



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
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	Rupertsland	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

Monday, October 21, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Gail Franklin, Craig Gilchrist, Barry Hammond and others requesting that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care and that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families.

Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Norman Kosinski, Isabel Watson, Bill Lambert and others requesting that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Joan L. Cox, Gordon G. Cox, Ruth Marion and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Susan Harapiak, Margaret Wetherill, Lillie Sadowski and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes? The Clerk will read.

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

THAT in 1976 Canada signed the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognized the right of everyone to make a living by work which is freely chosen, recognized the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, recognized the right of everyone to enjoy a high standard of physical and mental health, and provided for the widest possible protection and assistance to the family; and

THAT poor children and adults in Canada continue to die at a higher rate and earlier age than people with adequate incomes; and

THAT Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment Act, will create even greater poverty among the poor in Manitoba by eliminating government responsibility to ensure that everyone who lacks adequate food, clothing, housing and health care has these needs met; and

THAT the bill proposes to punish people by cutting them off from social assistance or reducing their benefits if they fail to meet employment expectations; and

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Family Services to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which

provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care and that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families.

* (1335)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Law Amendments Fourth Report

Mr. David Newman (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the Fourth Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Tuesday, October 15, 1996, and Wednesday, October 16, 1996, at 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

At the October 15, 1996, meeting, your committee agreed, by motion, on a counted vote of 6 Yeas, 4 Nays, to establish a time limit for presentations and for questions and answers, of 15 minutes per presentation.

At the October 15, 1996, meeting, your committee elected Mr. McAlpine as its Vice-Chairperson. At the October 16, 1996, meeting, your committee elected Mr. Sveinson as its Vice-Chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 37—The Ambulance Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services d'ambulance

Dwayne Forsman - Manitoba Pre Hospital Professions Association

Bill 49—The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les offices régionaux de la santé et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Glenda Doerksen - Private Citizen

John Nicol - Union of Manitoba Municipalities

Lois Creith - Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Conference of the United Church of Canada

Laurie Potovsky-Beachell - Manitoba Women's Institute

Georgia Weins - Private Citizen

Aline Audette - Private Citizen

Marilyn Robinson - Manitoba Health Organization

Lorraine Sigurdson - CUPE - Manitoba Division

Marilyn Goodyear Whiteley and Diana Davidson Dick - Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses

Vera Chernecki - Manitoba Nurses' Union

Rob Hilliard - Manitoba Federation of Labour

Allan Sweatman - Convalescent Home of Winnipeg

Debra Mintz - Private Citizen

Sharon Macdonald - Private Citizen

Brenda Maxwell - United Nations Platform for Action Committee

Yvonne Peters and Barbara Wiktorowicz - Women's Health Clinic

Desmond Conner - Committee Coalition on Mental Health

Monica Singh - Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba

Jenny Gerbası - Coalition to Save Home Care

John Poyser - Manitoba Association of Community Health Centres

Bernard LeBlanc - Private Citizen

Ian McMahon - Private Citizen

George Musswaggon - Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak

Edward Hiebert - Private Citizen

Evelyn Shapiro - Private Citizen

Shirley Lord - CHOICES

Linda Clark - Private Citizen

Bernard Christophe - United Food and Commercial Workers Union - Local 832

Bob Minaker - Private Citizen

Peter Olfert - Manitoba Government Employees Union

Ben Hanuschak - Private Citizen

Carmela Abraham - Private Citizen

Lucille Barnabe - Private Citizen
Elizabeth Smith - Private Citizen
Ellen Kruger - Manitoba Medicare Alert Coalition
Mario Javier - Private Citizen

Your committee has considered:

Bill 37—The Ambulance Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services d'ambulance

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT section 2 of the Bill is amended by adding "AND STRETCHER TRANSPORTATION" after "RESPONSE".

Your committee agreed to not complete clause by clause consideration of:

Bill 49—The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les offices régionaux de la santé et apportant des modifications corrélatives

but to defer such consideration to a future meeting of the committee.

At the October 16, 1996, meeting, your committee adopted the following motion:

THAT this Committee recommends to the Government House Leader that another meeting of the Law Amendments Committee be called to continue clause by clause consideration of Bill 49.

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister charged with the administration of The Public Servants Insurance Act): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Public

Service Group Insurance Fund Benefit Summary and the Auditor's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended April 30, 1996.

In addition, I am pleased to table the Civil Service Superannuation Fund Actuarial Report as of December 31, 1995.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today His Excellency Bright Msaka, High Commissioner of Malawi to Canada.

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

Also seated in the public gallery, we have 30 visitors from Riverton, Manitoba, under the direction of Mrs. Dora Friesen. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Health Sciences Centre
Heart Surgery Cancellations**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Since 1990, this government has been promising a co-ordination of health services beds in the city of Winnipeg and talking about a bed registration project. They have been talking about it and promising it in 1990, '91, '92, '93. They re-promised it again in '94 and again in '95, and on and on and on it goes.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier, how many operations of heart surgery were cancelled last week at the Health Sciences Centre, and why were those operations cancelled?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, it would be very helpful if the honourable Leader of the Opposition would re-examine his conscience and that of his colleagues and join with all of those health professionals as well as the government in proposing an integrated system for the delivery of health services in the city of Winnipeg.

Certainly we have made available funding to help us deal with the pressures that increasing numbers of surgeries, heart surgeries especially in the last few years—we have provided the funding for that. If the honourable member and his colleagues would get onside, it would certainly be helpful as we establish program management throughout the city of Winnipeg to make use of a bed registry more meaningful and more effective for patients in the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Doer: I would like to table a letter from Mr. Kowalyk, who resides in The Pas, who was one of many residents of Manitoba who had their operations cancelled. In fact, Mr. Kowalyk was notified four and a half months ago that open-heart surgery would be scheduled and required. He came down to the city of Winnipeg, which is his fourth visit to the city of Winnipeg, and his operation was cancelled the day that it was scheduled to take place. There were many others, and the minister never answered the question of how many and why these operations were cancelled.

Therefore, I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), what impact has the cutbacks in funding to the Health Sciences Centre impacted on the bed closures at the Health Sciences Centre and the cancellation of surgery, and what impact has the broken promises of the Premier on capital spending had on Mr. Kowalyk's fate and others that are relying on a Manitoba health care system?

* (1340)

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, in 1995-96, \$941,000 additional was appropriated to the Health Sciences Centre and \$894,000 additional approved for the St. Boniface Hospital to cover the increased number of open-heart surgeries performed. In 1996-97, this additional funding was incorporated into the global budgets of these two facilities. In 1993-94, there were in total 523 coronary artery bypass surgeries. The following year

there were 594; the following year, 729, and this fiscal year we expect there to be a minimum of 1,000 of these surgeries.

Those numbers are climbing very, very significantly, and because of the incident to which the honourable Leader of the Opposition referred, we have asked Dr. Louis Oppenheimer, who is the head of surgery for the city of Winnipeg, to call the players together to see the best way for these dollars to be appropriated so that patients do not have this happening.

Mr. Doer: Dr. Hamilton in June of this year said that if people have their operations cancelled, they could die waiting for operations that are necessary in terms of heart surgery. Mr. Kowalyk goes on to say that the reason he was given was the lack of beds at the Health Sciences Centre in the intensive care unit.

He goes on to say that this government is arrogant in its behaviour. Its cutbacks have affected his health. His last sentence of his letter to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and minister is, take it from an old man, Jim, do not grow old and never get sick here in the province of Manitoba.

Is this the quality of health care that this Premier expects from his Minister of Health? When is he going to get a strategy and a plan in place so people can get open-heart surgery when it is scheduled here in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: I repeat for the honourable member that surgeries for coronary artery bypass surgeries have literally doubled between 1994 and 1997, which is coming up by the end of this fiscal year. The funding for that has increased very significantly in the last two years, so what the honourable member is calling for is happening. Now we need to get the program managers together with Dr. Oppenheimer to make sure that the programs are running in a co-ordinated fashion.

Post-Secondary Education Enrollment Decline

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): My question is for the Minister of Education.

