forks.

One of the other things that I wanted to mention briefly was that a few years ago I was part of a committee called the Urban Safety Project for Women and Children. What we found in that committee was that if there were lots of people on a street, if there was a diversity of buildings, all these kinds of things contributed to the success of a neighbourhood.

So it seems to me that granting tax credits can only work for safety as well as beauty and economic security in downtown Winnipeg.

To date, I have been talking about buildings, but I just wanted to say a word about houses because I do not see anything in the proposed legislation which would prevent heritage homeowners from benefiting from such a program of tax credits or grants.

Although it seems to me that this could be open to abuse and become a scam for funnelling benefits unfairly, it would seem to me that if the by-law was carefully prepared and judiciously administered that homeowners could also stand to benefit from the by-law, because the truth is that owners of heritage homes are often constrained by what they can do with their home, and of course they should be constrained because if they are not restricted they may destroy the heritage quality of their home.

But one of the problems with the restrictions is that these owners often have trouble selling their houses. It seems to me that this is all wrong, that we want a city

where heritage homes are desirable, where there is encouragement to preserve the character and grace of Winnipeg heritage homes.

I do not know how many character homes have been lost because of a lack of tax credits or whatever. I know that there are some grants available, but it seems to me this proactive legislation is desirable when it comes to homes too.

Before closing, I have three other points that I want to make. First of all, I want to comment on the use of the term "renovation" in Bill 17 because this term "renovation" in Bill 17 disturbs me, even though I have been using it.

The problem is that I think there is a need not to strip away the history from a building, and I want to quote from William Morris here. William Morris, of course, was a Victorian master of all trades but especially those related to architecture, to design, to craftsmanship—[interjection] A socialist too, and especially a master of craftsmanship in the preservation of buildings.

Morris said, we must not follow the fatal idea to strip from a building its history. Let us put protection in place of restoration. Thus and only thus can we protect our ancient buildings and hand them down instructive and venerable to those that come after.

My point then is that it is our duty and ultimately the duty of the by-laws from the City of Winnipeg to respect the historical character of our buildings, and I am sure the city has every intention of doing this. I think there is a need, too, to point out, as is pointed out in the Appleton Charter of 1883, that there are a variety of activities or a variety of ways of caring for heritage buildings and the way in which we choose to do this depends on many factors.

We can preserve buildings. We can restore buildings. We can rehabilitate buildings. We can reconstruct buildings and we can redevelop buildings. All of these may be very valid levels of intervention, and what is important is respect for the existing fabric. That is absolutely fundamental, respect for the existing building itself. The level of intervention should depend on many things: the nature and heritage value of the

building, the goals of the conservation, the scale of the artifact and the financial and human resources available.

My point again was that the term "renovation" as it appears in the proposed amendment is slightly disconcerting as it implies a major overhaul and a high degree of intervention. But, as I said, I have great faith in the leadership of those interested in heritage at City Hall, Glen Murray and Giles Bugailiskis, so I am sure that they will be very anxious to preserve the heritage character of buildings.

The second point that I want to make in closing is to note that this is enabling legislation, an amendment to The City of Winnipeg Act. Once this bill leaves this House, one hopes that the City of Winnipeg will expeditiously proclaim the amendment and enact the necessary by-law in order to protect the heritage buildings and, by implication, to encourage the city to thrive economically, physically and socially, for I think we all know that a diversity of buildings, a blend of old with new ensures a variety of uses, ensures a variety of activities which, in turn, encourage people and business, which, in turn, mean and encourage community.

In a healthy community, people become keepers of the street peace, and this gives way to a peaceful atmosphere for individuals and business. If we can revitalize our buildings, if we can preserve our heritage, we may also create community and we may also do something about the street peace.

The third point I want to make in closing is that, and I have made this point already, but, again, it is important for Winnipeggers to take credit for the significant renewal of buildings, homes and communities in the inner city. We have done fine work, and though we have done fine work, much remains to be done.

If we can manage our regional growth, if we can keep regional growth under control, if we can encourage the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) to provide broadly based, comprehensive leadership, and I certainly encourage him to do that, to provide broadly based, comprehensive leadership, then we may

be able to protect the advances we made in the '80s, the advances and the protection of heritage buildings, and the advances made in the early '90s.

In closing, then, I want to point out that our heritage buildings do not live by bread alone. All the tax credits and all the grants to heritage buildings and properties will come to nothing if this government continues its current policy of no regional growth management.

The lack of policy these days leads one to imagine a widening circle, dead in the middle with decay, slowly spreading outwards, a city that eats itself from the inside out.

That is exactly what has happened in the city of Detroit. That seems to be happening in the city of Winnipeg. I think we see this evidence in the boarded windows downtown, for rent and for sale signs, litter and garbage everywhere, homeless people, citizens afraid to be in the streets of their city.

* (1450)

You know, in many ways the downtown sections of Winnipeg appear to be a modern wasteland where alienation and dislocation and despair are the order of the day, so I call upon the minister once again to demonstrate some sound leadership to turn this around. I suggest that the minister chat with his cabinet colleagues, tell them to send some of their high-flyer developer friends flying and then sit down with some regional growth management people, invite some downtown residents, invite some business people, invite some ordinary people, and then he will be in a position to inaugurate a broadly based political process which will involve the whole of the community. It is time to turn things around in Winnipeg, and I think it is time to put people first. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid)?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to close debate on Bill 17 from our side of the House, and I will be quite brief in my comments.

Both the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) have spoken very eloquently about two of the major components of Bill 17, those dealing with the enabling legislation to enable the City of Winnipeg to enact by-laws dealing with pellet guns within the city of Winnipeg limits and also the ability of the city to deal with taxation issues around heritage buildings to enable the city to, one would hope, strengthen and increase our stock of heritage buildings.

The other general area that the legislation includes, or as the minister said, more minor issues dealing with planning and development legislation and granting of land use variances.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my own comments are that this legislation is good legislation. We have stated and spoken with the minister that we will be approving this legislation and not attaching amendments when it goes to committee. I would like to commend the minister and the government for implementing this legislation.

I would like to make a couple of comments more generally. One is that the member for Osborne spoke earlier about the minister's comments that Winnipeg was the Chicago of the North. As a resident of Chicago for eight years in the early to late '60s, I can understand where the minister has the connection in some ways. There are many beautiful buildings in the city of Chicago, many of them newer than our heritage buildings, but I would like to suggest that in one area, and this goes more to the issue of pellet guns and that part of Bill 17, I would hope that we do not become the Chicago of the North in the whole area of safety and crime because Chicago has a well-deserved reputation as being not one of the better cities in North America to live in that context.

As the minister stated in his remarks when he opened with this bill, it is essentially a bill that provides opportunities for enhanced local government autonomy and accountability. In the areas that Bill 17 deals with,

that is true. We see this as an example of something that we would like to see a lot more of, which is co-operation between the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba. We all know that there are several major issues under—not under investigation—in the public eye today as we go down to the last week before the municipal election campaign.

There has been a creative tension between the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba for as long as there has been a city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba. That will never change, given the control that The City of Winnipeg Act gives the province over the dealings of the city itself, and given the fact that the city incorporates the vast majority of the population of the province of Manitoba as well as the financial resources and social and economic resources of the province. There will always be those tensions. It is important that we try as legislators and as people who live in the city of Winnipeg to bridge those gaps that appear and to alleviate those tensions wherever possible. Bill 17 does that in the areas that it deals with; Bill 7 did that in the last session.

I would just like to close my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by asking the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) to take a look at the requests that have come to the province from the City of Winnipeg's city councillors over the last 10 years. I have received a listing from the mayor's office, and I know it is available if the minister would ask for that, some very interesting areas that the city has asked for action on the part of the province.

They cannot do anything about these requests until the province makes changes and amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act. So I would ask the minister to carry on the good work that he has begun with the government with Bill 7 and now Bill 17, take a look at the requests the City of Winnipeg has sent to the province in the last eight years and bring back in the next session another bill amending The City of Winnipeg Act to deal with the other issues of importance that the city has requested of the province, or, at the very least, hold discussions with the new city council on some of these issues that have been raised. In some cases, they have been raised by more than one city council.

With those words, I, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, would commend the government, and we are prepared to pass Bill 17 through to committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, very briefly on Bill 17, we understand the main component to the bill is to include new legislation to allow council to regulate the sale and possession of weapons other than those covered in the Criminal Code of Canada, and we think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is, on the surface, a very positive thing.

Legislation is also to allow the council to establish a program of tax credits and grants for renovations to our heritage buildings, and Winnipeg has this very distinct downtown area, in fact, not only within the downtown core area but virtually throughout the city of Winnipeg, characteristics to it.

You compare, let us say, Winnipeg to Edmonton or to Calgary, what many people will talk about in terms of the difference is, of course, how much heritage so many of our buildings have. This is something in which the newer cities—and, in most part, if you take a look at Calgary, it is a fairly new city, especially when you compare it to Winnipeg. So, if there are things that we can do to encourage that preservation of our heritage, I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is positive.

One of the unfortunate things that I have never really had the opportunity to see—and it is somewhat tragic—was the old City Hall. I have seen pictures. I was too young, I guess, possibly to see it. I do not know when it was actually taken down. I believe it was during the '60s. I was born in '62. So I believe it was still there when I was born, but, unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to see it at least live. I can only see it in pictures. I think maybe this piece of legislation will assist or will be of benefit in terms of future generations with the many other heritage buildings that we have throughout the city of Winnipeg. To that end, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what it does is it allows the city to proceed in an orderly fashion in doing what it can to preserve some of these wonderful, beautiful buildings that we have.

* (1500)

Amendments to planning and development in legislation, again, is something else that is talked about. We have no problem in terms of seeing this bill go to committee at this stage. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is Bill 17, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act(2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 6—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Bill 6, The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques, standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), is there leave for this matter to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No? No, leave has been denied.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad to be able to rise and finish off the minutes that I have left to speak on Bill 6.

Bill 6 is a very important bill to consider as legislators because it deals with the area of education which I think is of the utmost importance to not only students and staff within the province of Manitoba but for the future economic viability and sustainability of our province.

My concerns with Bill 6 are basically in four major areas. The first area that I have a problem with is the lack of public input before the bill was put together, before the bill hit the floor of the Legislature. I want to reiterate the comments that others have made on Bill 6 in terms of the importance of obtaining the views of the public before legislation comes into the House. I suppose that could apply to any bill that hits this House but in particular Bill 6 since it does deal with the public schools in our province and the fact that the vast majority of our students and graduates and people who live in the province have come through the public school system.

I think that in itself right there should qualify people to have some kind of input into legislation that we pass in this House that has a bearing on the people of Manitoba but, also, because the rules and the regulations and the legislation that we pass in the area of education represent such an opportunity for this province to grow.

I want to make sure that in any future legislation concerning education that comes to the House that this government make an absolute, honest, complete, thorough attempt at collecting public opinion and soliciting public input right from Day One when considering legislation.

The second major concern that I have with Bill 6 is that the final result of the proposals contained within Bill 6 will increase the amount of responsibilities on each and every school staff from one end of this province to the next. In particular I think the administration of each school is going to find themselves with a continuing growth in the amount of responsibilities that they have to undertake while at the same time this government reduces the amount of resources available to the principal and vice-principal in the schools from one part of the province to the next.

It makes no sense to me at all to increase the responsibilities of the school's administration on the one hand and take away the very tools they need on the other hand to help them do their jobs in a satisfactory manner. This is the reality of what this government is doing right now, and Bill 6 is no help in that regard.

The other staff within the school who are going to be negatively impacted by the proposals contained within Bill 6 are the teachers who are on the front lines and deliver directly the education to students in our classrooms. I believe the same principle applies here as what I talked about just a minute ago in terms of the administration.

What we see as a trend in our schools these days is an increase in the amount of responsibility put on teachers, fewer teachers within the system to take on that responsibility and fewer resources in terms of dollars, in terms of time and in terms of personnel to help teachers to deal with the increasing load of responsibilities that are being put on the shoulders of teachers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my backup in saying this, my background is that of a school principal. I have seen firsthand the kind of results you get when you take a group of people and arbitrarily increase their responsibilities without, at the same time, increasing correspondingly the amount of resources available to the people who are expected to teach our students within the schools.

Another area that I think is going to end up with a big shift in its responsibilities as a result of Bill 6 are the school trustees we elect every so often to represent taxpayers, to provide the authority to offer good quality education to the young people in our province, and that of course being the trustees who sit on the various school boards across the province.

My worry about the role of the trustees is that it is my concern that the provisions of Bill 6 will, on the one hand, take some of the responsibilities away from the trustees and centralize it within the office of the Minister of Education, but at the same time we are taking a lot of the responsibilities that the trustees have had in the past and giving them to a parent advisory council.

As a school principal at Rorketon, I helped in setting up a parent advisory council, and I understand the value of parent input and parent advisory councils in each of the schools. But we have to remember some very important things about parent advisory councils.

First of all, they are advisory. They do not have the legal responsibilities, the legal liability, the insurance liability that an elected school board has. They do not have the protection in certain areas that trustees have.

We have to remember that school boards are incorporated; parent advisory groups are not. Through that incorporation, trustees have a certain amount of protection in dealing with everything that a school division deals with over the course of a year. Parent advisory groups do not have that advantage. Therefore, we must be careful in the kind of responsibilities that we shift from the school board in any area to the parent advisory groups.

Of course, I really fear that the other shift that is taking place in education today is a shift of responsibilities from the trustees to the Education minister's office, and that while it does not present the kind of legal and insurance problems that may occur as in the first case I outlined, I think there are some political problems that occur with centralizing to too great an extent the decision making in education in the hands of one person, the minister.