A province which chooses not to educate enough young people at the post-secondary level is not going to be able

to have anything other than a low-scale, low-wage economy in the 21st Century.

In 1995, Manitoba registered the largest drop of any province except Prince Edward Island in both full-time and part-time university enrollment. Enrollments dropped again this year and have remained stagnant in community colleges.

Will the minister tell the House what steps she has taken to reverse this trend which seriously undermines the economic future of Manitoba?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I think one has to take the remarks and the preamble that were made in context. The member has known and has known for some time what has been stated not just here but in other circles that when there are plenty of jobs available people are inclined to finish school, take jobs and not go on to post-secondary institutions. Similarly, the reverse is true. That is statistically known. It has been stated by people far more qualified in this area than I am.

The trend for reduced enrollments in university is nationwide, and the member should know as well that the trend in college enrollment is up. I believe one of the things that we are doing that will really assist the strength of the post-secondary education system is to start to see it as a system, and in that regard we will be, hopefully, beginning debate tonight on Bill 32, which will allow for greater articulation between colleges and universities, indeed even in some cases between high schools and colleges, greater mobility of transfer credits for students, a general strengthening of the entire system.

* (1345)

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister explain then why, in this month's Statistics Canada survey of high school graduates who go on to further education or training, Manitoba again has a worse performance than any other province except New Brunswick? Could she tell us why Saskatchewan is substantially better in this, why Ontario is substantially better, and how this is going to affect the economic future of Manitoba?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I believe I just indicated to the member that with the growth in job

opportunities that has occurred in Manitoba over the last few years more and more people are entering the workforce. As well, we have workforce training. As well, we do have continuing entrance into entrepreneurial endeavours by young people in Manitoba, and the results showing there are very satisfactory.

So I say again that as we move into seeing the post-secondary education as an entire system, we will open up more opportunities for students through the creation of centres of excellence, et cetera, that I believe will strengthen the system and be very good for students in Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I cannot believe that we have a Minister of Education who has not grasped the connection between—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Wolseley that this is not a time for debate and a final supplementary question requires no preamble.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister explain why Manitoba is now the only province in Canada that has no widely accessible loan remission policy for students who will now face debt loads in the region of \$40,000 to \$50,000, something which is fuelling the decline in enrollment?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, the member and I have been through this issue on numerous occasions in the past dealing with Access, dealing with availability of student loans, dealing with our relationship with the federal government in the provision of Canada Student Loans. The member knows, for example, in the area of Access students that we have not only the Canada Student Loan loan/bursary program, that we have bursaries available for high-need students to an unlimited amount of a nonrepayable loan.

So I think for those who are in need, which is the group that I believe she is trying to identify here, they can have loans nonrepayable to the government of Manitoba over and above. They can have bursaries, gifts over and above their Canada Student Loan to an unlimited amount, \$33,000 whatever the amount is, and I can give her sample cases of those if she would like. I would be willing to do that. I believe I have answered it for her on numerous occasions in the past.

Council on Post-Secondary Education Mandate

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, students feel they have no say as this government makes universities less accessible. Tuition fees have been increased by 80 percent to 100 percent under this government, and the government's proposed Council on Post-Secondary Education does not offer much hope in addressing this problem.

Can the minister explain why her proposed post-secondary education bill preamble says, it is essential to promote excellence in the post-secondary education system while ensuring it is accessible and effective—but in the mandate of the council, accessibility and effectiveness are dropped?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I have to indicate, first of all, that I do not accept the majority of the preamble put forward by the member. I indicate to the member that we put in last year a 10 percent learning tax credit that enables students to get back 10 percent of the fee that they have paid for tuition and, Madam Speaker, in some cases, that meant that students were paying less last year than they had the year before.

So I do not think that the member is telling the full story when she gets to her feet to make those pronouncements because with the rebates available it has been very helpful for students, and students have applauded that loudly and clearly and consistently and formally through their associated organizations.

Madam Speaker, this Council on Post-Secondary Education has been applauded by student groups. The University of Manitoba Students' Union—and I know we have a small group here led by a member of the Choices group that wishes us to examine the Choices budget as an alternative for what to do here—but I indicate to you that the University of Manitoba Students' Union presented us with a petition, with a document called the Path to Excellence endorsing this particular council that the member for Radisson thinks is not good. That is the largest student body in the province, who do not belong to the small group of 12 or 15 people who came here today.

* (1350)

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, perhaps the minister can answer the question, why does the mandate of her proposed Council on Post-Secondary Education not include accessibility when it was acknowledged in the preamble to the bill that accessibility is essential in education?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, it was acknowledged in the preamble of the bill—I mean, the member has answered her own question in the asking of it—but I also indicate the whole purpose of the bill is in terms of co-ordinating the system and creating greater mobility, greater acceptance of transfer of credits, greater opportunity for centres of excellence, less overlap, less duplication, saving more time, energy and money for students.

Let me give you one example. A student who takes a diploma in civil technology right now at a community college, under the old system, wanting then to take a degree in civil engineering, would have to repeat many of the courses taken at the college that had already been taken, passed and utilized. Under the new system with the articulation of the credit transfers, that same student would not have to, in all hope and all likelihood, repeat courses already taken and passed. That would save the student time, money and energy and free up a spot for another student who might have wanted that place.

Student Participation

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): My final supplementary, Madam Speaker: Will the minister explain to the House how students will make their concerns about accessibility and tuition fees known to the council? How will they participate on this new council so that their voices are part of the decision making?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I am glad that the members opposite have finally begun to ask some questions on Bill 32 because to date they have not shown any interest in this topic in this Chamber.

An Honourable Member: That is not true.

Mrs. McIntosh: Check Hansard and find the number of questions they have asked on this bill, and I think you will see that is true. But we do have some 12 or 15

people in the gallery, which I think maybe has spurred them to ask some questions.

I would indicate that the students will be consulted on a regular basis by the council, as will faculty members, as will boards of governors, as will be all the other interest groups in education. They will be included that way, as all the other groups are. We have indicated our strong commitment to students being involved. We have gone so far as to increase student representation on boards of governors and boards of regents at the post-secondary institutions to ensure that not only do they get to communicate via the boards of governors, they will also be communicating via their own official student representations on a regular basis with the council, and we will see that that occurs.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Conflict of Interest

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, on Thursday I asked the Minister responsible for MTS (Mr. Findlay) how he did not see the obvious conflict of interest with the MTS financial adviser group, 161 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, consisting of three brokerage firms, CIBC Wood Gundy, RBC Dominion Securities and Richardson Greenshields, which are all going to be selling shares, according to the minister, in terms of MTS. He at that time said he saw no conflict of interest. Of course, this is the same minister who said there was no conflict in him buying shares personally.

I would like to ask the Premier if he will do the right thing and recognize there is a conflict of interest and disqualify these brokerage firms from benefiting from the upwards of \$25 million in commissions that will result from the sale of our telephone company.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, this of course is still substantially less money than the NDP squandered on the sands of Saudi Arabia when they tried to set up a telecommunications business in Saudi Arabia with Manitoba government money, with Manitoba taxpayers' money, the kind of stupidity that we typically get from the members opposite.

The short answer to the question is that the policy decision of course was made by government, that the government accepted a broad cross-section of analysis

that included, obviously, economic analysis based on the rapidly changing technology in the field of telecommunications, based on the \$800 million of debt that currently is guaranteed by the taxpayers of Manitoba and based on a whole series of factors about what would be best for the provision of telecommunications services in future to the population of Manitoba. Based on that, we made our policy decision.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I will try again. Will the First Minister not recognize that it is an obvious conflict of interest when this study that was produced by these three brokerage firms was the only study that was done prior to the privatization, when in fact MTS did no internal studies, something MTS has confirmed? How does he not see that getting up to \$25 million worth of commissions is a conflict of interest with recommending the sale in the first place?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I repeat because obviously the member for Thompson has difficulty understanding. The government listened to many, many different people and undertook analyses of a whole variety of different perspectives on the issue. The policy decision was made as a result of a composite of all of the information available to us.

* (1355)

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I would appreciate the Premier tabling anything from MTS because they have said to me in writing that they did not do a single study before the decision was made.