The fourth major area of concern that I have has to do with the amount of commercialization of our schools that I fear will take place as a result of the provisions of Bill 6. What the bill is attempting to do—I think probably in this area the heart of the bill is in the right place insofar as they are trying to provide some sort of protection to students from the selling of illicit drugs, illegal weapons of some sort, goods that are illegal or harmful on school properties.

Now, on the surface of that, I think that is okay. I would always agree that we have to take steps to protect the students and to protect other staff members at schools. My worry, though, is that what would maybe start out as a good plan might evolve itself into something a little more hideous.

* (1510)

My first concern deals with the legitimate school fundraising activities that go on in every part of our province. I would not want to see a school be put in a situation where a fundraising event became jeopardized

because of provisions contained within Bill 6. I think that is a concern that all MLAs in this House should have. I think it should be a concern of the cabinet, and in particular, the Education minister must keep that in mind as we proceed through the debate on Bill 6.

The other part of this section on commercialization that I worry about is the effect that the large corporations, the large parts of the business world, will have on local business. The schools in which I have been a teacher and school principal have basically been small schools within small rural communities, small rural communities that are battling it out with larger towns, larger centres, larger cities, who have larger corporations set up within their jurisdictions to do business. The business community of very small communities in rural Manitoba cannot compete on a toe-to-toe basis with large multinational corporations, and I fear that this could be another way of funnelling money from rural Manitoba into the larger centres.

After all, I question whether it is the right thing to do. Do we actually want to subject our students in schools to yet more commercialization? My feeling is that they are subjected to enough of that on television, on radio, in newspapers, the gazillions of fliers that end up in our mailboxes every day. I think that commercialization has gone too far already without—inadvertently, maybe—introducing it into our schools through the provisions of Bill 6.

Those four areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are the areas that I am mostly concerned about with Bill 6. I realize that I have more minutes to talk on this, but there is no point in going any further when I have made all the points I need to make, and I would like to close off what I have to say on that note.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for affording me the opportunity to make a few statements about Bill 6, an amendment to The Public Schools Act.

When the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) moved Bill 6 for second reading on June 7, 1995, she clarified more or less the intent of Bill 6. In a relatively short preamble she stated that Bill 6, an amendment to The Public Schools Act, was part and parcel of the

government's grant strategy for educational renewal. In fact, the word she used was transform. Now, after seven years of that kind of transforming, eyebrows automatically lift for members of this side of the House, especially when they hear the word transform.

Let us hope that the transformation will be somewhat positive, but I believe that students, parents, educators and the public have reason to be jittery, have reasons to be sceptical. The transforming may well be toward a leaner, meaner system, not doing more with less but doing less with less.

The transformation may well be ideologically driven and top down. It has the potential to stress law, rule, regulation, dictum, overcollaboration, co-operation and flexibility. This piece of legislation appears to have been created in relative isolation and does not appear to have been based on broad consultation or wide public input.

In her introduction of the bill for second reading, the minister stated that one of the primary aims was to increase school effectiveness by improving the environment for learning in the classroom. That was the primary aim. Other aims, secondary aims, were not mentioned. No one is going to argue against improving the environment for learning in the classroom. Improving the classroom learning environment is exactly what thousands of teachers in Manitoba do every day, and they do this day after day after day.

The minister stated that this improved learning environment in the classroom is somehow the result of Bill 6 or will be the result of Bill 6. Her exact words were, and I quote: The Public Schools Amendment Act will ensure—will ensure—that the environment for learning is safe, secure and nonthreatening.

I am not sure why the minister used three adjectives which are more or less identical: safe, secure, nonthreatening. He is basically saying that Bill 6 will ensure a secure classroom learning environment.

Is the assumption that classroom learning environments were not secure before Bill 6? That is an assumption with which very few teachers would agree; besides, how can a bill ensure this? How can a

classroom environment, allegedly not secure, suddenly change because of Bill 6? Is this the magic transformation, the magic renewal the minister hinted at earlier?

But the minister could argue that I am nitpicking, that I am splitting hairs. Perhaps what she really meant to say but never actually stated was this: In a few schools, conditions exist that are not optimal for students and for teachers.

The minister should have said that. Is she saying, as Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), I am putting in place some legislation which will give more power to principals to deal with these abnormal or irregular situations which negatively affect students and teachers because, after all, a positive, progressive school climate is very important for learning. We all agree with that.

The all-encompassing nature of the bill, however, suggests that harsh measures are needed now, and they are needed everywhere. The minister herself says, and this is her quote: The bill will increase the authority of school principals to deal with persons whose actions or proximity threaten to compromise safety within the school or interfere with its safe and orderly management.

Now, principals have always zealously guarded the safety of their school. I am not sure that principals were consulted or that their opinions were asked for with regard to this bill. Normally, if a threatening situation arose in a school, let us say, if the life or the welfare of students or teachers were threatened or endangered, the principal would not hesitate to telephone the police.

I am not sure whether all principals need or want this new authority. Once again, all school principals are affected by this bill. All are lumped together, there is no discrimination, no realization that the extra discipline, the extra muscle that might be needed by a few principals in a few particular schools, is probably not needed at all in the majority of schools.

It is a question of overkill. In Tommy Douglas's unique phraseology, it is like cracking a peanut with a sledgehammer.

Also, the bill has the potential for a very wide variety of interpretation. When the minister stated that the bill would give increased authority to principals to deal with persons whose actions and proximity threatened to compromise school safety, what exactly does that mean?

The minister probably meant that the principals should have extra clout to deal with dangerous trespassers. However, it could be interpreted far differently. In how many ways could school safety be compromised? Let me count the ways: a student running down the hallway, a janitor carrying a stepladder. A bill's interpretation could be significantly different from what the minister intended.

Another phrase that is open to all kinds of semantic acrobatics is the phrase: Persons whose proximity threatens to compromise school safety.

How are we to judge proximity? Does it mean in the classroom? in the school? on the school ground? near the school? How far from the school? Persons are being judged, supposedly by the principals who did not ask to be judges, on their actions and their proximity to schools.

Now, schools are pretty open-ended places. All kinds of community events and meetings take place in schools. All kinds of interesting people visit schools. In many northern schools elders wander in and out, participating whenever their input is needed. Schools hold open house. Schools have fundraisers. I would hate to see the school become a closed, paranoid little cubicle with a principal looking over his shoulder for intruders.

The partnership among the school, the parents and the community needs to be open, trusting and flexible. We learn from one another; a heavy-handed boot-camp approach is anathema to real learning.

Fear and paranoia have no place in the learning situation, in the learning environment. Education should be immune to fear and paranoia, but I am a realist enough to know that a certain degree of fear and paranoia is out there and that it is a moot point whether

this bill, Bill 6, decreases that fear and paranoia or paradoxically increases it.

In a two-tiered world, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the have-nots soon outnumber the haves, a certain degree of uneasiness can be expected, and this is the most painful part of Bill 6, that it addresses only symptoms and not causes.

It is an attempt to instill some kind of rigour or discipline in the educational body, aimed at the mistaken belief that a few dangerous individuals can be separated, identified or punished, because they are a threat to that educational body.

There is no recognition that, as more and more people are fighting for survival, the stresses generated cannot be wished away with merely a get-tough attitude and a few provisions from Bill 6.

* (1520)

There is no crisis situation yet, and as the minister herself admitted, we have a good educational system run by dedicated professionals, but as the economic prosperity promised to Manitobans keeps eluding them, then there will come a time when the pent-up frustrations and anger and hopelessness felt by so many Manitobans, especially the more disadvantaged ones in Manitoba, will also be felt within the educational system.

It is very easy to drift into a law-and-order mentality, let's-get-tough-with-crime mentality, let's get tough with those who hinder the creation of positive learning climates, while ignoring the real reasons, the economic reasons, for that unrest.

As I stated earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 6, The Public Schools Amendment Act, deals with symptoms, not causes. It is legalistic, and it overreacts. For example, in the minister's own words from June 7, as she introduced Bill 6 for second reading, she said, quote: The amendment provides a legal basis for removing and prosecuting drug pushers, sexual predators, gang leaders, nonstudents and other undesirables who pose a threat to the students at the school.

Now that is quite a catalogue of evil, one that I would hardly associate with education or educational institutions, but perhaps I have lived a sheltered life and the schools in which I have taught did not experience threats from drug pushers, sexual predators, gang leaders and other undesirables. In fact, I am not sure whether those people ever existed in our world or in our communities, but perhaps they did and perhaps they still do. If they did exist and if they are a threat, one still wonders why nonstudents are lumped in with sexual predators and drug pushers.

In fact, most teachers and most principals do not really consider themselves students, along with janitors, carpenters, school committee members and so on. As for the phrase "undesirables," the minister's own phrase, "undesirables," it is a most unhappy phrase. It could refer to just about anything or anybody an education minister or a principal or a person authorized by the school board could want it to refer to.

Undesirables, like beauty, are often in the eye of the beholder, and, again, we are not dealing with causes. Of course, no one wants drug pushers in or near their school. Of course, no one wants gang recruiters in or near their school, but pushing the gang recruiter one block back from the school does not address the cause of gangs or gang violence. Furthermore, drug pushers, pushing them one block further back from the school does not really remove the drug abuse.

What the minister is using is the American get-tough-on-crime approach and sticking that approach into an educational framework where it probably does not belong. But, in reality, that only sanitizes the issue; it does not deal with causes. It is a California model because, in California, if the streets become more violent, you hire more cops, you build more jails. Never mind what caused it, never mind that bad tax laws which protect the rich leave no money for social programs or job creation and that the disenfranchised keep lashing out more and more.

It becomes a vicious cycle, and, of course, once that starts, there is more violence, more need for more policemen, more need for penitentiaries. It goes on and on. That is the kind of growth industry we do not need in this province.

Surely the issues of child poverty in this province, the lack of housing in the northern part of this province, the lack of meaningful jobs or any jobs for the young in this province cannot be viewed as isolated phenomena. Now, I was happy that the minister, a few days ago, did say some jobs are created for our young people in the summer. She mentioned 700 jobs for the urban Green Team, 400 for the rural Green Team, and I am very happy with this, but it is only a drop in the bucket. Thousands and thousands of other young people did not find jobs.

So, when the minister talks about undesirables and keeping them out of the school environment, who created the undesirables? Every child born in this province has the potential for greatness. Why are there undesirables? Do we once again blame the victims? Certainly, we do not want drug pushers near our schools, but would the young person selling drugs be doing so if that young person could find decent employment, and would the gang recruiter in schools? Would the teenagers that feel a need to join gangs, would they still have that need if they had decent self-esteem, if they were grounded in those solid altruistic family values that the Tories are so fond of holding up as an ideal?

The undesirables that the minister makes reference to, would they still be undesirables if other criteria were used, if they had been raised in affluence instead of poverty? I will point out to the minister when she uses the word "undesirables" that great leaders and teachers from the past, from Christ to Mahatma Gandhi, did not scorn the outcasts and the undesirables. In fact, they created their kingdom for these undesirables. They created hope for them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 6 gives principals the right to document an act of trespass and engage the assistance of police officers if warranted. By decree this act increases the penalty from The Petty Trespasses Act with a penalty of \$25 to a major monetary penalty of possibly \$1,000 to \$5,000. That is a tremendous increase, a two-hundred-fold increase in some cases. I am not sure how trespass will be defined. Some people who are neither students nor teachers can normally and legitimately be on school property. Cocurricular activities, community meetings in schools, adult

education, late night usage of gymnasium could all create problems with identifying who should and should not be in a school at a given time.

We do not want to limit community access to our schools. We had an adage in our last school; at least our principal used it extensively. The adage was, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Now that may not be a great adage for educational innovation, but it is for the kind of restructuring the minister is advocating in Bill 6. If it ain't broke, why fix it?

Bill 6 is cracking peanuts with a sledgehammer. In the few cases where principals feel they need more power to safeguard the learning environment, the school climate, I am sure solutions could be worked out among the stakeholders, which include educators, parents, students, advisory councils, school boards, law enforcement agencies. In fact, in the past there have existed community police projects in several high schools which led to a reduction in violence in schools. Community police projects might well have been part of that answer that the minister did not look at.

Bill 6 attempts a global solution for localized problems. It does not mirror flexibility or even sensitivity. It reflects a heavy-handed, top-down bureaucratic approach to education, an approach that Tories usually condemn. Therefore, it is surprising that the laissez-faire, hands-off approach they espouse for business they do not espouse for education. It is nonintervention for the marketplace, and it is heavy-handed intervention for the schools.

I assume, and I admit to being somewhat biased as an ex-teacher, that if there is one group in society that knows what it wants it is a group of educators. It is doubtful that much consulting was done with educators before this bill was drafted. I doubt that this bill, Bill 6, reflects the most serious concerns of educators. This bill is not entirely without value but broad-based consultation does not underpin it. As a housekeeping bill it has some merit and I am sure many recommendations at committee stage could improve this bill. My colleague for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has referred to this bill as thin. Well, it is emaciated, it is starving, it is indeed very thin.

It is hardly the bold vision that the minister mentioned when introducing an earlier bill, Bill 5, when she stated and I quote: The status quo is no longer sufficient for a society that is moving toward a new millennium, unquote. I agree. Schools are infinitely adaptable, and, yes, schools must be safe. Indeed we need to work out detailed policies and programs that address the root causes of violence in our schools. Bill 6 addresses symptoms, not causes.

In working out detailed policies and programs, we must work from the bottom up and not the top down. Conflict resolution and violence prevention can be built into the school curriculum. Schools should continue to focus on early and ongoing identification for prevention of violence, and in some cases more staff development is needed. But in the era of cutbacks, Filmon Fridays, lost professional development days, it is difficult for teachers and principals to muster the resources and the time needed to properly address the issue of school safety that is so urgent for some schools, not all schools.