Privatization—Legal Counsel

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final supplementary to the Premier: Since we already have a \$400,000 advertising contract in which Barb Biggar, the former press secretary to the Premier, is benefiting and now the three brokerage firms benefiting from the commission, who is doing the legal work of the sale of MTS, and could the Premier indicate the name of the firm and the lawyers involved so we can get some idea of who else is going to benefit at our expense in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, because there are many different interests, obviously, that

must be protected in this whole issue, there is one firm that is engaged by the Manitoba Telephone System, there is one firm that is engaged by the people doing the initial public offering and there is one firm that is engaged by the Province of Manitoba. So, as a result, the three firms, as I understand it, all of whom are doing work in order to protect the various interests in this whole deal, include the firms of Thompson Dorfman Sweatman, Aikins Macaulay and Pitblado & Hoskin.

Laboratory/Imaging Services Information Request

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster. [applause]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gesture made from both sides of the House towards the past weekend.

Having said that, the task that I have been requested is to once again come forward and ask another important question on behalf of the public of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals has been attempting to get the gross amounts paid to private laboratories in Manitoba, in fact, through Freedom of Information, had made application, were denied and then they went to the Ombudsman's office. The Ombudsman's office then recommended that the Department of Health release the information.

On October 9, I asked the Minister of Health for the information. I am wondering if the Minister of Health can provide for this House the progress that he has made to date, and I will table a copy of the letter from the provincial Ombudsman.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question the honourable member asks. He has asked it before. I have put a response to him. I guess I could say it is in the mail, but that sometimes does not work. The response explains the reason for turning down the application for the information. If the honourable member wishes, I can seek to break that information out into a more generic way so that we do not name names of clinics or individual physicians. I do not think that is necessarily what the honourable member wants. It may be what the union wants, but I do not propose to engage in revealing

proprietary—or information which is not given out on a routine basis dealing with other professionals, and that would be the reason for that.

Certainly, for the purposes that the honourable member wants the information, I think we can make the type of information he wants available, with the kind of quality that might suit his interest.

* (1400)

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Health—no doubt he has seen the provincial Ombudsman's letter or the request, the recommendations—are there any aspects of the letter from the Ombudsman's office that he would disagree with?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, to the extent that we would decline to follow a particular recommendation, it is to that extent that we would disagree with the recommendation, but I think I understand why the honourable member is seeking the information. He is trying to make a point that there might be some conflict involved with private laboratories and their billings, and to that extent, we can talk about that. But I have declined to give out information dealing with individuals on the basis set out in the letter that he will soon be receiving from me, if the federal Liberals can get the mail moving.

Mr. Lamoureux: It is likely going through inter-departmental mail as opposed to Canada Post, I must make reference to the Minister of Health.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Is the Minister of Health prepared to review the information that is being let out in terms of trying to make it easier for—whether it is an opposition member or interest groups or individuals that are interested in getting important information—is the minister prepared to review what the current policy is within the Ministry of Health with the idea of relaxing some of those rules so that Manitobans can find out exactly what this government is doing with respect to health care reform?

Mr. McCrae: If the honourable member has some new information to bring to bear on the issue itself, I welcome his input and look forward to hearing from him as to what criteria he might suggest we look at in order to make decisions about the provision of information. Suffice it to say though, we, through my colleague the

Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), have a discussion underway in Manitoba about access to information along with a discussion about what information we should hold back so that people's health records can be protected from scrutiny by those who ought not to be scrutinizing our health records.

Maybe the honourable member, the Liberal Party as a whole may have something to offer to us in terms of the discussion that is underway in Manitoba which might well be useful as we move toward bringing forward legislation on these topics.

St. Laurent Fish Processing Plant Funding

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, who has acknowledged that on March 15, during the 1995 provincial election, a fake cheque for \$30,000 was given to Kim Sigurdson, a Conservative candidate in St. Boniface and to Robert Gaudry, an official of the Interlake Metis Association.

This fake grant was written up in the Interlake papers but never paid, resulting in losses to organizations and individuals who had made commitments on the basis of the cheque.

Could the minister tell the House whether or not he and other ministers had subsequent discussions with those involved in the bogus cheque episode in regard to the expansion of fishing activities of aboriginal fishers?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, let me make it abundantly clear that in the first instance there was no cheque. There was a commitment, a letter of intent that the Department of Rural Development under its REDI program was prepared to provide support to a fish company, the Spirit River fish company, on a project that has long been a particular ambition of mine as the MLA for the area, that is, to find some appropriate way to utilize the millions of pounds of rough fish that are cast aside every year in our fisheries.

The specific agreement called for some very specific things to be accomplished before a cheque would be drawn. What the honourable member is referring to there is a letter of intent being passed to these principals. Regrettably, the conditions of the agreement were not carried out, and no cheque was ever issued.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Dauphin, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Struthers: Could the minister tell the House the nature of the discussions with Mr. Sigurdson and others regarding their fishing, processing and export activities?

Mr. Enns: The nature of the discussions is very simple to provide. It was with a great deal of enthusiasm that I as a representative for the community of St. Laurent, which regrettably has an unemployment rate that is unacceptable, which borders and sits on a resource on Lake Manitoba that sees millions of these rough fish wasted and in fact become an environmental hazard as they are left to rot on the shore, in the bushes and on the ice every year, it has been, as I have said now several times, as long as I have been the member for Lakeside, an ambition of mine to try to arrive at some economic use for the rough fish.

So I embraced, I was a very strong supporter for the project. I was able to help convince the economic development group within the Department of Rural Development to consider the application but there were various—and I might say this is not the first project of this kind. Freshwater Fish has tried on different occasions. There were very specific commitments made by the proponents with respect to being eligible for these monies. Those commitments were not met, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Struthers: Could the minister tell the House whether or not these discussions are in any way related to certain charges under The Fisheries Act against Mr. Robert Gaudry?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, my understanding is Mr. Robert Gaudry is facing certain charges for illegally using small mesh net and for fishing without a fishing licence. Most fishermen in Manitoba are aware of these preconditions prior to fishing in the province of Manitoba.

St. Laurent Fish Processing Plant Funding

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the cheque in question was a pay cheque of one of the minister's own employees, and it shows clearly in the picture.

For years aboriginal fishers have sought ways of making a living by using all the fish they catch instead of having to throw the rough fish away. They protested what they consider unfair quotas on Lake Winnipeg where they are restricted to less than 20 percent of the overall lake quotas.

Will the Minister of Natural Resources acknowledge that he and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) met with Mr. Sigurdson and others to discuss this issue during the summer and fall of 1995?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I can confirm that the meeting took place. I also want to confirm the fact that when the aboriginal groups from Island Lake basically made application to be exempt, I was the proponent who brought it forward to the federal minister, who is still the minister responsible for making those decisions.

Further to that, it was also in agreement with the group that basically wanted to expand beyond the Island Lake area in terms of exemptions of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. However, the federal minister saw fit to deny that request. I am still working with the groups in terms of doing further exemptions.

* (1410)

Fishing Industry Sisipuk Lake—Exports

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, will the minister confirm that there were discussions regarding the taking of fish for processing and for export from a northern lake without interference from Fisheries officers?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): What I will confirm, Madam Speaker, is the fact that a request was made for allowing to export processed fish from the fish plant in the Interlake, and my response always was I had no objection to them moving the fish from the lake up north and to the processing plant, but it is not within my jurisdiction to give any authorization for the export beyond the Manitoba boundaries.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, on a new question. I will table a signed statement from three individuals which

claims not only that these conversations took place but that also the ministers knew that what they told these people to go ahead and do was illegal.

Will the minister acknowledge that the meetings took place, that both ministers suggested that they would look the other way when the law was being broken in regard to the taking and exporting of fish from Sisipuk Lake?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Speaker, as usual, I find big skepticism in terms of anything that this member brings forward, because he is developing a history of trying to be down in the gutter somewhere trying to find things that he cannot substantiate, and he cannot substantiate many of these things. I have said that I—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Natural Resources, to complete his response.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Speaker, this member has invariably, at various times, brought accusations to this House that he can never substantiate, and I deny any of the allegations that he has put on the record here today.