We all want safe schools, we all desire a safe learning environment for our children, but if we are serious then we are not interested in cosmetics. We are interested in addressing root causes of violence in schools. It would be naive and irresponsible to assume that we can address the issue of violence in schools from the top down when the real issue is the fact that the violence we decry is spawned by poverty, by unemployment, by lack of hope.

The minister talked about the new millennium and the fact that the status quo is no longer sufficient. She is absolutely correct, but let us make certain that Bill 6 is heading in the proper direction. We cannot nor do we want to maintain the status quo. The new millennium the minister talks about, the new century indeed, but I hope however that the new century we are aiming for, that Bill 6 is aiming for, is the 21st Century, a century of bright hope and not, and I repeat, not the 19th Century whose dogmatic factory-model educational system has been so colourfully chronicled by Charles Dickens.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

I just want to clarify one thing with the House first. The honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), the resolution had been standing in your name with 22 minutes remaining and leave had been denied.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I rise to speak to Bill 6, The Public Schools Amendment Act.

This piece of legislation increases the authority of school principals in dealing with persons whose presence or activities on school property threaten the learning environment or the safety of persons rightfully on school property.

The legislation gives principals the right to engage the assistance of a police officer in removing a person from school premises who is misbehaving. This bill increases fines that may be imposed.

In response to this question from opposition members, when the bill was introduced in the previous Legislature, the then-Minister of Education stated that the impetus for the bill was ambiguity in the present law surrounding the rights of principals in evicting undesirables from school property.

The then-Minister of Education stated that the present legislation does not provide sufficient deterrents nor basis of prosecution of offences.

I will take the then-Minister of Education's word for it, but my experience as a community police constable in the north end of Winnipeg, we dealt with many incidents of youth that had to be evicted from schools, and we always found a ways and means in order to do it.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Once again, this bill bears the marks of the simple solution that this government applies to so many problems. We support this bill, as it will protect the interests of students and educators. However, we point

out that the impetus for this legislation is an increase in the number of dropouts and graduates who hang out at schools, threatening the learning environment. This legislation will do nothing to prevent this problem. It can only give educators an iron fist power to push the problem off school property. It has been amply demonstrated in the past that the increasing penalties and enforcement powers do little to change people's behaviours.

Madam Speaker, we welcome this bill passing on to committee, and we look forward to presentations from the public. Thank you.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): I am grateful for this opportunity to speak on Bill 6, The Public Schools Amendment Act. It is a privilege to be able to speak on something so important as the education of our children and our public education system.

What we are talking about here is really a bill that is a shallow attempt to deal with something that is very serious, and that is the fact that we do have some trespassers, some interveners in our school system, people that some have described as undesirables who are attending and coming into our public school system.

I know a case in point in the north end of our division, a group of individuals, not students, individuals that we would probably call members of a street gang who came forward in a concerted, organized fashion—what would it be?—to seize, enter and apprehend an individual that was a student in this one high school. That type of organized criminal—I would say—activity is truly one that is unacceptable.

However, Bill 6 is not going to prevent that; Bill 6 does not deal with prevention. It is a valuable bill in that it increases the fine from \$1,000 to \$5,000, but it does not deal with the real issue; it does not deal with the need for more police officers in our communities, a closer link between our law enforcement agencies and the public school system. That is why this bill is a shallow attempt at dealing with a serious situation.

This situation is not unique to schools in Winnipeg. In fact, it also happened in The Pas that I am aware of,

happens in numerous situations where individuals will attempt to enter and disrupt the school system. It is not only street gangs, but there are other individuals who will come in with their own agenda, and these are few and far between, Madam Speaker.

For the most part, I would say that the public school system is opening their doors to the public, and I think that that is a positive event. We are looking at more and more what we call community schools, schools that are linked with our public library system, schools that are attached to our community centres, schools where we encourage the participation of our community and parents.

These are models that we indeed want to cherish and promote. This bill, I think, is really dealing with a small number of cases and not dealing with it very well at all, Madam Speaker, not dealing with it at all.

The issue of identifying trespassers is one that we hope will not in fact impede the public school's process of opening doors. For example, Madam Speaker, if you have an administrator who is not particularly eager to have the public join us as partners, some of these questions must be dealt with. It is truly a measure that is dealing with a very small and organized group of individuals hardly concerned about this penalty. Their objective is to sometimes gain access to what they would consider customers, young people who may be vulnerable to their sales pitch in terms of perhaps trying to gain access to the student body to sell drugs, to recruit young people into gang-related activities. These members of society need to be excluded. We do need protection from—we do need programs that deal with these things.

This bill is really, I believe, Madam Speaker, an attempt by the Filmon government during the provincial election to say they did have a plan; and, when you look at the bill, you realize that it is nothing more than a few words. It is a very shallow attempt at dealing with a very serious situation, and, again, it is mostly wind, not substance. When you look at the government's record of dealing with disruptive behaviour, both external influences and within the school, it is very shallow, very minor, and not treated seriously. It is a shocking record from a government

that actually says they will take a strong stand in terms of youth crime, that they will take a strong stand in terms of dealing with street gangs, but the record proves that there are a lot of measures that are really what we are now referring to as Casper committees, committees that we get the press release long before the formation of the committee, long before any real substantial action is taken. Basically, an attempt to say, yes, we are there to deal with the issue when in reality the issue was to have the appearance of doing so, not the reality of doing it.

* (1540)

Madam Speaker, what we need is for a serious review of preventative measures in terms of dealing with trespassers, dealing with students that are excluded from the public school system. Much of the problems are now being dealt with in a very reactionary way. They deal with punishment, and very little is being done with prevention. For example, the move by many school boards, and encouraged by the government, to move towards expulsion is one that is—and I support a zero tolerance policy that many jurisdictions have taken, zero tolerance towards students being violent, to carrying weapons into schools.

The question is: What is the role and responsibility of the government to provide another avenue for those young people to have an education? Where are those students who are not functioning in a regular classroom going to go when you expel them, Madam Speaker? Out on the street, seems to be the only option provided by this government. As they are expelled from the public school system, their options are very limited. Their options are, you stay at home, you go and associate yourself with other like-minded individuals, not something that we particularly want. I mean, are we saying that we are encouraging street gangs? They are not functioning in school, expel the kid onto the street, and there they are going to be a very easy victim for any street gang to pick up.

What the responsibility of this government is, which they have neglected to do, is to provide an alternative setting for people who are not functioning appropriately in the public school system, a program

which addresses the needs of those young people, reaches out to them, find out why they are behaving in that way, provide programs and have them go back to school.

Madam Speaker, it is the responsibility, through The Public Schools Act, of this government to provide an education for all students. What is their mandate for those students that are expelled? What options have they given to those students? Indeed, it is very limited. The only options available are often those that are provided by individual local teachers who are providing homework for these students, who are providing opportunities for them to continue to get an education, but there is no leadership from this government, no leadership, no alternatives for young people.

Madam Speaker, it is indeed a situation that is going to require, I think, collaboration, collaboration on the part of this government, collaboration by individual school divisions and school boards, collaboration by the students and collaboration from the communities.

However, this bill and this government, through its inaction, lack of consultation and regressive policies, has meant very limited opportunities for young people. What we are looking for is a change. What we are looking for are alternatives and options to deal with some of the important situations that are occurring in our neighbourhood.

What has happened to the program that was extremely successful, and I had the opportunity to talk about earlier, was the police in schools program? Our member from The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) is very familiar with the program, a program that was successful, a program that actually worked jointly. We are not talking about our law enforcement officers patrolling the halls to take care of disruptive students; we are talking about partnership. We are talking about the police officer being in the school, conducting regular hours. Only once a week for a couple of hours a week made a drastic difference in those communities. That program was pulled, a program that was successful, that had a record of success, that was a preventative program, and one that we do not have in effect now.

We have heard from this government, we are going to look at tackling youth crime; we are going to tackle street gangs. I say one of the ways to do that is to reinstate a program that works, a program that is not a Casper program, a program that was working, that does work and does mean that you are working with the police department in harmony with schools, a program that I know that every school that I am familiar with wanted the program to be included in their schools.

Every high school in Winnipeg No. 1 that I am familiar with requested that program be extended to their schools, a program of success. That is a program, and I know that there have been many success stories because of that program, stories we do not hear about because the media like to draw attention to cases where there is some glamour, there is some violence. There has been something that has happened that is inappropriate and you see that it is splattered on the front page of the paper, and you have youth gangs controlling schools or some other headline that is totally inappropriate. A program that was in effect like the Police in Schools program, in effect prevented those types of youth activities, organized youth gang activities, in fact, mediated between various factions in our communities and prevented those programs.

Do we see a headline, Prevention Works? It is very difficult, Madam Speaker. What we have tended to do is sensationalize cases, and I think this is what this bill in fact does. It feeds right into it. What really is meaningful are programs like the Police in Schools program, programs that are dealing with the community, bringing in community members into schools so they feel like it is a partnership. Those are the types of things that we would like to see in our public school system. We want to see a public school system that can deal effectively with trespassers but has an open-door policy to the community. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 6, The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

**Bill 23—The Health Services Insurance
Amendment Act**

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 23, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Speaker: Stand. Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a few comments on the record on Bill 23.

Bill 23 appears to be not a major piece of legislation, certainly not of the scope of other pieces of legislation, such as the balanced budget legislation that this government has brought in this session. However, Madam Speaker—

* (1550)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if I might ask all those members who are having private meetings if they would either move to the loge or outside the Chamber.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Speaker, the provisions of this act are basically in three major sections. The first sections are provisions that permit the government to examine medical practitioners or former medical practitioners who are under investigation. The second group of sections protects members of any government board or review committee from liability in the performance of their duties if they act in good faith. The third area deals with trust accounts to be held and administered by personal care homes.

Madam Speaker, of course, prior to hearing any public presentations at the public hearing process, we

do not have major concerns with the first two sections of this piece of legislation. However, the section that deals with accounts to be held and administered by personal care homes, we do have some concerns with this and would hope that the government in debate on second reading and most assuredly in the public hearing process will address some of the concerns that I will be raising briefly and that others in our caucus will be addressing in more detail, most particularly the critic for Health in our caucus.

The present act allows personal care homes to hold funds in trust for residents and allows the government to make regulations for them. That is a legitimate thing for the government to do. Personal care homes do have and should have some connection with funds in trust for some of their residents if it is deemed necessary. However, the new act seeks to outline some of the factors by which personal care homes can deal with these funds.

Now, I guess generally one could ask, well, why would you have any problem with legislation that clarifies something. I would suggest that often we would not have trouble with that kind of situation, but we do not believe that the sections of this act that deal with that clarification in fact clarify in the right way. We have some major concerns with that.

Personal care homes under this act would be allowed to deposit funds from residents in trust in interest-bearing accounts and the interest from those accounts could be used for the quote, benefit of residents generally.

Now, we do not know why this is in here, and it is quite a general kind of statement, that the interest could be used for the benefit of residents generally. I suppose an argument could be made that the specifics of that would be dealt with in regulation.

However, we have had concerns expressed on this side of the House with the fact that there are pieces of legislation that this government has brought in where literally every single element of the legislation is dealt with by regulation instead of being dealt with in the legislation that we have the authority to debate in the House.

That is the problem you get into when you leave the area so wide open that is dealt with by regulation when you do not have an opportunity to debate in the public domain the implications of those regulations. Granted, Madam Speaker, it is a fine line, because the whole reason for having regulations is so that you do not have to have every detail outlined in the piece of legislation.

That is the reason for regulations. We do not disagree with the concept of the need for regulation so the legislation itself is more policy document, and the details that provide the government with the guidelines as to how to implement that policy are dealt with in regulation.

However, we feel that you need to have enough information on the policy in the bill itself to ensure that the public at large and those of us who represent the public at large in this House have a degree of comfort or, if not comfort, at least understanding about what those regulations will do. It is kind of a convoluted way of saying that we think this piece of legislation is not nearly as clear enough as it should be.

We wonder why the government puts in the legislation. Why is it that personal care homes need to have this ability? The only thing that we can come up with is that the government is, through this portion of Bill 23, giving private, proprietary personal care homes the ability to finance some of their ongoing operations through the interest accrued in these interest bearing accounts.

If that is the implication and the will of the government as it is spoken through Bill 23, we have some major concerns with that. This is money that belongs not to the proprietary personal care home, this is money being held in trust by them, and this money belongs to the residents of the personal care home. I personally would have a question as to why the proprietary private personal care home should have control over the interest in that account instead of that interest being held for the use of the individual to whom the money belongs in the first place?

If the legislation is not clear in saying that this interest would be used for the benefit of residents generally, then we have some major concern. What

does it mean, "benefits"? Clearly, we know who the residents are, but is this money—if I am a resident in a personal care home and I have \$100,000, the interest on that is \$10,000 per annum. Under this element of Bill 23, is the interest, that \$10,000 in interest, to be used for my benefit as a resident whose money it is that is generating this interest?

Is it to be used for the residents as a whole? Who determines what constitutes a benefit? Who determines what constitutes a resident? Is it resident individually or residents severally?

What does it mean "generally"? "Generally" could mean anything from the interest on those accounts will be used to improve the physical surroundings of the personal care home. It could be used to pay for more staff. It also could be used for things that the residents themselves might not see as essential. It could be used for things that the owners feel will be to the benefit of residents generally.

Madam Speaker, these are all questions that are raised by these words in this piece of legislation. When the minister says, as my understanding is the minister has said, do not worry, trust us, the regulations will make everything clear, that is when the red flag is raised on this side of the House very clearly—the red flag of caution, Madam Speaker, not the red rose of socialism as the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) has—

An Honourable Member: It is somewhat wilted in Ontario these days.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Speaker, in concluding my remarks, I would just like to say that we on this side of the House have some major concerns with certain provisions in Bill 23, which others of our caucus colleagues will deal with in due course. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Order, please. Can I just get clarification from the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett)? If she wished to conclude her remarks at a later date, the honourable member would have 30 minutes remaining.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Madam Speaker. No, I have concluded my remarks.

* (1600)

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Wellington for that clarification.

The hour being 4 p.m. and, as previously agreed, time for private members' hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 28—Integrating Services in Our Schools

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), that

WHEREAS changes in society have resulted in responsibilities being added to our educational system; and

WHEREAS this has resulted in schools now delivering services which were once the responsibility of other government departments; and

WHEREAS it is increasingly hard for Manitoba schools to find the time and money to meet the many demands being placed on them; and

WHEREAS teachers are being asked to perform health care, justice and social service functions without being offered comprehensive training in these areas; and

WHEREAS asking teachers to perform these functions has resulted in less time available during the working day for teaching traditional subjects; and

WHEREAS better use can be made of school facilities as a community place where services to children and others in the community can be offered; and

WHEREAS duplication and jurisdictional tussles may occur where teachers, social workers, nurses and other government workers have responsibilities for the same child; and

WHEREAS co-ordinating and integrating of health, justice, social services and recreational services to children provided by government departments and agencies will best meet the needs of Manitoba students and will contain costs.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Education to consider integrating into our schools, initially on a pilot project basis, health, justice, recreational and social services provided to children by government department agencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge every government department involved in delivering services to children to consider working with the Minister of Education to co-ordinate and reallocate financial and human resources within those departments to our schools.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I am provided the opportunity to speak to this resolution here this afternoon. It is, in fact, an area or an issue, education being, of course, that which has received a great deal of debate over the years, in particular over the last 18 months, 24 months with this particular government.

To a certain degree, there is a certain amount of disappointment in the sense that this is a government that has been in office now for in excess of seven years, and we really have not seen significant movements forward to try to address some of the issues of the teachers, parents, support staff, administrators and all those other individuals who are concerned about the direction of education in the province of Manitoba.

What in fact is happening at our schools is not being given the attention that it should be given by the current government.

You know, a number of years ago one might have argued that in our schools we see a great deal of teaching being taught to our children and extracurricular activity provided after class hours and, in essence, that made up the day. Some people might have argued that, Madam Speaker, a number of years back. Today it has changed and it has changed quite considerably, even the perception of the public as a whole.

We recognize that more and more we are relying on our educational institutions in order to provide services to our young people. There is in essence nothing wrong with that as long as we provide the resources, whether they be financial, staff, support services that are necessary in order to ensure that we are not taking away from the quality of education that is ultimately being taught to our children. After all, we have to agree in principle that the first priority of our schools and our public education is in fact to teach children and young adults. This is in fact and should be the first priority. That has to prevail. There is no doubt about that.

The government has at least attempted to try to ensure that there is a curriculum that is reflective of the desires, if you like, of the public as a whole in terms of what they feel should be taught in our schools.

In fact, the government came out with the blueprint or an action plan, whatever it is that you might want to call it. We were disappointed in a number of different aspects with respect to that particular blueprint. We were glad to see that the provincial election applied additional pressure on the government and they were able to reverse some of their decisions that were initially made, and we were pleased to see that, Madam Speaker. There is no doubt that there is going to be an ongoing need for change within our schools and in the curricula, but it is one of the areas that has not really had the sort of discussion or debate inside the Chamber that we believe has been lacking and needs to be debated much more and, more importantly, that government needs to take more action.

Madam Speaker, we have suggested in this resolution in the area that I am about to talk about that the

government concede that it is necessary, and, in fact, it would entertain having a pilot project that would see the total integration, if you like, of services in a particular school. If they do it on a pilot project basis, of course they will then be able to have more control over this particular project to ensure that it gets off the ground and that it will ultimately then be implemented province-wide because I do believe, and the Liberal Party believes, that the integration of services is absolutely essential given the make-up of our schools today.

Madam Speaker, if we take a look at our schools—and, you know, I have indicated to many constituents of mine and I know the Liberal Party has taken a fairly strong stand in the past and will continue in the future, and that is that those community schools can serve a purpose and you cannot underestimate the potential. I often make reference, as do no doubt many others, of the community school being the heartbeat of a community and in fact that we do underutilize our schools. There are a number of things that can be done to maximize the benefits of the structure itself.

An Honourable Member: What is the number of the resolution?

Mr. Lamoureux: Resolution 28.

Madam Speaker, dealing with the integration of services, I had an interview or a discussion with one local principal. The principal indicated to me that with this one particular child, they have 10 different people, whether they are a social worker, health care professional, a resource teacher, the teacher, the principal—ten different individuals, who are trying to take a look at one child, from different agencies.

In many cases, if we really want to get to the crux of the issue, we are to assume that you will have children that come not only from dysfunctional or nonfunctional families, you will have children that will come from the elite of society that have problems that involve different agencies, if you like, of government. Ultimately, it would be much more cost efficient—I know the government likes the two words of cost efficiency—if you had a more co-ordinated approach in dealing with the development of a child.

* (1610)

Madam Speaker, I believe that you can virtually go into many schools throughout the province, and administrators within those schools can point out students where they know that there are going to be potential problems as the years go on. So if a principal or an administrator or a teacher can recognize something of this nature, if we have the support services put into place, in particular within the schools, we will be able to prevent a lot of long-term costs that we are going to have to incur in time as a direct result.

You know, Madam Speaker, I do not think that any of the things I have said is new information. I would assume that not only this Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) but other ministers have heard the same thing, and I am a bit concerned in terms of why government has not acted on this.

In essence, what we are talking about is, particularly, the roles of the Department of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Family Services, and to bring in some component of recreational services. These are the types of groups or agencies that we believe should be sitting at a table trying to come up with ideas on how a child can best be served.

The idea of having a pilot project, I think, is a positive one in the sense that we are not saying to the government, look, we expect you to implement this into the hundreds of schools throughout the province overnight. In fact, this is an idea in which I believe that you will find vast support amongst the many different experts that are out there, and not only the experts, but also the average person that has a child going to school or even if they do not have children going to school.

The idea is in fact fairly simple, difficult no doubt to put into place, but the concept is not that difficult to understand. That is the reason why, with the pilot project, the government can really make this thing work.

We hope to see that that is what will happen, that the government will take the initiative sometime in the not too distant future and recognize this. There are certain things no doubt that they can do now, such as

establishing the communication links that are necessary from within the different departments, working together to a certain degree. That is already in place when one sits around a cabinet table, that there is a certain amount of consultation that occurs. There might be some ad hoc discussions between different departments dealing with this particular issue.

It would be nice to see a more formal process that would assist in expediting the issue of integration of services in our schools because ultimately, Madam Speaker, children and young adults in the province of Manitoba would benefit tremendously by this concept, and if they benefit by this concept, society as a whole, in particular in the province of Manitoba, will reap the rewards because ultimately what we are talking about is providing a better atmosphere for our children and young adults in our school settings.

When we do that, we are building self-confidence. We are building upon the education that is currently there, and by taking a multifaceted approach in dealing with our children's education, hopefully, and I believe, what will happen is that we will address the issue of dropouts. The number of dropouts that we have in the province of Manitoba is in fact unacceptable. This is one of the ways in which we can actually deal with the issue.

Earlier today we talked about Bill 6, and we have heard many different proposals from the government in terms of what it believes about education and the way in which it wants to deal with education, but they have never really addressed the issue of dropouts. In fact, the fundamental flaw, I would argue, of the whole education reform package that this government has is that it does not address the needs of all children in our public school system, in particular, the gifted and the special needs or those with learning disabilities. That is somewhat tragic.

Here we tried to provide a resolution that will provide hope for many, and it is a resolution, Madam Speaker, that I trust that the government will speak to. [interjection] The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) asks if I am speaking with conviction. Well, I like to believe, much like when the Minister of Agriculture stands up when he speaks, I trust that he is speaking

with conviction and he believes in what it is that he is saying. I, too, believe, and he no doubt doubts.

Madam Speaker, I only have two minutes left, but to try to assure individuals that I do not have to consume the 15 minutes, I will take this opportunity to say thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to present this resolution to the Chamber.

I look forward to seeing a continual debate and ultimately it would be wonderful to see a vote on this particular resolution because, after all, it is a responsible resolution, and picking up from a speech that was very well delivered from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), at times, it does not hurt for us to do something beneficial in private members' hour. I would suggest that he read this resolution and recommend to his colleagues that we allow it to a vote.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise to address this particular resolution of the honourable member for Inkster.

Let me say from the outset, I certainly appreciate the thrust of the particular resolution that the member has brought to the floor of the House. I gather from his remarks and from the resolution itself, what he is attempting to do is to propose that government better co-ordinate the delivery of services to children and families and to use the school system ultimately as the vehicle for that delivery. That in itself is a very valid proposal. It is one that many have argued for over the years. It is one in which in some ways, I would suggest, many have argued we have done or successive governments have done over the years already to a significant degree.

Madam Speaker, the other point that he makes which I would say is certainly a very valid one is the need for government agencies and departments and service providers, both government and nongovernment, to be able to better co-ordinate or co-ordinate to the greatest degree possible the delivery of services to their constituent groups.

I would suggest in fact that he has hit upon in this resolution in making that point one of the great tragedies of the last number of years, certainly in the years in which the New Democrats were in power in this province, but a great tragedy of our society that over the last 20 or so years we have come to so fragment the delivery of services or to meet the needs of individuals.

The result has been that we have hosts of agencies dealing with individuals each with their own piece of that individual and at the end of the day maybe the overall result being far from satisfactory, in fact maybe not doing anything at all. The member for Inkster has hit upon I think that major issue facing governments everywhere, that is, how do you deal with the whole person on a one-to-one basis and all their needs that government has some responsibility for or has taken some interest in as opposed to this fragmented approach?

* (1620)

In fact, Madam Speaker, I remember in some of the discussions that we have had over the years as government, and we look at Child and Family Services agencies, and I am going from recollection, but I believe at one time there were more files held by various caregiving agencies in total than there were children in the city of Winnipeg simply because you had so many providers of care, each with their own piece. If we go back some years ago, again my recollection may not serve me well, but I seem to recall a particular family in southeast Winnipeg where there was a murder-suicide or a number of deaths, and there had been nine, 10 or 12 agencies dealing with that family. Obviously, they had all failed collectively to help that family to avert a tragedy.

One looks back a little farther, maybe 25-30 years ago, when we had far less caregiving agencies in total, far less people providing care, but a much more direct approach where Child and Family Services or social workers had a family or individual need, had one person to which they were assigned that they dealt with for the complete basket of services. Some would argue, some have argued to us, that is a far more effective and personable way to deal than the great

periphery of service providers that we now have. So the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), in fairness to him, has hit upon, through this resolution, a great issue that we as a government and the social service ministers have to address and want to address and are struggling to address.

Madam Speaker, the other side of the coin to this member's resolution, which I think is one that makes it a little bit difficult for members on this side of the House to support, is that the member for Inkster has chosen as the vehicle, or recommends to this House that the vehicle for the delivery of this programming be the school system.

Although the member, I think, has hit upon a fundamental problem and puts forward—and I must admire his coming forward with this resolution, because he puts forward a proposal onto the floor of this House for us to debate that issue.

I want him to know that I fully recognize this, members of this House recognize it, but the question with the vehicle of the school system is that there are many who would argue that today we have used the school system far too much already as a means of delivering health and social services to young people. In fact, in the recent election campaign in dealing with school boards in my constituency and talking to teachers in my constituency, they continually have made the point to me that we are asking our school system to do a huge amount of noneducational things with our young people, services to our young people, and that is unfair to the system, that is unfair to educators and that the school system really is not the vehicle to do that.

So the dilemma that we have with this resolution, quite frankly, is that it attempts to suggest and put on the floor for debate the need to re-evaluate the way services are delivered, to focus on the needs of a child with, for lack of a better term, one-stop shopping, but it recommends a vehicle that we, I do not think at this particular time, are prepared to accept as the best vehicle or the appropriate vehicle with which to do that.

So I want to say very clearly to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), I appreciate the opportunity

to contribute. Other members of this House may have commentary that they wish to put on the record in dealing with this because it is an issue that our ministers who are in the social services, the members of Human Services Committee of cabinet which I have served on for a number of years have been struggling to deal with.

What I can tell the member for Inkster in raising this point, one of the initiatives that this government took and it came out of the discussions much similar to this and that he has brought to the floor of the House at the Human Services Committee of cabinet, and that was the need for the creation of some sort of body, and again this was the struggle. You create more bureaucracy in essence to deal with too much bureaucracy, but we created our Children and Youth Secretariat, and the idea there was to do in some ways what the member was suggesting, to be able to bring together the various departments who have those pieces of the service delivery.

I know the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) would love to get to a bingo game in British Columbia, but the member for St. James talks about committees arguing, and, yes, that does occur and it occurs, Madam Speaker, obviously because there are a lot of people protecting or coming from turf or points of view. It comes back to that fundamental issue, the fundamental issue that the member for Inkster has raised, that the need to cut back, ultimately, on the bureaucracy and pigeon-holing and cadre of whether you want to call them experts or specific deliverers of service and get much more focused on that one-stop shopping in essence to the individual involved.

Now, I find it a little ironical that the New Democratic Party would be suggesting that simply because a good deal of the growth and the fragmentation in our social service delivery occurred while their party was on this side of the House. It occurred to a large degree because they came into power in the 1970s and again in the 1980s with the belief that government could meet all these variety of needs of individuals, that somehow a bureaucracy, that somehow social service providers were the best method of dealing with basic human problems. Ultimately, their efforts created much of the fragmentation and

huge bureaucracy that we have today. So I find it somewhat ironical that they would now be calling for what we have to deal with.