Railway Industry Bay Line

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister or Acting Minister of Transportation.

A year ago, CN was privatized without any upgrading of the Bay Line, and this was followed by the Canada Transportation Act abolishing the protection of branch-lines and branchline subsidies, giving the CN, the new CN, the right to abandon all of northern Manitoba.

I would like to ask the acting minister why he and his colleagues did not fight for upgrading of the Bay Line and the port prior to these events.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Acting Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), but I also want to say at the same time that the record of this government, in terms of protecting the Bay Line or fighting for anything

that happens in Churchill, is something that is on record and we are very proud of the position that we have taken to date.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, last year this Legislature unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing Gateway North Transportation system in their bid to establish a Bay Line network from Yorkton to Churchill.

I would like to ask the acting minister, when did this government switch its position from supporting the GNTS proposal of a Bay Line network from Yorkton to Churchill to supporting CN's plan of selling only the lines north of The Pas?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Speaker, I will take the specifics of that question as notice as well, but I can just indicate that my knowledge of what is happening right now with the Minister of Highways and Transportation, that ongoing negotiations are taking place on the positive side. We hope there is going to be a positive solution to the problem.

Mr. Robinson: Since leaving lines south of The Pas with CN means that CN will be trying to ship grain from Saskatchewan to British Columbia rather than through the Port of Churchill, how does this government think that it is in the Manitoba interest to have the Bay Line cut off?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Speaker, again, I will have to take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Cattle Producers Compensation Programs

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the high water levels around Lake Winnipegosis, Lake Manitoba and Lake Dauphin have caused serious problems for cattle producers in the area in that they are unable to take off their hay crop. I know the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) visited the area.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture, what steps has he taken to resolve the problem facing the cattle producers in the area, and has a compensation program been put in place to assist the producers?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the honourable member is correct that some three or four weeks ago I, along with some senior officials of the Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources, visited the area north of Dauphin Lake and the Winnipegosis area. There are some serious problems being created by general levels of high water.

I have subsequently also heard and understood, and that does not surprise me as a modest cattle producer myself, that all efforts are being made, even late in the season, to gather in what native hay is available in those areas. I have asked the Department of Agriculture to pay specific attention to these areas in helping the cattle producers formulate rations of alternative sources, straw, grains, molasses and so forth.

No specific compensation project is being entertained by the department and by the government at this time however. It is one of the difficulties facing cattle producers who use these lands, most of them 90 percent, 95 percent Crown lands adjacent to our large lakes, which in periods of high water and somewhat higher than normal rainfall, as we have experienced the last two or three years, bring about these conditions.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to ask the minister responsible for disaster assistance, since cattle producers feel that the high levels at the lake are due to the increased flow through the Portage Diversion and this flow was increased to spare the city of Portage from flooding, why will the minister of disaster assistance not look into disaster assistance for these producers? It was his city that was saved and it is these producers who are now being sacrificed because of high lake levels. Why are they not being treated fairly?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): It may not have come to the attention of the member, but the majority of damage that was done this year and the claims that occurred as a consequence of the damage done due to high water levels occurred in the Red River Valley basin and in the communities north of the city of Winnipeg. That is where we had substantial claim activity.

When one diverts the Assiniboine, which, by the way, for the member opposite, flows into the Red River, one is doing that, not to benefit a specific community, so the

assertion of the member is a ridiculous one, of course. When water is diverted up the Assiniboine Diversion, it does not flow down the Assiniboine to the Red. We had damage occurring throughout the basin this year; claims are in the process of being dealt with. For the member's benefit, her constituents or the people that she raises as concerns in this province will be dealt with in the same fair and evenhanded manner as other claimants are dealt with by our department.

Crop Insurance Wild Hay Coverage

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he will recognize that he has made an error in removing the crop insurance coverage for wild hay, and is his department considering reinstating the crop insurance to cover wild hay that would help these producers who feel that they have indeed been sacrificed by the high lake levels that have been posed on those lakes?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, that indeed was one of the positive suggestions that was made by individual producers. They made it very plain that the simple reinstatement of the old program would not work. It was a program based on area, and one of the reasons why it was dropped in '94 was lack of participation by these same producers. They did ask—and I have forwarded those instructions to the board and to the senior management of Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation—to, over the winter months, re-examine the question of whether or not a system of crop insurance, dealing with the individual farms, could be instituted for the coming year, and that is being actively pursued by the corporation.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Rulings

Madam Speaker: I have two rulings for the House.

I took under advisement on October 8, 1996, during Question Period a point of order raised by the opposition House leader about an answer provided to a question by the Premier. The opposition House leader asked that the Premier be directed to answer the question and to withdraw comments. I believe the words spoken by the

Premier in question were: "the irresponsible attitude of the members opposite, cheering on this situation, is the ugliest situation that we ever have to deal with in this House."

Beauchesne Citation 417 states in part that answers should deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate. I do believe that the Premier's comments were provocative and I would encourage him to choose his words carefully.

* (1420)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Adolescent Pregnancies

Mr. David Newman (Riel): Madam Speaker, I rise today in the House to speak on the issue of adolescent pregnancy. Recent media reports have quoted Manitoba as having one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in single teen parents. I, being a member of the St. Boniface-St. Vital adolescent and pregnancy steering committee, do not take these statistics lightly. The reality of contemporary society is an increasing occurrence of sexual activity outside marriage. To a large extent, the adult response to this reality has been to provide various methods of contraception and sex education.

The message being communicated by schools is to encourage students to get any advice surrounding the moral issues of sex from families and religious institutions. The consequential realities of these attempts to address the issue of increased sexual activity are serious problems with adolescent pregnancy and enormous multigenerational cost to society in the form of welfare, health, education and justice costs. These kinds of realities too often result from dysfunctional single-parent families.

I believe public policy must place greater emphasis on teaching and encouraging sexual abstinence outside of marriage. I believe public policy must also place more responsibility on the biological father for support and parenting as a deterrent to sexual activity outside of marriage and as a means of better ensuring a single mother and child are supported financially and in parenting.

As an aside, and by way of my attendance at several events over the weekend, I wanted to offer congratulations to the all-Canadian Holy Trinity Ukrainian-Orthodox Metropolitan Cathedral Winnipeg for 50 years of service to the community.

I would also like to offer congratulations to Dr. Naranjan S. Dhalla for the inauguration of the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences at the University of Manitoba and, finally, I would like to give congratulations to aboriginal youth award winners at the Thursday awards ceremony sponsored by Anishnaabe Oway-Ishi, a native youth employment agency. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Madam Speaker, I want to make a statement as well on the Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards that were held last Thursday, and I certainly want to acknowledge the remarks made by the member for Riel (Mr. Newman), who was also in attendance, and also the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), including several of my colleagues from this side of the House, including my Leader (Mr. Doer).

We had the opportunity of seeing some 66 young people from aboriginal communities in Manitoba being nominated for the awards. The winners included Robin Billy in a senior category for academics; Myles Horton, who is a constituent of the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), in the junior division; artistic performing arts, Kimberly Halcrow; Richard Manoakesick for visual arts; for cultural, Kevin Brownlee and Ramona Bird, who is a constituent of the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans); Rebecca Chartrand in community and volunteer activities, and Amy Carpenter. In the athletic category we had Pamela Mayo, Melissa Daniels; personal achievement: Marilyn Alcorn; and Joseph Houle and also Kelly Lee Hashemi in business and entrepreneurial activities; and also in the traditional employment category we had Kevin Cook.

I would like to congratulate all these young people, as well extend our congratulations to Anishnaabe Oway-Ishi for another year, their third annual youth achievement awards, including the fine job that was done by Allen McLeod and Lisa Monkman and I believe that this is a

testament to the positive aspects of aboriginal youth, rather than the negative elements we sometimes hear about. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

White Ribbon Against Pornography Week

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Madam Speaker, October 20 to 27 is White Ribbon Against Pornography Week and I encourage my colleagues to wear and display white ribbons this week in support of the fight against pornography. Pornography, I think all of us would agree, is all too pervasive in our society and has been shown to be a factor influencing crimes such as child sexual abuse, violence against women, sexual harassment and sexual assault. However, government cannot do everything that is needed to protect our children and families from the harm that pornography can bring. Individual families and community groups, such as the Group Against Pornography, help us to raise awareness and define where and how protection is needed.