My colleague the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), who is an experienced member of this House, who has served the people of Lakeside constituency and the people of Manitoba for many years now and has studied human nature from the unique vantage point of this Chamber, if one were to seek his wisdom, and I hope he will participate in this debate as we go forward, he, I am sure, would tell this House about that growth in fragmentation and how we lost the perspective of providing that kind of basic, what could often be rather simple need and making it far more complex than it has to be.

So comments he makes in support of the principle reaffirms to me that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is certainly trying to come to grips and getting for discussion a very, very serious issue. Again, what we would have difficulty accepting, particularly at this point, and I know in discussions that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) has had with myself and others, is to make the school system in itself the only vehicle.

In fact, if you look at over the number of years, and I defer to the wisdom and experience of the members like the member for Lakeside, every time there was a need we went to the school system and we layered on the requirements to deal with social issues and health issues and used the school system, and dental issues, special needs.

I can tell members opposite, in my own constituency, a particular special needs case, a medical case, the frustration of that parent having to deal with the school division to provide service and care or treatment to a young individual with a severe physical handicap, because the school system was the delivery, when really the treatment that was needed is a health issue. It should have been dealt with as a health matter.

I brought that to the attention of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). He recognized that, and we are struggling to see how we deal with it because it is not just one individual, but it is many who are in that

position. [interjection] The member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) asks if the problem is resolved. There has been some temporary resolution to it, but it raises a lot of larger questions.

I guess the concern that we have with the member's resolution is that by making the school system the vehicle for the delivery of this fragmented and multitude of services that we ultimately place on it a greater responsibility, a greater role than it is suitable to carry out. I think the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) would appreciate that that is a valid concern that is being raised and that the school system itself probably is not in a position to be able to deal with that.

As Minister of Labour, I can tell the House as well that on a number of occasions we had representatives of employees in the school systems come in who were concerned about Workplace Safety and Health issues because they were dealing with students who required medical attention that was far beyond their ability. In fact, it sometimes put them at risk. So I would suggest to the House that that is the difficulty that this side has with the resolution as it now stands in trying to achieve that focus.

* (1630)

Nonetheless, the issue that the member brings to this House, I want to say very clearly, he has touched upon, is a very supportable issue, and it is one that he has touched upon that is deserving of a thorough debate and a lot of exchange of ideas. At this point in time, I cannot say, nor any of my colleagues, that there is some model out there that everyone, that, you know, we are prepared to say is the be-all and end-all and absolute solution to this. We do not know yet. We are trying to work this out, but we do know, as does the member for Inkster in bringing this forward, that we must get away from the fragmentation and periphery of services developing everywhere where we divide a child and their needs into small, little compartments and bureaucratize what should be, at the end of the day, a very simple and individual fulfilment of those needs.

So I put that on the record on behalf of this side, Madam Speaker. I look forward to more discussion,

because the member has put forward onto this floor a very fundamental issue whose urgency will grow as the monetary fiscal issues of government have to be dealt with, particularly with the further withdrawal of federal transfer payments. So I appreciate this debate, and I appreciate the proposals of the member for Inkster.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of rising to deal with this particular issue insofar as it has been an issue that we have brought, the New Democratic Party has brought, to this Chamber time and time again since I was elected to this Chamber in 1990 and, I know, previously.

I am glad to see that members of the Liberal Party have now determined that they too can agree to this kind of a solution, and I welcome their initiative of bringing forward a resolution in this area that allows us an opportunity to debate this issue. I welcome them aboard. I welcome the fact that the Liberal Party, speaking through the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), have determined that in fact they can support initiatives of this kind and welcome the bringing forward of a resolution of this kind.

Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Energy and Mines has indicated, this is a complex issue, but I want to put on the record a few facts concerning this issue that I think are quite crucial to the debate. One of the issues related to this and I want to address—and I know that it is an attempt by the Liberal Party to try to resolve the issue—that they suggest the fact that there ought to be a pilot project basis. I think a pilot project basis is perhaps one solution, but I think it is too narrow and it is too rife with the possibility of doing a pilot and nothing happening for four years and going into another election and not having the opportunity of actually implementing some change in this regard.

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says, what do I suggest? I would just remind the member for Inkster about past resolutions we have brought forward in this regard, but, more important, I remind the member for Inkster that as long ago as 1991, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, The Manitoba Teachers' Society and other organizations brought forward a paper recommending just such a

policy as this. They brought it forward. I can provide the member for Inkster with a copy of that report if he would like.

They brought forward a recommendation that children's services and justice and education, social services and the like be integrated and looked at by the government. They asked the minister of the day then, the member for Roblin-Russell, to respond by December of 1991, I believe, to that initiative. There was no response. There was no initiative. I vividly recall questioning each subsequent Education minister and each minister as they came up, asking for progress on it. Nothing happened in this regard until initiative was taken by the government with respect to the institution of the child secretariat, the children's secretariat.

I just want to point out for members, and I am surprised that the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) was not aware of some of the recommendations in the Postl report, that it was put together in this regard. Perhaps I should read into the record some of those recommendations, page 116, recommendation, quote: That schools be recognized as a primary delivery site for community-based child health. Funding for these programs should come from relevant departments utilizing a collaborative, interdepartmental approach and redirecting resources. Vertical structures must be re-orientated to allow for horizontal programming.

Madam Speaker, I am very concerned at the comments by the member for Lac du Bonnet who sits in cabinet, who talks about the cabinet co-ordination committee, that he is not aware of this primary recommendation of the government's Postl report saying, let us forget the past. Let us forget the talk. Let us forget—in the words of the member for Lac du Bonnet, and I could go on much longer than I need to in terms of debating his analysis of how we have got to where we are. I will leave that aside because I would like to be positive in this regard.

The fact is that he has recommendations from government committees recommending specific action in this regard, not in his own words, we are going to have to study this and redevelop this and look at this.

Madam Speaker, the time has come, it is far too late in the game to keep pigeonholing government, to keep itemizing government—[interjection] The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says, we should have done it in 1980. I thank him for his suggestion. Perhaps the member could assist us in this regard by talking to his federal brethren who have demonstratively cut off resources to children and families and have helped put us in the situation where we are, in terms of not having resources. I could talk to him about dozens of pilot projects that were formerly funded by the federal government but that they have cut off funding to, that dealt just with issues of this kind as they relate to aboriginal children.

But I digress, Madam Speaker, and to return to the subject, we are past the phase where we can have another department studying or we could have a pilot project. The issues are so complex, the integration is so necessary and so required and has been so studied that I do not think another study or having another cabinet committee resolve the issue can actually do justice to it.

If we want to move forward in this area, the government has its own report, the Postl report, recommending a number of specific initiatives in this regard, and I say to the government and I said to the government from the very beginning, let us get on with it, let us move on it, you will have our support with respect to these initiatives. In fact we have made a number of recommendations, for example, concerning protocols and concerning protocols that were put in place by the government of B.C. five, six, seven years ago, Madam Speaker, that look at the integration. I will pass them on to the member for Inkster in case he wants to acquaint himself as well, since he has comments in this regard, but these protocols deal with the integration of government services.

It may not be the best method of doing it, but at least it is a method. The government has in this province adopted some forms of protocol, but there is a system of protocol as an interdepartmental co-operation and communication that could break down some of the barriers and actually get on with the job finally of delivering services to children and delivering services in a more meaningful fashion.

Fundamental to this, of course, is the question of financial resources and the fact that funds have to be earmarked and allocated to that. The member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) made mention of the fact that the education system has been asked to do too much, and I think that is in some ways a correct observation, although I do not agree where he is coming from, Madam Speaker, but it is a correct observation. Part of the problem is we have put it onto the classroom and we have not put the commensurate resources to enable the classrooms and the schools to deliver those kinds of services.

Madam Speaker, I just want to return to the issue of the whole school system, because I detected a reluctance on the part of the member for Lac du Bonnet to deal with school-based approaches, and I ask the members opposite, if not the schools, where else are the services to be delivered? You have cut parent-child resource centres; you have cut funding to Indian-Metis friendship centres; you have cut money for preventative health programs; you have cut money in social services areas that provide a speech and language pathology and the like. Where are these services to be delivered? Where are the children going to get these services if not in the school system that touches virtually and literally every single child in the province of Manitoba? It may not be the best solution from an administrative standpoint, but it is the only solution that we have.

That is recognized in your own report, a report undertaken by Brian Postl. That, for example, schools be recognized as the primary delivery site for community-based child health programs is one example. I could go on, and I urge members opposite to reread the recommendations of that report in order to familiarize themselves with some of the recommendations that actually could be implemented.

* (1640)

Madam Speaker, last year we in the New Democratic Party, in an attempt to try to evoke some debate and try to be positive and try to get the government to do something, put together a 10-point child plan. We announced it and we publicized it and we put details, and in our 10-point child plan we indicated within the context of that child plan that we would implement an

action plan for interdepartmental co-ordination as called for in the 1991 report that I previously mentioned in the earlier part of my remarks.

We also called that schools be recognized as an integral component of community-based child health programs. We also said that nurses have to be put back in the schools. Now, members opposite ought to understand the fact that in the old days—and I know the members love the old days in a lot of respects—nurses used to do a lot of primary care in the school system, and it worked well. We went away from that. There is nothing wrong with taking that idea and going back to it, Madam Speaker, and putting them back in the schools, not just to deliver the primary care of vaccinations and some of those other cares but to provide for assistance in terms of other aspects of health as it relates to children. There is nothing wrong with that old idea coming back and being reutilized. That is why we put it in our 10-point child plan.

I am glad and, again, I am very appreciative of the fact that the Liberal Party has finally come around and appreciate the significance of this measure, Madam Speaker. I hope to see from them support for a plan of that kind. As limited as this resolution might be, I support the initiatives in it, because it is a first step, it is a move, it is something. Again, the time is very, very short. It is very, very difficult to turn the ship of state around, and as we move into the government's next four years, unless some initiatives are commenced quite early, unless some initiatives are commenced now, we will move on and move on and move on like we did for the past seven years, see no action, hear from more studies and will effect no change.

It simply is not fair. It is not fair to the child who cannot get speech and language treatment in their community. It is not fair to special needs children. It is not fair to the children that are having behavioural problems. If some intervention could be provided early on, the problem could be turned around, and we would not end up with a much larger problem at the end of the day. It is not fair to the aboriginal children of this province whose resources provided to them are wholly inadequate. It is not fair to the inner city kids, Madam Speaker, who require in some cases a nutrition program, before and after school programs, and other

services of that kind. It is not fair to those children that the government not take specific action and specific measures.

They have the vehicle, as pointed out by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik). They have the vehicle of the Child Secretariat at their disposal to make some initiatives, and we have been—I have had problems with some of these announcements, and I have had problems with the way they have moved. In principle, of course, we support those initiatives and that direction. I have had serious problems in the application of the procedures. I have had serious problems with the lack of action on the part of the government dealing with specific measures as they relate to this area, Madam Speaker, but surely and clearly the time is past to continue studying the matter. Surely, given limited government resources, firstly, as a result of cutbacks and retrenchments by this provincial government and then serious cutbacks and almost a complete change in the way the federation is governed by the federal government in Ottawa, in light of those initiatives we virtually have no choice but to move in this area.

So I urge on government members, I urge on the Liberal Party, that we all work together in this regard. There are some positive steps we could take. We could probably do it in this Chamber almost unanimously, and if the members do not agree in principle with a lot of the initiatives and a lot of the measures, perhaps we can proceed and agree to proceed on some areas, some small parts, that we can all agree on. For example, allocating funds from the Department of Health in certain instances to the education system to deal with health needs and the problem that was pointed out by the member for Lac du Bonnet. Or putting community-based nurses back in the schools to deal with a variety of problems as they exist in the school system. Or integrating the justice system into the school system in order to provide—deal with children and services. Or specific measures of dealing with, for example, speech and language programs, be it at the daycare level.

There are some very good initiatives in that regard, I might add, Madam Speaker, even at the daycare level that we could put in place to deal with children's problems before children even attend school, but if it

has to be at school, at school so that we can deal with the problems in the first instance and eliminate them early rather than having the problems become more difficult and more difficult to solve as we go along. Indeed, we have facilities, we have structures, we have schools that ought to be open and ought to be accessible to the community on a wider basis. Consider that option.

In my own community of Kildonan we have now—we ran at one of the schools with the assistance of the school board, with the assistance of the city, with the assistance in some cases of the provincial government—we have operated a youth drop-in centre at one of the schools, that was successful, over the summer, and we are now going to be operating year round, Madam Speaker. We are going to use that structure. We are going to use that facility to allow children, to allow kids to have a safe environment to play in and to allow them with an opportunity to meet and to have a safe place to go. That is using of a facility and a capital structure that has already existed, and that is an integration of services.

I see that my time is up, Madam Speaker, and I encourage all members to consider that. At least, let us try to do something in this regard, but not throw up our hands and just eliminate it all. Thank you.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share some remarks on this matter, this resolution, that has been brought forward by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I commend him for this. This is, as we all know, private members' hour. I think that every one of us has that opportunity to express our views and to bring these issues forward unlike the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who seems to find some difficulty with that and the free expression of the members here. I think we have to look at all these aspects.

But, in view of the resolution, there are some things that I think we have to bear in mind. The thing that comes to mind, and certainly I listened to the member for Kildonan attentively, it seems that over the last 20 years or so under a socialistic administration the NDP seem to think that we can solve all the issues by a

simple cheque from Treasury Board. Those are the things that I think, that is living in the past.

I think that we have to take a more holistic approach to a lot of these things in terms of what we are doing. I think it is a matter of not only dealing with these things as the member for Kildonan has brought forward—he sees the issue as one that he is offering some suggestions in the way he sees things to happen—but I would like to offer some remarks that would be possibly taking a different approach to this. I think that government is already doing this, and I will demonstrate that in my remarks that I do make.

But I think that the basic point that I wish to make is that it is a matter again, and I say responsibility, the responsibility not only of individuals but the responsibility of parents and the responsibilities of governments and the responsibilities of families and the responsibilities of churches. I mean, churches, we cannot limit them. They have a responsibility in terms of dealing with the challenges that are out there in society today. The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) suggests that maybe these things should be integrated through the Department of Education.

As I said, I want to demonstrate that many of these are already taking place. Some of the things that I do have exception with, and I read from the member's "RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Education to consider integrating into our schools, initially on a pilot project, health, justice and recreation and social services provided to children by government department agencies."

I respect what the honourable member is saying, but I think there are other responsibilities that should be out there and taken by other people. On the same note, I say that, because of our 20 years of socialistic mentality, these things have been integrated already into the system.

* (1650)

Education, I think the education in many cases is the root of all these things because of the fact that if we provide people with education and understanding, then

they will be able to do things better and be able to do things for themselves. So I think all these things have been accomplished, or some of them have, and we are well on our way in doing that.

The truth of the matter is the government has been proactive in terms of recognizing the needs and the co-operation between various government departments and agencies, as I have indicated, and in all the departments we have promoted and developed co-operative ventures.

During my time allotment I am going to touch on some of these co-operative partnerships undertaken by the departments, and the departments specifically reference what the member is talking about. He talks about the Department of Education and Training and the Family Services, Health, Justice, Culture and Heritage, and those things I will direct my comments in this resolution to the co-operative initiatives undertaken by the Department of Education and Training.

The government recognizes the fact that effective use of our financial resources and human resources call for greater co-ordination among the departments, with other agencies, and this is occurring in a wide range of area through various mechanisms, Madam Speaker.

The youth secretariat, as the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) referenced, this is something that is an interdepartmental protocol agreement. This is just an example of how government departments are already working together in order to co-ordinate existing government services, but there are many other existing examples especially in the Department of Education.

I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to identify just a few of the co-operative initiatives in the Department of Education. They encompass many areas such as distance education—we have all heard about that—and the technology and the upcoming council of the post-secondary education, the joint interprovincial curriculum initiatives, business advisory committee and advisory councils for school leadership.

Now, when we talk about distance education, our initiatives in the field of the distance education and

technology demonstrate one way in which we are already facilitating co-ordination among departments with other agencies; and, as was explained to us yesterday in a presentation, I mean, it is just like our highway systems with distance education. You do not go and build a highway for Reimer Express or Arnold Bros. coming into the city or for some other, Bison Transport. You do not build three highways to serve those people. Those are things that I think that we appreciate and we understand.

We have created a special operating agency called MERLIN in order to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the operation of the technology networks of education. Technology is rapidly becoming a basic feature of most Manitoba classrooms. A co-ordinated approach to technology networks in educational settings will result in increased learning opportunities for both students and teachers. Library linkages will also be initiated to facilitate linkages among libraries in schools and universities, colleges, public libraries in outlying areas, in smaller communities where I think it is necessary to have those resources available to the students, the young people and the families in these rural communities.

This initiative is especially exciting because I think it is an initiative that if we do not get on with it, then we are going to be way behind the rest of the world in terms of how we treat and teach our young people—and society gets involved. Certainly, the education aspect—yes, we do that through the services of the Department of Education. The educational institutions like school divisions, churches, the private sector, the government, departments such as Education and Training, Government Services, Culture, Heritage and Citizenship and Rural Development, they all play a part in that aspect. So I think when you talk about the integrated services those are already happening.

When we talk about upcoming council and the post-secondary education, another mechanism we are using to facilitate the co-ordination among departments is the demonstration in the upcoming council of post-secondary education. As many of you are aware, the report on the university education review, the Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba: Doing Things Differently, recommended a new approach to

governance for the post-secondary education system, a council that has recommended as a way of strengthening the current system. Our ultimate goal is to transfer the post-secondary system into one which is not only strong but dynamic and creating excellence within that because that is really what we want to achieve in doing that because I think if we are going to do something we want to do it well. This will ensure that the long-term social, cultural and the economic growth of the province will demonstrate our commitment to the career aspirations of all our students.

We envision a strengthened post-secondary education system, Madam Speaker, which will be fully integrated and will be well articulated. Further, it will be one which will link social, cultural and economic developments of the communities through teaching, training, research and services that go along with that.

Finally, we believe that the strengthened post-secondary system should be broadly accessible to all those who wish to obtain post-secondary education. It will be fully transparent and accountable to the public, and it should be committed to the broad application of communication technology to the learning process.

Now, our proposed council of secondary education will achieve all of these goals. The council of post-secondary education really has its work cut out for it, but I am convinced that the council will be an important and an effective vehicle for the co-ordination among Manitoba's post-secondary institutions. Co-ordination among these partners is essential, and there are many benefits. As I have referenced, institutions will be able to establish and more effectively plan their program priorities both on the short- and long-term basis.

I believe the council is an important first step and the council will assist Manitoba universities and colleges to refocus on re-engineering or to re-engineer their contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of this province. This is especially important in today's fiscal environment, Madam Speaker, because over the next two years the federal government will be contributing fewer financial dollars to the post-secondary sector.

So, when I come back to talking about taking the responsibility, and in all due respect to the member for Inkster, talking about government, in terms of his reference to this resolution, although I do not think we totally disagree with where he is coming from, I do feel that there is a responsibility on all of us—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek will have one minute remaining.

As previously agreed, the hour being 5 p.m., and consideration of the second private member's resolution.

* (1700)

Res. 30—Two-Year Budgets

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), that

WHEREAS the provincial government currently tables a budget every year; and

WHEREAS the absence of long-term stable funding is not conducive to long-term planning; and

WHEREAS yearly budgets afford little opportunity for assessment of efficiency and effectiveness of programs.

THEREFORE be it resolved that the provincial government consider moving to a two-year budget cycle to ensure more stable funding of programs and encourage a focus on long-term planning.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Actually, it is a pleasure to be able to stand and speak on two resolutions that we sponsored today—luck of the draw, I guess, to a certain degree.

Madam Speaker, it is a resolution in which I am hoping to get some sort of a response, in particular from the current Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson).

What I am most interested in from the government side on this debate are reasons as to why it is not feasible to have multiple-year or two-year budgets brought before the Legislature.

The reason why I say that is that I recall discussions with the former Minister of Finance in committees and, you know, if we had more resource dollars, I guess, to a certain degree I would have possibly been able to pull some of the quotes, because I know on more than one occasion, the former minister, Mr. Manness, and I had discussion on budgets, and I can recall his indicating that he would like to have multiple-year budgets brought forward. He believed that would be good policy or at least gave the impression that that would make sense and it would be good government policy, Madam Speaker.

As I did then, I still believe today that the objective of trying to achieve a two-year budget cycle from the government is in fact a very positive one. The benefits, I believe, far outweigh the negatives on this particular issue. No doubt, it would take a great deal of effort from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) to implement something of this nature.

But what government can do currently, if you open up a budget book—I do not know if I have one in the Chamber; fortunately, I do—if you open up one of the budget books, you will always find where it talks about the Estimates and changeover from the previous year. It would be nice to be able to go the extra year in saying this is what we can anticipate in the following fiscal year. I believe different departments, or not different, all of the different departments would be in a better position to be able to bring forward budgets, the budgets for approval from within the departments.

I have always found the budget debates and what happens regarding budgets to be very stimulating, very interesting, and because there is always a sense that you can speak and say what you really think about what the government is doing on a wide variety of different issues. Once we get down into the Estimates debates and the Supplementary Information, I find, depending on the critic and depending on the minister, you can actually have very productive discussions and dialogue that is created.

I have thoroughly enjoyed many hours of discussion in which you have very good rapport, whether it is from a Liberal critic, New Democratic critic, and, obviously, a minister, in which I believe something very positive is taking place in terms of—and when I say "positive," I am referring that the best interest of Manitobans are in fact being addressed. I ultimately believe—I should not say "I"—we, as in the party, believe that one of the ways in which you further that type of debate or that line of questioning and answering is to provide more information.

Madam Speaker, that is one of the reasons why I believe that it is, again, very beneficial. So when we talk about it, we are not only talking about from within the bureaucracy or the civil service, if you like, in terms of being better able to do their planning, we are also talking about better ways in which we can hold the civil service accountable through legislative Estimates, committees, budget debates, and so forth.

Another reason for something of this nature, Madam Speaker, of course, is that we pass on a considerable amount of money to the City of Winnipeg. We also do it to all municipalities in rural Manitoba, the City of Brandon. We also have many different school divisions that are out there and which we contribute to. All of these different levels of government have to set their own budgets and decide in terms of what their priorities are going to be. If the government was able to provide this sort of information, again, they are going to be in a better position to have more planning.

You know, we have seen in government budgets in recent years where it is virtually 100 percent speculation on school divisions' parts in particular on just what they can anticipate from the government in the following year. That ultimately, I would argue, is not fair nor is it appropriate for school divisions and individuals that have to plan the expenditure of what scarce resources they have in setting and trying to achieve the goals that they have put forward for their particular constituents, in particular for children or adults.

Those are reasons why ultimately, the three primary reasons that come to mind, as to why it is government should be supporting this. The negative side, Madam

Speaker, no doubt could be the optics, the political optics of government opening itself up for potentially more criticism, and I think that it is to a certain degree a valid concern. That should not be the reason why government fails to recognize the benefits and to move ahead.

I do believe very much so that the former Minister of Finance was of the opinion that, yes, we do need to move in this direction, but I was a bit lost as to why it is that he was unable to get it through the Conservative caucus. No doubt, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), who does not want me lost on this particular issue, was probably one of those individuals because I know how political this particular individual can be. He is probably one of those individuals who put up a roadblock for the then-Minister of Finance.

I am an optimistic type of person. I look at the current Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), and, hopefully, he is going to be able to override or jump over any potential roadblocks that might be put into place and bring forward multiple years, in particular, as this particular resolution is suggesting, two-year budgets to the Chamber. I definitely believe, Madam Speaker, that it would be of benefit to all Manitobans.

I want to briefly comment on some of my budget experiences and why it is, Madam Speaker, I feel that multiple-year budgeting would benefit. I can recall, for example, the first budget that was brought in, and I am sure most members in the Chamber will recall when government said we are going to establish a Fiscal Stabilization Fund, and they ended up borrowing money in order to establish this Fiscal Stabilization Fund, something of course in which we in the Liberal Party saw right through and voted against the creation of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund because of the manner in which this government was bringing it in.

* (1710)

Madam Speaker, again, I did not get to confirm this through looking back in Hansard, but I believe my remarks would likely have been—or the argument as to why I could not support the legislation was—because I believed that the government was going to be using this money in future budgets to try to make them look a bit

better than what reality actually was. What did I see but years to follow where we have seen exactly just that, where government was tapping into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund or it was used for a rainy day. [interjection] The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) says the rainy day came.

If in fact that is the case, it would have been more appropriate to have had the government to say in terms of this is in fact what their intentions are to do with the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in the following year, and in fact if it had been with the Minister of Finance's real desires to having more than a two-year budget process, especially something as important as issues such as the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, the deficit.

The deficit is really proving to be a very interesting debate. Madam Speaker, the deficit debate is proving to be very interesting. I look at it, and I voted for seeing this particular balanced budget legislation, if you like, going to the committee stage. I was somewhat surprised in terms of the degree in which the New Democratic caucus is automatically lining itself up to vote against it. In the hallway, or actually it was in the members' lounge, Mr. Olfert was out there, and the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) brought up the point that why it is that I voted against or I voted to see it go to committee, and what it made me think about was during the last provincial election. During the last provincial election—I am not 100 percent sure, but there was a town hall meeting, and I did not recall the NDP candidate saying, I do not support balanced budget legislation.

So what it did is it caused me to look back in some of the material that I collected, like, no doubt, other people collect, and I found that there was nothing in the material that I collected from the New Democratic Party that indicated that they did not support balanced budget legislation. When I look at it now and I reflect on it, I see the New Democratic Party, in fact, was quite silent on this particular issue going into it. Madam Speaker, silence can be golden and silence says a lot, and it is going to be interesting to see how this whole debate continues because we are entering into committee tomorrow night and to see exactly what it is that people have to say about that piece of legislation, because the deficit is an important part of any budget.

When we talk about multiyear budgeting, it puts a responsibility on government to be a bit more accurate. In particular, the former Minister of Finance—[interjection] a good man? Well, an honourable man in terms of the budgets and so forth. I do not believe I voted—actually, I know I did not vote for any of the budgets by that particular minister for a number of different reasons. But, Madam Speaker, it is important that we recognize that the government has attempted in the past to predict what next year's or the following year's deficits are going to be.

But, Madam Speaker, they have been way out. They have not been close, so when we talk again about multiyear budgeting or a two-year budget, I would want to encourage the current Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) that it is not only important that we recognize the need for this, that type of a budget, but it is also equally important that we put some legitimacy to those percentages. It is important that we see not only that the government is sincere in wanting to provide a better form of budgeting our financial affairs through two-year budgets, but it is also that those figures are within a reasonable variance of what is actually happening. There is an onus of responsibility in terms of having some accuracy.

So, again, I would ask the Minister of Finance—Madam Speaker, I see that my time is running out. I would ask the Minister of Finance to comment on that, the accuracy of figures, and also what he believes are the negatives of two-year budgets and putting the two-year budgets in our Supplementary Estimates and Main Estimates.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to say a few words.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to say a few words on this interesting resolution.