As Legislatures, parents, citizens and as a society, we cannot afford to be complacent; however, in partnership we can help define community standards, educate our children and increase public awareness of its destructive nature. We can make it clear to those who produce these materials that we will hold them accountable to the standards we as a community set. Again, I encourage all members of the Legislature to wear your white ribbon. Thank you.

Child Poverty Rate

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, last week the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops marked the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty by releasing a pastoral letter entitled *Struggle Against Poverty, a Sign of Hope for our World*. The bishops lamented that in Canada, one of the richest societies in world history, one child in five lives in poverty. They rightly denounce this condition as a damning indictment of our socioeconomic order. As they put it, and I quote, in our society, if a parent denies a child food, clothing and social security, it is considered child abuse, but when a government denies 1,362,000 children the same, it is simply balancing the budget.

Canadians are familiar with balancing the budget and cutting the deficit on the backs of the poor. Canadians,

too, have come to see that our Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance are little better than deadbeat parents. Their dismal record is apparent in the dismantling of CAP and in a myriad of excuses for the continued abuse which we call child poverty. But when it comes to deadbeat parents, our Premier (Mr. Filmon) outshines even his federal counterparts. Manitoba has the second highest level of children living in poverty in Canada, 29 percent, only Newfoundland outdistances us. Still, when Bill 36 is proclaimed, along with other legislation which will increase poverty among Manitoba children and their families, perhaps then this provincial government will displace Newfoundland and once again claim the dubious title of child poverty capital of Canada. Two things are certain: our Premier is really struggling to lead the pack and only a few percentage points separate him from the current titleholder.

Provincial Cross-Country Track Meet

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, this past weekend the Teulon Collegiate hosted the provincial high school cross-country running meet. Despite the somewhat chilly temperatures, more than 650 students participated in the annual event.

An Honourable Member: Did you run, too?

Mr. Helwer: Oh, I did, too, sure. Over 300 parents also attended the race to cheer on the students from high schools throughout the province. I had the pleasure of not only attending the meet but also participating in the awards ceremony to follow. Winners of the race in the various categories were awarded for their excellent performance with medals. All participants were commended for the successful finish, participation in the meet and the vigorous training that they did prior to the race with Manitoba pins and certificates. To also present the awards, the mayor of Teulon, school board trustees, race officials and co-ordinators and the Teulon Collegiate student council president were also in attendance.

Madam Speaker, I would just like to applaud all the students, the parents, teachers and coaches who participated in some form of this at the cross-country meet in Teulon on October 19. I am pleased with the numbers of students who came from throughout the province to participate in this event. It is encouraging to

see so many students participate in school sporting events.

Madam Speaker, lastly, I would also like to congratulate all the participants who were rewarded for their outstanding performance in this race. Thank you.

* (1430)

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickey (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: The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen); Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway); Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for Wellington (Ms. Barrett); Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) for Tuesday, October 22, 1996. for 10 a.m. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I also have some committee changes.

I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Monday, 7 p.m., October 21 be amended as follows: the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings); the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger); the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) for the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst); and the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) for the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey).

Also, Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development for Tuesday, October 22, at 10 a.m. be amended as follows: the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine); the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer), and the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

Motions agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, there may be a will to waive private members' hour today.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to waive private members' hour today? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: In that case, Madam Speaker, would you call please Bills 40, 51, 57, 48, 26, 67.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 40—The Pension Benefits Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), Bill 40, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, I will be the final speaker for our side on this bill, and we are then prepared to send it to committee.

Bill 40 gives the minister authority to enter into agreements with the federal and provincial governments to simplify and streamline the regulation of private pension plans for employers operating in more than one jurisdiction. Currently, employers must abide by up to 11 separate pieces of pension legislation.

In 1994, pension commissions from the across the country proposed to have employers required to administer their plans in accordance with only one set of legislative requirements. Bill 40 is basically enabling legislation. It will allow Manitoba to enter into agreements with other jurisdictions across the country, but it does not spell out the specifics of those agreements, with a couple of exceptions.

Whatever master agreement that is finally brought into place by negotiations with all of the provincial and territorial pension commissions will have as an overarching principle that the pension plan of an employer who operates in more than one jurisdiction would be subject to the rules of the jurisdiction where the most of

that employer's employees reside. So if an employer has employees in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and the majority of the employees work in Manitoba, then the pension regulations for the province of Manitoba would be the pension regulations that all of the employees of that employer would fall under because more of them would live in Manitoba.

There is only at this point one caveat, and that is that the proposed multilateral agreement that has been arranged in a preliminary fashion provides that division of pension benefits upon marriage breakdown and the garnishment of pensions for maintenance enforcement will remain under Manitoba law for residents and employees who work in Manitoba. So that even if for the rest of the pension legislation it would be the province of Alberta that would be in charge, in those two particular instances the regulations in effect in Manitoba would be in effect.

Virtually all the provinces and territories are in the process of working together to pass their own enabling legislation to allow this to come about, with the exception of Saskatchewan which has a concern about Alberta's five-year vesting provision, whereas in Saskatchewan the vesting is only two years. The concern, I understand, on the part of Saskatchewan is because Alberta is a larger province with more head offices and more employees in many of the private corporations, that their pension regulations would apply, and there is a major difference between two-year vesting and five-year vesting. On a personal note, I hope that Alberta moves towards a shorter vesting period, which is only fair.

However, with that small hitch, at this point, it would appear that passage of Bill 40 will enable Manitoba to participate in this multilateral operation. Private businesses' employers have cited the rising cost of compliance of having to work in multijurisdictions as a major reason why the number of employer-sponsored pension plans has been in decline all over Canada. It is argued that if all jurisdictions pass similar enabling legislation, there would be a reduction in unnecessary overlap and duplication. We think that is probably the case. We also hope that employers, if this legislation does pass throughout the country, will use this as a tool for increasing the number of employer pension plans and hope that this will facilitate that.

With those few notes, Madam Speaker, as I stated earlier, we are prepared to send this legislation to committee.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 40, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

**Bill 51—The Civil Service Superannuation
Amendment, Public Servants Insurance
Amendment and Teachers' Pensions
Amendment Act**

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), Bill 51, The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment, Public Servants Insurance Amendment and Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de la fonction publique, la Loi sur l'assurance des employés du gouvernement et la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

* (1440)

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, we are prepared to pass this bill through to committee upon the conclusion of my remarks today.

There are several elements, four in number actually, to Bill 51, sort of an omnibus bill that deals with several

insurance, superannuation and pension elements for employees of the government.

The first one allows, in effect, the Filmon Fridays to qualify as pensionable service. We certainly have no quarrel with that. We wish that the government had not implemented Filmon Fridays to begin with, but since they have, we are pleased to see that they recognize the fact that these days, which are not taken off as a result of any choice on the part of the employees, should be allowed to be counted towards pensionable service.

The second series of recommendations comes from a series of committees: the Employee Liaison Committee, the Employer Advisory Committee, and the Manitoba Government Employees' Union.

Basically, these recommendations as implemented in Bill 51 will allow employees to continue to pay into the pension plan during maternity leave, parental leaves, periods of seasonal layoff and for those who are within five years of retirement and choose to reduce their hours to less than full time. Again, this allows people who are not actually putting in days but are still employees to continue to pay into the pension plan to increase their financial security upon retirement.

Correctional officers will be allowed to retire up to five years earlier than normal and the full cost of that early retirement will be paid for by a 1 percent increase in the contributions of the officers to the fund. So I assume this means there will be no additional cost to the coffers of the Province of Manitoba. The minister is nodding his acceptance of my assumption. And there will be a transfer of \$8 million of surplus funds in the group life insurance fund to the province.

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

The third area is Revenue Canada requirements. There are several amendments in Bill 51 that are required by Revenue Canada to ensure that the Manitoba pension plans remain registered for income tax purposes, so some of the amendments are regulatory in nature.

Finally, there are some administrative changes that have been recommended by the boards of the pension plan to streamline the operation of the pension plan.

So those are the major elements in Bill 51. We are prepared at this point to pass Bill 51 to committee and look at the public hearing process and potentially an amendment or two.

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading, Bill 51. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 57—The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance, Bill 57, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act (Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public), 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, we will be prepared to send this bill to committee this afternoon after my brief remarks on Bill 57.

Basically, the Minister of Finance, when he was introducing this legislation, spoke about how it will increase and improve accountability and openness on the part of sectors in the province that get a substantial amount of or a substantial percentage of their funds from the Province of Manitoba.

What it will require is that public sector salaries over \$50,000 will be disclosed, either in special public statements or in the audited financial statements for government departments, government agencies, municipalities, health facilities, school divisions and universities as well as any nonprofit organizations that

receive half a million dollars in funding from the government or \$200,000 in funding if that amount is 50 percent of the organization's budget.

Again, the minister stated that this was to show accountability on the part of government and non-government organizations, how the money is being spent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are certainly not in opposition to openness and disclosure. Unfortunately, this Bill 57 is fairly selective in its requirements for disclosure. For example, it does not require disclosure of salaries or grants to companies and businesses and contracts that are handed out by the government.

For example, how much is Biggar associates getting from the government of Manitoba, not just as a total, global figure which I believe we can get in Public Accounts, but how much of that money that goes from the government of Manitoba to Biggar and associates goes for the salary of Ms. Biggar?

There are other contracts that the government has let, any government lets that could be in this category and should be, we feel, in this category. As a matter of fact, it has been stated in this House several times before, the highest-paid civil servant, if you define a civil servant as someone who makes their revenue from the government, or at least a portion of it, would be one Mr. Barry Shenkarow. But this piece of legislation does not require the government of Manitoba to share with the rest of the people of Manitoba what Mr. Shenkarow got as a direct result of government donations to the Winnipeg Jets, government actions regarding the Winnipeg Jets.

So while we are in favour of disclosure, we are also in favour of disclosure for everyone. It seems unfair to us that you require civil servants and small, nonprofit organizations who get \$200,000 from the government to disclose their incomes, their salaries, if you are not prepared to disclose the salaries of very large recipients of government largesse, such as Ms. Barb Biggar and Mr. Barry Shenkarow.

So we are quite concerned about the fact that the government states that it wants to be open and accountable and it wants the people of Manitoba to know where the money that the government gives to its own civil servants and nonprofit organizations goes to, as far

as salaries are concerned, we do not have a problem with that, but let us put the other side in the equation as well. Let us find out exactly where government grants go and how much these people who are recipients, just as staff people in small, nonprofit organizations are recipients of government money—let us see where the money goes for Barry Shenkarow. How much did the people of Manitoba pay directly through the public coffers to Barry Shenkarow? How much money does Barb Biggar get directly from the Province of Manitoba? We will not know through Bill 57. So, again, it is a case of a glass that is half full or half empty. What we would like to see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the glass filled to the top so that the people of Manitoba have a truly accurate picture and reflection of where the people's money goes and to whom.

With those few comments, we are prepared to pass this legislation through to committee.

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

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to join in the debate on Bill 57. First of all, as a party that brought in disclosure laws in the past, we feel we have pioneered some of the innovations in this province that have been positive for the people of this province. We, for example, brought in disclosure laws for campaign contributions here in the province of Manitoba, and it allows us over a period of time to develop some interesting trends in terms of who donates money over \$200.

* (1450)

We are able to look over a 10-year period, and it appears to us that the Conservative Party of Manitoba gets about 60 to 70 percent of their money from corporations here in the province of Manitoba over a 10-year period. Some years it is lower, some years it is higher. It appears to us that the Liberal Party gets even a higher amount of percentage money from corporations, although they get less of it. I guess the kind of political operatives in the south end of the city like to keep their chips on two players at the table, and they put some chips, corporate chips, on the Conservative Party and put a little less on the Liberal Party. We have seen through disclosure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the NDP gets

between 75 percent and 80 percent of its money from average people. It gets 10 to 15 percent in any given year from unions, and it gets 10 to 15 percent in any given year from corporations. I think this has been a very valuable bit of information. However, you would not know it. Knowledge is not necessarily power because it still can be distorted by people who use information for only their political reasons. For example, you would think that the NDP gets all its money from unions and the Conservatives get all their money from corporations and the Liberals—well, they are opposed to patronage, I suppose, in terms of their policies.

So we have pioneered disclosure, and the one difference between our party and its disclosure laws and members opposite, as we have always believed, is that you have to have balance in terms of disclosure. We believe the public interest is to disclose. We have absolutely no problem in extending the disclosure provisions to other public agencies across Manitoba. For example, we have written the Minister of Education in the past asking for the salaries to be released of presidents of universities, and my colleague the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) has asked questions in the past during the university dispute last year to release the salaries and increases of the vice-presidents. When the government comes back and says, oh, you do not want to release professors' salaries—yes, we do. We have absolutely had no problem at all in releasing the salaries of individuals.

I also think that we should have a uniform way of releasing them. If you are going to have salaries and benefits released for certain people in our society and you are going to cost out those benefits, then we should do it for ourselves. How much is a car worth for the Leader of the Opposition? How much is a bigger car worth for the Premier? How much is a car worth for other individuals, notwithstanding the fact that we do not replace them? But we replace them faster than school buses, as my learned friend from St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) has pointed out in the past—and that was a good question and a good point that she made.

So we believe that we should have, again, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. What is good for the public service is good for the MLAs and the cabinet ministers here. How much are certain things worth? We cannot even ferret out how much money goes to spousal

travel here in the Province of Manitoba. We have asked the Premier to go back over the last 10 years and release spousal travel. He says, you people are the same as we are. And I said, well, release it all. Release it all. Make it all public. Disclose it all. What are you afraid of? What are you hiding? Why are you so afraid to release the information?

We are not afraid. Release it when we were in government. Go ahead. I challenge you. Mr. and Mrs. Disclosure over there, release your own disclosure. Start with yourselves. That also comes to the other point about balance and disclosure. Why should we not release information dealing with corporate money from the taxpayers? The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) says, you only can be a shareholder to find out that information. We are the shareholders of money on behalf of the taxpayers. We are responsible. This Legislature is the board of directors, if you will.

The 57 members in this Chamber is the temporary board for public institutions and public money. This Legislature has to approve every dollar that is spent in this Legislature. So why are we afraid to release, as the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) says, other information dealing with donations and grants and untendered contracts, et cetera, for both the public service and the private sector?

Why should we not know the salary of Barry Shenkarow? Why should the Premier be able and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) be able to sign a gag law in the interim operating loss agreement that prohibits the public from knowing how much money Mr. Shenkarow got in salaries? I have heard the rumour that he got half a million dollars. I have heard other people that are in the know say he got a million dollars a year, plus the asset appreciating, plus his losses being covered.

Now maybe these members opposite are so embarrassed across the way that they do not want to reveal how much Mr. Shenkarow got paid. I dare say he is the highest paid civil servant in the history of this province, so we are saying to you opposite, we support disclosure in public sector. We will support the disclosure that is part of the disclosure that is contained within this bill, but I challenge members of the back bench that were not involved in cabinet decisions to have the courage of your own convictions.

I know this Premier is a little bit of a dictator and an autocrat kind of scaring members opposite, but I just want some of you to get a backbone transplant and go into caucus and start standing up on behalf of Manitobans. I want some of you to stand up. I know it is tough. I know it is tough, but I want some of you to stand up and be counted for all checks—[interjection] It is easy to flex your muscles in the House, but I want you to flex your muscles in caucus. We want to see a little result of some little, little backbone or conviction. I think that any one of you in rural Manitoba should want to know how much money your Premier (Mr. Filmon) and your Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) paid Barry Shenkarow in his salary last year.