I start by making the comment that what the member for Inkster is proposing is something that currently does not exist anywhere in Canada, any provincial government, not at the federal government level, and not that that means he should not be proposing this, but I am wondering if his objective is more long-term

planning than a two-year budget cycle. I was listening fairly closely to what he was saying and I am still not clear of what his understanding or definition of a two-year budget cycle is. I want to tell him if he is talking about planning over a longer term, that is something that I agree with and I would hope most members of this House agree with.

In fact, a few years ago in our budget documents, like is happening in many provinces now, we not only tabled our current budget estimates but we also showed a three-year plan that projects out for the next three years. Granted it is not in the same detail as our detailed budget estimate, but it does show what our expectations are in terms of what our revenues will be in terms of the best information we have available. As a result of that, it shows what we feel are reasonable levels of expenditure on a global basis, on a government-wide basis, that we can afford and can incur, Madam Speaker.

I think the issue of long-term planning is something that we wholeheartedly endorse and agree with and continue to do more and more of in our government, and we are seeing more of that in provincial governments across Canada. Listening to the member and then reading his resolution very closely, the first point under the "WHEREAS" suggests that "WHEREAS the absence of long-term stable funding is not conducive to long-term planning;"—I guess I am wondering how that relates to a two-year budget cycle. If I were to agree with him that there is some volatility in revenues, particularly in transfers from the federal government—and that has been the case over many years.

We have had many discussions in Estimates, Public Accounts here in this Chamber on the volatility around federal transfers and, in fact, that is one of the reasons why we established the Fiscal Stabilization Fund many years ago. And that is one of the main reasons why the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is a very important element of our balanced budget legislation because we do acknowledge that there is volatility in revenue, particularly transfers from Ottawa, and therefore we need the ability through a reserve account or a savings account, whatever you want to call it, to deal with any of those fluctuations.

Having said that, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) referred to the other day when speaking to balanced budget legislation, if you track the last 20 years of our budgets our revenue has actually exceeded our budgeted revenue more often than it has fallen short. In fact, if you look over approximately 20 years, our revenue has exceeded our budgeted revenue by about \$500 million. The member, in his resolution, makes this point about long-term stable funding.

I know the federal Liberals in the last federal election in their red book made a suggestion and a commitment; they said that they felt very strongly that predictability of financial arrangements are vital. In fact, they said that they were prepared to provide the maximum degree of predictability and stability for each level of government. And we certainly applauded them for those statements, something we agree with, but I think their record has not lived up to that commitment. In fact, it has been quite the opposite. We need look no further than their 1995 federal budget where again, without any advance notice to provinces, there was a significant reduction in terms of transfer payments to provinces. In the case of Manitoba, next year our transfers will be down by \$147 million, the year after that by some \$220 million.

* (1720)

What is even worse is they have now given us an indication for a two-year period of time but have indicated that there is still no certainty, they are still looking at maybe reducing transfers further, and at this point in time we need to wait until the next federal budget in 1996 unless we get some notice over the next few months what their specific plans are around transfers.

I agree with the issue of long-term stable funding, but when we get approximately one-third of our revenue from the federal government and you look at the kind of volatility we have had over the last many years under both levels of government, a commitment made by this level of government that they have not lived up to at this point in time, so in the absence of that stability for our funding levels, it is very difficult to then do the opposite which the member spoke to in terms of ideally trying to provide a little bit longer-term commitment to

municipalities or school divisions or universities or community colleges or other organizations that receive their funding from us.

When we have virtually no predictability and stability from the federal government revenues, which are one-third of our revenues, it is very difficult to then turn around and provide that kind of stability for people who receive funding from us.

Having said that, the member asked about our accuracy. When I have looked at our budget documents over the last several years in terms of areas within our direct control, I would say our accuracy has been outstanding. Our ability to predict our own source revenues, we have virtually been right on target over the last several budgets. Certainly when it has come to hitting our budgeted targets on the expenditure side, again we basically hit those targets.

When I meet with the bond rating agencies they acknowledge that. They say that how governments build up credibility is by hitting your targets, and they say very clearly in the case of Manitoba we have done just that in all areas that fall within our control.

When we are falling short of a target, it has been because of an area that has been outside of our control where numbers are provided by another level of government like the federal government, and it ends up, because of events during the course of the year, those numbers change very significantly. So our track record, I can assure him, is excellent.

I would gladly spend the time to sit down with him and track our comparison of our budgeted own-source revenues, to how we have ended up in terms of actual, how we have ended up in terms of our budgeted expenditures to our actual.

The next part of the WHEREAS talks about, "WHEREAS yearly budgets afford little opportunity for assessment of efficiency and effectiveness of programs."

Again, I guess I am confused how this two-year budget cycle would enhance that, because right now we have, I think, one of the more detailed Estimates

packages in all of Canada. The Estimates books that we provide to all members of this Legislature are as comprehensive as you will find in most provincial governments.

I think in terms of provincial governments, we probably allot as many or more hours than most provincial governments. We allot, as we all know, 240 hours. We just went through it back in May and June of this year.

So in terms of the budget process being an opportunity to assess and evaluate, I think the kind of budget process we have now provides us, as a government, the opportunity to do it in a more detailed, comprehensive way by doing it on an annual basis. It certainly provides the opportunity for members of the opposition to question effectiveness and efficiency, to question individual allocations, and so on. Again, that part of the WHEREAS I am somewhat confused with.

I ask the question when talking about—right now we go through it on a yearly basis—under this two-year budget cycle, is the member thinking that we would only review departments every two years or would we only review half of the departments every year? What is the thinking behind that? I guess if that is sort of the outcome of a two-year budget cycle, I am not convinced that that accomplishes his WHEREAS talking about efficiency and effectiveness.

I think the system we have now provides greater efficiency and effectiveness. I am not suggesting it cannot continue to be improved, but it certainly creates the opportunity for us as a government, because I think, as the member knows, although he has not had the opportunity to be a part of government, but the budget process is a very detailed, comprehensive process. We have started it right now.

Obviously, that is no secret, we have started our 1996 budget process, going through many months of analysis, of review, of discussions with our departments, ultimately, analysis by Treasury Board and so on. So we are talking hundreds of hours at the political level, let alone the hundreds and thousands of hours at the staff level in terms of preparing a document.

Again, the opportunity to continually assess how our programs are performing, what programs we should be providing, what areas we should be funding and so on, I think the kinds of things that the member refers to in his WHEREAS are being accomplished under the kind of system that we currently have.

Besides those kinds of things, in addition to those conceptual concerns, I think there are a host of technical issues which would need to be addressed during a two-year budget cycle if one ever were introduced.

What would happen if a general election was held in the middle of a budget cycle? What happens to that budget document? I would assume that the new government comes in and sort of starts fresh.

Well, it is a little different now. You have an annual budget cycle so, when you go into an election now, you have usually a budget that is in place and represents the last budget of the government before you go to the polls.

I think those kinds of just logistical, sequential things, I am not sure have been clearly outlined—I know the member only had 15 minutes—in terms of how he would see those kinds of things functioning.

What kind of financial reporting would be expected? We have had discussions about the performance of Public Accounts. Would Public Accounts only meet every two years? I know the member has expressed concern we are not, some members have expressed concern we are not, meeting as often now as we should. Would a two-year budget cycle mean that Public Accounts would only be released and dealt with on a two-year basis? If that were the case, I really do think that that would be a backward step in terms of accountability to this Legislature and to Manitobans. Obviously other legislative amendments would be required, but I think, if that was sort of the outcome of a two-year budget cycle, as I say, that would be a backward step and would be unconscionable in my opinion.

Madam Speaker, the budget document has historically been a very powerful policy instrument for

government. It is more than a financial document; it is also a policy instrument of governments. I think, again, to have that kind of an annual document is important in terms of the direction that the government is heading, their accountability to this Legislature and to the public and in terms of continuing to communicate to Manitobans what their plans are.

Now, as I said in my comments, that is not to say there is not room for long-term planning, and that is a different issue from my perspective than a two-year budget cycle document. I think, if that is the thinking from the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), then we are on similar ground, and I think there are more things that governments can be doing in terms of—in fact, I say even longer than two years.

As I have said to the member, our document produces the current year budget and then an extra three-year planning document. We are talking about a four-year time period. I agree with that kind of planning. I think that is the planning that governments at all levels should be doing, that they should be doing it over a three- to five-year period. They should be doing it over their whole mandate of office and looking ahead in terms of what their revenues will be, what their expenditures will be, what their priorities are and so on. I think that is a healthy discussion and one that should be taking place as part of the budget process and part of the Public Accounts process and so on. But I do not see how a two-year budget cycle in any way enhances accountability to the public, dealing with the issues, responds to the two WHEREASES that the member has in his resolution.

I am open minded in terms of future discussions with the member for Inkster. I would welcome any additional information he ever accumulates or is prepared to share on two-year budget cycles or if he sees other jurisdictions starting to move in that direction or other government and so on, or any research that, with his limited financial abilities, he is able to put together.

I would welcome that, and I am certainly prepared to do that on behalf of our government, but my initial reaction here today is that this resolution should not be supported, because it is a departure from a system that

I think is serving Manitobans very well, and I have not heard any sound reasons for changing. In fact, I think there are very sound reasons for maintaining the kind of budget process and document that we currently produce, but I am certainly open to continuing that dialogue on this discussion and look forward to more information.

I think discussions around budgets, around budget process, around public accounts, are healthy and productive discussions usually. Usually, the discussions we have in those forums are very meaningful and important for all of us, so I welcome future discussions with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and any information that he can share with me and with this House.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.

* (1730)

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I am delighted to rise today and speak on this resolution put forward by the member for Inkster.

I was listening to the words of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and found myself in agreement with some of them, some of the ideas that he was talking about in response to this resolution, most particularly that planning over a longer period of time is good, and I agree with his comments. None of us would disagree with that as a concept and an ideal.

Budgets by their definition are nothing more than plans. Good budgets that are based on solid information end up being closer in reality than budgets that are based on information that is not accurate, and as the minister has said, the government can only control portions of the revenue stream and has far more control on the expenditure stream, but in situations where they are statutorily required to spend money, such as in income security and social assistance, those areas can have an impact on the best-laid budget plans.

I agree with the minister that we need to look at planning in the budgeting process as in the programming element. I agree with the minister, too, in comments that he made that I believe this

resolution—the ideas that it is espousing are not necessarily bad, that we need to look at long-term stable funding and long-term programming, but two-year budgeting is not going to do it.

A budget is a plan. It is also a political document; it is based on an ideology; it is based on a set of values; it is based on the government of the day's perception of its role in society. So while the numbers are very important and they do have major implications for programming and for everything that happens, the assumptions upon which those numbers are based and the programming that come out of those assumptions are, to my view, even more important or equally as important as the actual numbers attached. The actual numbers attached will bear, if it is a good budgeting process, good in the sense that it follows from the values and the vision and the principles of the government, if they are brought forward in the budget, there will be a close analogy.

We disagree with the values and the ideology and the budgeting numbers that this government has brought forward, but I think the principles are the same, that a good budget is a budget that reflects the will of the government and reflects as far as possible the ability of the government to determine ahead of time what the revenues and the expenditures are going to be.

Two years, three years—you put garbage in, you get garbage out. You put good things in, you will get good things out.

So I think this resolution misses the boat here on the problems that it is attempting to address.

The minister and I believe also the member for Inkster have talked about accountability. I think that is a real issue that this government has to address, a real issue that we have been trying to get the government to respond to in many areas that this resolution does not deal with.

The idea that by having a two-year budget you can be more accountable is absolute nonsense. You are as accountable as a government as you choose to be. You are seen to be as accountable as a government as others choose to see you. There is very little objective criteria

against which you can judge the accountability of a government. There are things, but perceptions are very important in this regard.

Whether you budget for one year or two years or 10 years, No. 1, it is still a plan which is open to the vagaries of what happens in real life and, No. 2, if you do not want to have a budget that is open and clear, you will have a budget that is not open and clear.

I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that the Canada West Foundation has made some comments in that regard about the Manitoba budgeting process, and a two-year budgeting process is not going to be any better than a one-year budgeting process if a province does not deal with some of the concerns that they have.

I am going to quote a paragraph, because I would be unable to effectively paraphrase it, not being a financial wizard myself. The paragraph starts: A disturbing and confusing part of the Manitoba budget is that the province is reporting a surplus this year, but the Dominion Bond Rating Service reports that tax-supported debt of the province will actually grow this year by \$141 million, over \$166 for every single Manitoban. No explanation for this is given in the budget, yet the goals of fiscal clarity clearly demand one.

Now, the Canada West Foundation is not normally an organization that we on this side of the House quote with any great degree of regularity, and the minister may argue with the statements that were made in this document. It says to me that the government can choose to be opaque or clear, and the budgeting process, whether it is a one-year process or a two-year process or a multiyear process, can be as opaque or clear as the government chooses to make it. What are the debt numbers? What are the deficit numbers? How much have taxes gone up? What kind of taxes have gone up? What is the government's actual expenditures on things? What is the financial bottom line for the people of Manitoba? All of those things are open to a great deal of manipulation in the budgeting process.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest that Bill 2, as it reflects on multiple year versus single-year budgeting, clearly will help obscure for the people of Manitoba,

has the potential to obscure for the people of Manitoba the actual costs for individual citizens of the province of the operations of the government. I would suggest to you that multiple-year budgeting will not change that because, if you have 35 percent of the current financial information and current financial expenditures of the province now not reflected in the actual budget document—that includes the expenditures and the money in and out for Crown corporations and special operating agencies, upwards of 35 percent—then I would suggest that you can budget on a 25-year period. If you are hiving off major components of the government's expenditures and revenues, then the people of Manitoba do not have any better idea under a one-year budget than they would under a three-year budget of what the actual revenues are for the people of the province of Manitoba and the actual expenditures are.