I do not want to just know how much else is going in the public service. I support that part. But are you so embarrassed that you cannot take on the Premier about how much he signed away to Barry Shenkarow? Why can you not tell us that? Why are you afraid of that? Why do you not support the extension of disclosure as we did in the past to include unions and corporations and political contributions?

I think that law that was brought in in the '80s was a good law. It helped everybody understand the transparency of donations, and it helped to understand that the NDP is the only party that really represents people because it is the only party that gets the majority of its money every year on average from families and working people and pensioners and other people that donate money to us.

So what are you afraid of? Why are you worried? Why are you censoring one part of the equation? Why do you believe in censorship? We support your idea to have the presidents of universities have their salaries produced, or heads of major institutions, or other people who get money from the public sector. We do think that you should have a consistent policy on benefits between politicians who you exclude from these provisions in terms of benefits and the other members of the public service system.

Finally, we also believe that people like Barb Biggar should have their salaries released. You know, there is a term called laundering contracts. You give it to one person who gives it to another person who gives it to another person so you can, what should I say, cover up,

cover up the amount of money from the public sector to the individual. You perhaps, in the case of Barb Biggar, would give the money to an advertising agency, who in turn would give the money to a marketing agency, who in turn is owned and operated by say one individual called Barb Biggar.

Is it the intent of members opposite to censor that information from the public and from the Legislature? Are you again afraid to deal with the former communications secretary of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) who was called by the former member from Portage, the co-Premier of this government administration?

If Barb Biggar is not getting too much money, why should we not know about it? Why do you want to hide it? I mean why do you allow the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to be able to make arrangements with advertising agencies that are close to the Conservative government and who in turn are already going to make arrangements with the person who probably proposed the advertising campaign and get hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars, and in the latest case, getting thousands and thousands of dollars—we do not know the amount—to have the Premier market a broken promise?

It is almost bizarre. It is almost out of a kind of a surreal science fiction show where this Legislature is not disclosing Barb Biggar's payments, and she is out, having campaigned 18 months ago—to tell everybody that we are not going to sell the telephone system, we promise—spending our money to market the Tory's breaking the Premier's promise in the last election campaign. We think at minimum we should have the knowledge of that grant, and we should have the information before this Legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to suggest that the New Democratic Party will support disclosure. We have initiated disclosure, but we do not believe disclosure is for one segment of society. We believe it is for all, and we would call on members opposite to show a little integrity, a little honesty, a little backbone and extend the same rules of its disclosure that you have for a school teacher in Lakeside to Mr. Shenkarow in Tuxedo. Thank you very, very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second

reading, Bill 57. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

* (1500)

Bill 48—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), Bill 48, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba), standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Is there leave this matter remain standing?

Some Honourable Members: No.

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

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to put a few comments on Bill 48 and actually represent our caucus, and we are prepared to move this bill at the conclusion to committee.

This bill comprises two unrelated amendments to The University of Manitoba Act. This is not an unusual tactic, for this government to include two seemingly unrelated subjects under one bill.

In this case, it relates to the reorganization or a change in the structure and composition of the Board of Governors at the University of Manitoba, and the other is enabling legislation for mandatory retirement.

On the section relating to the reorganization of the Board of Governors, what it does is increase student representation from three to six positions while decreasing Senate representation from six to three, and it decreases employee representation by three positions, leaving only one employee representative on the board who is a nonadministrative staff member.

Clearly this side of the House supports a stronger voice for student representation. However, there is a serious

concern about the representation, the loss of representation by employee groups, staff members, people in the classroom who understand the long-term importance of a sound and well-balanced university education.

In addition, the opportunity presents itself to look at the structure of the selection of candidates for the Board of Governors at the University of Manitoba. This, like the rural health boards, was an opportunity for the government to put their position to the people of Manitoba. Are they going to continue the political patronage system or are they going to look at representation and a democratic voice in terms of board positions?

Well, it comes as no surprise to this side of the House that the government, in fact, chooses the appointment route, and it is clearly disappointing that here again we are looking at a form of governance which would provide the ability of the government to indeed look at a democratic process where members could be elected from the population.

In fact, it is interesting to note that UMSU, the students' union, had elected members, had put on the ballot representatives to sit on the Board of Governors in the past, I believe it was in 1991 or '92, and those elected representatives who went through a due process were selected by their peers, were submitted to the government, to the Filmon government, and what did the Filmon government say? No, we will not accept those elected members of the students' union.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the record stands for itself. That is unconscionable that they would not allow the process of democratic selection of students. No, the government instead appointed their own student representatives, their own friends of the government, it might be said, to sit on the Board of Governors and rejected the democratic process and put in political patronage appointments instead.

That is a process that we reject. That is a process that could have been amended. It is a process that this government clearly chose with will and conviction, to refuse to provide the opportunity for elected members on the board, just as they are refusing the regional health

boards that opportunity for local representation in a democratic fashion.

The reorganization has also another unsavoury aspect to it. What it does basically by removing the Senate's representation is similar to Bill 32. It concentrates power at the ministerial level. This government is becoming more and more autocratic and dictatorial with its forms of government through these bills, more regulations, more hidden agendas and more concentrated power to the Minister of Education in this case and similar to the regional health boards, more concentrated power to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Senate, which is a group that represents the academic concerns of universities, looks at the long-term planning, viability and programming issues of the university, a very important structure. They are basically the ones that are looking for academic independence to ensure that there is a broad educational experience, to ensure that the programming that we offer in our post-secondary institutions, in this case, the University of Manitoba, will provide those graduates with the fundamental knowledge that they need to be comparable with other universities in Canada, the United States, and around the world. It is extremely unfortunate that this government has chosen to decrease the ability of the Senate to be represented on the Board of Governors. This raises serious concerns of the long-term vision and autonomy of universities.

In terms of the second part of Bill 48, which deals with mandatory retirement, this section of the bill is enabling legislation to allow mandatory retirement as part of a collective agreement. This component was a request by the administration of the University of Manitoba, and this act would suspend the Human Rights Code at the University of Manitoba. It is curious that this government has provided this ability only to the University of Manitoba.

Can I ask why they would single out one institution? Is it their intention, for example, to bring in mandatory retirement in all workplaces? Are they going to be consistent? The question arises, why are you targeting one institution? Are you targeting them because of an unfavourable strike situation earlier this spring, where we saw the government extremely frustrated with the fact that

university professors and students joined hands to protest and move ahead with a unified plan for the university.

Unfortunately, the government did not have that in their agenda, and is this bill, in fact, a way of punishing those professors who were there, some of them over the age of 65? Bring in mandatory retirement, and that is a way of eliminating that dissension. The question remains, if the government wishes to be consistent, then they should have the ability, and they should have the nerve to go to the people of Manitoba and say, this government believes that mandatory retirement is something that we are going to implement across the board, the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, Brandon, in all workplaces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, presently we have this ability in certain professions, professions that have very high, stringent requirements in terms of physical abilities, and in those professions, that provision has been allowed. The question still remains, has the government got the legal opinion? Are they intending to be consistent and go through all workplaces in Manitoba and change The Human Rights Code to in fact bring in mandatory retirement?

The issue of certain staff members or certain professors being able to collect a full salary and a pension does raise serious concerns, and there are individuals in different employee places—I know, when I was chair of the Winnipeg School Division on the board, we had an individual who was well beyond 65, who chose to stay, who was an active member and a valued member of our staff, but that person did not collect their pension as well as their salary. Those types of provisions can be done and can be made outside of the heavy hand of legislation, heavy-handed legislation which is targeted to only one institution.

What we are calling for here is fairness. If this is targeted against the University of Manitoba professors because of the strike action in the spring, then let the Manitoba government, the Filmon team, come forward and say: This is our retribution. This is how we are going to pay you back. We are going to bring in legislation that is going to impact only on you. I think that they have the responsibility to come forward and stand up on this bill and speak out and explain to the professors at the University of Manitoba and all of the

faculty that is questioning why this section of this Bill 48 as presented here, why is this component of this bill presented in this legislation? It is clearly intended to target and single out one group, one institution. We ask them, in terms of fairness and being open, to come forward and say, in an up-front way, that they are going to extend that to all workplaces in Manitoba.