I would suggest that this resolution will not have any greater impact, will have even less impact actually after we discuss and finally vote on the balanced budget legislation because this legislation will allow the government to put into the overall picture the actions and financial statements of Crown corporations. It will allow Crown corporations to be sold off, and it allows even more for the entities called special operating agencies to be formed. Those special operating agencies, as I understand it, Madam Speaker, are entities that are separate from the Estimates book that we see in the budget. What this allows is for the government to say, oh, oh, we have an area here which is going to be a net expenditure for the government, so let us hive it off and then we do not have to show it in the budget Estimates.

It does not mean that the people of Manitoba have not expended money for those services or behaviours or actions. No, Madam Speaker, it means that not at all. In effect, what it does is it obfuscates even further the already murky picture that the Canada West Foundation has said the Province of Manitoba's budgeting process is currently exhibiting.

Ultimately, the government could say income security is a special operating agency, so we do not have to show those expenditures, massive as they are, Madam Speaker, largely because of the inaction in

economic development that this government has undertaken, the inaction of this government in implementing programs that would help people get off the need for income security.

That is another topic, but under this legislation which is not addressed at all by the resolution brought forward by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the government could say income security, child and family service agencies, emergency rooms or some portion of the funding for the hospital system, portions of the funding for the education system, we do not need to have those be seen as government expenditures. We will just make them special operating agencies, and then we do not have to come with that revenue and expenditure to this House and have them publicly debated and under public scrutiny. No, Madam Speaker, we do not need to do that.

* (1740)

This government will not need to do that under Bill 2, and whether the government budgets for one year or a million years, if they decide that they do not want to have the public see what their budget actually looks like, then this piece of legislation, this balanced budget legislation will allow that to happen, Madam Speaker, and accountability, which is what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) was talking about, goes right out the window.

This private member's resolution, ill conceived though it is, as I believe it is, because it does not deal with the basics of the problem that we are facing here in Manitoba, it does not deal with the fact that this government is slowly—not so slowly, I think that after this session is completed, the next budget that we see next year in this House could very well, Madam Speaker, be on one single side of an 8-1/2 by 11 piece of paper, because everything else will be gone, but it will not be gone from the responsibility for the population to support those programs and those expenditures. Oh, no, the government will continue to spend money, will continue to make decisions on programming, will continue to raise revenue, but the people of Manitoba themselves, as seen by their representatives in this Chamber, will not have the right to look at and examine those government actions.

The minister, in his discussion on this private member's resolution, talked about the Estimates process that is currently under way, and Manitoba has by far the largest number of hours of Estimates. There are times, Madam Speaker, over the five years I have been here when I was not sure that I liked that process and I am sure the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), the former Minister of Family Services and other ministers will share that with me. It is an uncomfortable process at times, but part of the discomfort that that process engenders is precisely what needs to continue to happen, which is the open window of scrutiny.

The legislation that is before this House, that this private member's resolution does not deal with at all, is going to close that window. It is going to pull down the blind, and the people of Manitoba will not know what their government is doing.

I would suggest that this private member's resolution does not address the major issues facing the people of Manitoba. I wish that the Liberals had come up with a resolution that did discuss in more detail that, and I wish the Liberals were going to support us in our opposition to the closing of the window of public scrutiny on the part of the Province of Manitoba. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Madam Speaker, I too have a few comments to put on the record. Firstly, I just want to get some clarification here. Are we discussing Bill 2 or the resolution? I kind of lost track there and I was not sure if it was my position to stand up and challenge.

I would certainly say that from what I have seen of the opposition and what I have heard in committee and in this House that they definitely would not be in favour of a two-year budget. I do not think they would want any kind of a budget that they could present to the people of Manitoba, because it would be either—I guess it would be in such a large state that probably we would never get through it.

Just a couple of comments about budgets, I think that some of the statements that have been suggested are true, that it is a picture of what we plan on doing and

how we plan on doing it, through revenue producing ideas and also through expenditure cutting. I can speak from experience that in the business world not having a picture of your financial situation available to you—in our instance, we do it on a quarterly basis and then review it at the end of the year—and I recognize, with the numbers that we are talking about in government, it is probably too big to do it in that short of term, but I definitely think that going to the two year would be catastrophic to the government and also to the Opposition. Sitting through the debate and the questions in regard to the budget suggesting that we go to a two-year or a longer budget term, I would think that perhaps sitting here today we may be discussing the 1970-72 budget as opposed to the more current and, obviously, the most impressive issues upon the people of Manitoba today.

I think that the one-year budget as opposed again to the two-year budget is certainly something that we as government would want to be able to present to the people on a snapshot basis and at the end of the year with a new budget presentation in the spring. It certainly gives people a chance to look forward and see what the government is doing, what they are proposing to do and basically judge them in that same time frame as opposed to waiting that two-, three-, four-year period.

I certainly think that, again, as the honourable member for the opposition has suggested, that would not be in their best interest because they seem to be a party that no matter what the problems would be, whether it was a revenue shortfall or an expenditure cut that had to be made, we definitely know that it would be a tax increase to bring in more revenue. It would never be a cut in the budget that we have sometimes proposed and the people of Manitoba have obviously chosen to accept and did so resoundingly in the April election.

I do have, I guess, some things that I see as the benefits of the annual budget as opposed to a two-year budget. I do not have a problem with a two-year budget or a five-year budget. I think certainly we have to project the future, and I think we have to have goals and ideals to get to that level, but, in the same breath,

we have to take a look at it on a year-to-year basis and make adjustments as the demand is there.

Certainly, again, referring back to my personal business in the late '70s, who could have predicted the interest rates that went through the roof overnight. It was not a matter of a build-up process; it hit us. Had we not had some budget expectations and some goals set in our mind, we would not have been able to adjust to those numbers, to accept what was happening to us and also to try and survive. I think that the government is very wise in going just strictly and staying with the one-year process. I think that it provides us the ability to be flexible where you get into two- and three-year budgeting plans. As a proposal of what the future should be like, it certainly does not lock us into that, and we can make the changes that are necessary to adjust.

I think that again being new to the House and seeing the budget process that we just went through, I cannot imagine the resources that we would need as government let alone what the opposition would need to sit down and discuss it.

The honourable member talked about hiding things. I really find that to be offensive in my mind because I think as government, and I would expect as you, when you ever have the opportunity to be government, would be straightforward and bring forward the answers on a trusting and faithful basis to the people of Manitoba so that they can make their judgments based on that information.

* (1750)

We do talk, as the honourable member has discussed, about balanced budgets. Whether this is the time to get it on to the record or not, I detect a sense of fear that when you get into the balanced budget legislation that you just have no idea of the benefits to the people of province, can sit down and look at a budget, understand it, make their decisions. I do not think that you have a grasp on that.

I think that what you like to see is the fact that you can make your decisions, and if it does not fit into this

plan this time, let us change it. Unfortunately, what I see from that side is the only thing that would change in your budgets is that the revenue would go up as well as taxes.

The idea of we can continue to tax people and take the money from them, the bottom line is as the people of Manitoba have suggested. I find it so hard to accept and to believe that you have not caught on to that yet is that the province and the people want the government to control their spending.

If we go into a two-year resolution or a two-year budget or a three-year budget, who has the control? Who is going to be able to measure where the government has succeeded? Certainly the opposition I would think would support the Liberals on that because I am sure the longer they could hide the truth from the people of Manitoba, particularly the financial truth, would be in their best interests as far as promoting their self-interest within their own party.

I think that the other thing that was suggested by the Finance minister (Mr. Stefanson), and it certainly makes sense to me, is if there should ever be—and I state that very, very cautiously—a change in government, which you know it certainly has its question in that itself, that who would be responsible for the balance of the debt for that period of time? Would it be a new government or the government of the day? Would we introduce a new budget again on a two-year cycle? Would we, at election time, present two-year budgets to the people of the province of Manitoba and let them decide? What type of reporting would the government be responsible to give to the people of Manitoba?

As the honourable member on the opposition has suggested, and wrongfully, I might add, that we would have the ability to change the numbers, to correct things. Well, do you not think that the longer a budget would be proposed for for the public, the easier it would be to do that? Therefore, by suggesting that we stay with the one-year budget principle, we are suggesting to the people of Manitoba that the statement that we are going to present to them would be the best that we have done. It is easy for you to read, look at and challenge if there are questions.

As I say, I sat through the budget process—I do not know how many hours of it—a lot of it I found to be useful, a lot I found to be very unuseful in the sense of actually questioning the government and their spending capabilities.

Getting back to the resolution, I think that the presentation by the honourable member—I think the idea of projecting future budgets is not a bad idea. I think if you are going to measure budgets, it has to be done on a year-to-year basis. People have to be able to sit down and judge. If you lengthen that period, all you are doing is opening the door for more indiscriminations and things could be suggested that could possibly take place.

I think the information provided by the honourable member was perhaps lacking, like he is standing up and basically he is making a statement as to how the resolution should read, but he is really not filling in any of the details as to how it would actually function. I think that is something that perhaps with further discussion and conversation with the member, we can certainly get more of the information that we need to examine it.

It actually seems to me that perhaps you might have just run out of something to write down one night and thought that this might be the idea that we would go with. I would think that—[interjection] Well, certainly, we do table a budget every year, and we do do long-term financial planning and the people of the province of Manitoba accept that. Anybody in the business world accepts that we deal on a one-year basis for budgeting, because it is so dramatic, the changes that can go on.

Some of the examples that I have cited have certainly been cause in the real world for people to stay to the one-year term. We do not want to get too far ahead of ourselves because of the dramatic changes that can take place.

A natural catastrophe for government could be unending as far as what it might do to their annual budget, but the contingency funds that we build in, spread over the long range, certainly take care of that situation.

I had one more comment that I would like to make, if I can just find it. The wording of the resolution suggests that a two-year budget cycle would improve the opportunity of assessment, and I know I have discussed that, but how can we assess something so far down the road?

As I say, we are sitting in the budget process, and we are sitting in committee process right now, and we are discussing things that happened three and four years ago, and I would ask you, what is the relevance? Absolutely none.

Estimates, I would suggest that the Chamber would be full, and we would have our professional people in, our departmental people in. The building would be full of strictly that to answer the questions—[interjection] It has been suggested for the two-year that we would go to 640, but I am not sure where it came from. That is just a number that has been bandied about.

An Honourable Member: Eight hundred and nineteen.

Mr. Tweed: Oh, 819, and the number is growing. I am certainly glad to see that the opposition is paying attention, and I hope they are benefiting from some of the information that I am availing to them as the day goes on.

Madam Speaker, I certainly would like to suggest that I do not have a bad feeling in regard to the long-range planning. I think that has been shown in history. It has been shown by the people. It has been shown by business and more so by business in the last 20 years.

I can tell you, when I first started in business we did not do a budget. After the first year I sat down and I said to my family, how long can we continue to do this without a plan? So we did set up a budget and we set up a short term, which was quarterly; we set up mid-term, which was yearly; and we set up long range, which was in that one- to three-year plan.

I see government on this side, that is exactly what we are doing. We have a one-year budget that we can present to the people so they can understand it, so they can question it, so they can disagree or agree with it,

however they feel about it. We do also have long-term spending, and I guess in today's world, economic restraints in place, that we can make our budget balance.

Madam Speaker, I know that I have taken some of the time in the House, and I do not want to monopolize it all. It is unfortunate actually that our Liberal members opposite have left because—[interjection] Oh, I am sorry. I cannot speak about them because they are not here. [interjection] He was here, sorry.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Turtle Mountain that he is not to make reference to the presence or absence of any member.

Mr. Tweed: For that, I apologize, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Turtle Mountain.

Mr. Tweed: Similar—

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

The hour being 5:59, what is the will of the House?

An Honourable Member: Six o'clock.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 18, 1995

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		Provincial Council on Youth Crime Mackintosh; Vodrey	3963
Emergency Health Care Services— Community Hospitals Lamoureux	3957	Youth Crime Intervention Team Mackintosh; Vodrey	3964
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Youth Advisory Council Mackintosh; Vodrey	3964
Emergency Health Care Services— Community Hospitals Lamoureux	3957	Western Grain Transportation Program Wowchuk; Enns	3965
Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees		Education System Friesen; McIntosh	3966
Standing Committee on Economic Development, 3rd Report Radcliffe	3957	Energy Audit Program Mihychuk; Praznik	3967
Tabling of Reports		Nonpolitical Statements	
Annual Reports, Co-operative Loans and Loans Guarantee Board; Cooperative Promotion Board Downey	3958	Person's Day McGifford	3968
Oral Questions		Condolences—Walter Walsh Jennissen	3968
Winnipeg Jets Doer; Stefanson	3958		
University of Manitoba Reid; Toews; Filmon Lamoureux; Filmon	3960 3962	ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Concordia Hospital Cerilli; McCrae	3961	Debate on Second Readings	
Health Care System Cerilli; McCrae Sale; McCrae	3961 3963	Bill 17, City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2) McGifford Barrett Lamoureux	3968 3974 3975
		Bill 6, Public Schools Amendment Act Struthers Jennissen Kowalski Mihychuk	3975 3977 3982 3982

Bill 23, Health Services
Insurance Amendment Act
Barrett 3985

**Private Member's Business
Proposed Resolutions**

Res. 28, Integrating
Services in our Schools
Lamoureux 3987
Praznik 3990
Chomiak 3993
McAlpine 3996

Res. 30, Two-Year Budgets
Lamoureux 3998
Stefanson 4001
Barrett 4004
Tweed 4007