* (1510)

There are many ways to deal with personnel issues, to deal with a turnover, and we would like to see turnover at the university. Providing opportunities for young people to come in is an important goal, and we appreciate that. But the question remains, to use the heavy hand or to use other managerial abilities that could have been negotiated collectively by the two partners seems to us to have been a much more co-operative approach. This is in fact a principle that is important, and we look forward to the government coming forward and stating their position if it is their intention to provide this ability to all workplaces in Manitoba.

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading, Bill 48.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 26—The Labour Relations Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), Bill 26, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Deputy Speaker, as required by the rules of our House, under Rule 38.2, I

believe your office has been informed that I will be the designated speaker for our side on Bill 26. That letter has been sent to the Speaker's Office, and the Speaker is aware of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not in the last eight years—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I just get a copy of that?

As the honourable member has informed the House, he is the designated speaker by his Leader who will have unlimited time on this presentation.

The honourable member, to continue.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With past legislation, I have often stood in this House to indicate that it is my pleasure to rise to add my comments on particular pieces of legislation. In this case, that is different. This is a piece of legislation which I feel should not be before us in this Chamber today and in fact will go a long way to undermining the history, the significant labour-management peace that has been built up in this province.

Not in the last eight years and, I dare say, not since 1919 has there been such an antidemocratic, antilabour, anti-working-people government as we currently have in the province of Manitoba. I would like to start off by using current examples of what this government is intent on doing within the province through their legislative package currently before us in the Manitoba Legislature.

Bill 54, and I am putting this in context with respect to Bill 26 and its impact on the working people of Manitoba, Bill 54, the municipal amendment act, will override The Labour Relations Act and strip away the rights of working people to determine their elected representatives and it will wipe out freely negotiated collective agreements.

In addition to that, Bill 32, the post-secondary education bill, will strip away the rights of teachers to have academic integrity, something that was hard fought as an issue during the strike at the University of Manitoba in 1995, something that members of this House I am sure will remember.

In addition, Bill 72, public education, will destroy 40 years of labour peace and will create an atmosphere of distrust and animosity between those in teaching professions in this province and their employers and will bring teachers for the first time under The Labour Relations Act for full financial disclosure provisions for their organizations which represent them but at the same time provide no other opportunities for teachers in this province to be covered by The Labour Relations Act. So one must view this in the context of Bill 72 as being a regressive and punitive measure for teachers.

In addition, Bill 49, regional health boards, which this government has brought forward by way of legislation, will tear away the right of people employed in this sector of our provincial economy to determine who their democratically elected representatives will be and that these people will be supplanted by a politically appointed commissioner who will choose the unelected labour representative without right of appeal.

Now, if the members opposite actually believe that this is a democratic piece of legislation, and perhaps the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) should have looked at this bill because, from my understanding, he did not look at this bill. Otherwise he would have seen quite clearly that it was in contravention of The Labour Relations Act of the province of Manitoba.

The commissioner, under Bill 49, is politically appointed, not democratically elected. The government likes to sell Bill 26 and other pieces of labour legislation that they have brought forward here as being democratic in nature, that they are going to democratize the workplace as they are going to democratize unions.

At the same time this very government has several pieces of legislation, Bill 49 being one of them, that will strip away, will rob working people in those sectors of our economy of their rights, their democratic rights as residents of this province, to determine who their elected representatives will be. That is why over many, many decades we have built up those structures, to allow for the democratic election of people to represent working groups in our communities and in our society.

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

In addition to these unelected regional health boards that the government is now moving towards in their undemocratic fashion, this government introduced Bill 73, The Construction Industry Wages Act, and what this bill will do again is in an antidemocratic fashion. This Bill 73 will empower the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or his designate, obviously the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), to politically appoint a number of members to a committee to determine the issues, to bring back recommendations on issues that the minister will determine. Now, if this is not an antidemocratic provision, I do not know what is.

The minister not only will determine what issues are going to be sought, but he will also determine when that committee is going to meet or not meet. As we know from The Construction Industry Wages Act, the committee that was currently in place with the three wage boards, this government has not had those wage boards meet since 1991.

So it is very clear on what your intent here is, to lower the wages and to prevent any further improvements being made to the conditions and the working relationship taking place between employers and employees in this province.

* (1520)

In addition to that Bill 73, we have another bill that this government has introduced, Bill 17, The Essential Services Act, which will again strip away the rights of working people to negotiate, to freely negotiate collective agreements in the province of Manitoba which would include essential services.

Instead, in an autocratic and in a somewhat dictatorial fashion, this government will unilaterally set their own rules on what will and will not be covered under the essential services agreements of this province. In other words, government is going to impose a set of conditions and rules that others have to live up to with no consultation with the stakeholders that are involved in providing the services to us in our communities.

Now we come to Bill 26. Bill 26, the amendment to The Labour Relations Act of Manitoba, will undermine the rights of a union membership to freely and democratically elect their representatives, which will then

be able to represent the majority interests of the membership without having to look over their shoulders for possible further government interference either during contract negotiations or direct interference in the internal affairs of the union

It is interesting to note that after the 1990 general election, when I was first elected to represent my fine community of Transcona, one of the first things that I saw take place as an act of this Filmon government was something that had occurred as a result of actions that were taken by doctors during the 1990 strike when we saw in our province the results of this government stripping away the legislated rights of the MMA to have their doctor members' dues checked off and remitted to the MMA so that the MMA could continue their work.

Now for whatever you might think of doctors, for members in this House and members opposite, it is still an affront to democracy to penalize those who speak out on behalf of the interests of their members. Hopefully that would have been done as a result of a democratically held meeting where the wishes, the interests and the desires of their members would have been able to be brought forward and that those interests then would have been represented by the body, in this case the MMA.

Now the government actions have gone even further. We have a government that has gone mad in its efforts to punish those who dare to speak out on issues affecting them during the last provincial general election. We have a government gone mad in its desire to strip away the ability of working people to defend and advocate for their interests and the interests of the public on matters affecting public education, health care services and advocating on behalf of working people for a balanced labour relations playing field in the province of Manitoba.

This Filmon government has deliberately turned back the clock on labour relations in Manitoba to a time when government allowed for greed and profit to dictate the rules of labour relations in our province. This has been done systematically, I believe, and is done deliberately to destroy the very mechanisms that were designed to foster workplace peace and encourage business and labour to work together for the benefit of our Manitoba economy. Dignity and respect in the workplace will be among the casualties as working men and women will be forced to

fend for themselves as government deep sixes its proper role as a defender of the public interest in favour of an every-person-for-themselves economy where those willing to work for the lowest wage will be employed.

Power will be centralized into the hands of the Premier or his designate, obviously members of cabinet, the cabinet ministers, in a clear power grab that the United Church described during committee hearings on Bill 26 as similar to a communist dictatorship. Not my words, but words of those presenting to the committee on Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment Act, in reference to this government's arrogant and dictatorial fashion of operating in the way they treat the residents of our province.

I think that clearly describes what has become of this government, whether it be education with the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) deciding all post-secondary education issues or dictating primary school policy, or the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) or his politically appointed commissioner deciding who will represent health care workers, to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) taking sides in the University of Manitoba strike, to the Minister of Labour clearly breaking The Labour Relations Act during the lottery workers strike, to the Minister of Labour refusing to prosecute companies and their owners who ignore workplace safety and health concerns.

I believe the future is clear. As far as this government is concerned, building consensus via the Labour Management Review Committee is dead. Government involved in building peaceful labour relations in Manitoba is dead as long as this government is in power. This government is interested only in crushing all dissenting opinions through whatever means it finds expedient, legislation being the preferred route of this government to choke public opinion of opposing points of view. Judge the premier's own comments on the Manitoba labour relations, Filmon-Conservative style. Witness the government's action for those who dare to speak their minds. Think back to the strike at the University of Manitoba in 1995. During the strike at the University of Manitoba, the professors, the teachers at our university, one of our universities here in Manitoba—that body of people, professional people in our province—received the support of academic professionals and others from around the world.

In fact, one such letter came from a professor of astronomy in support of what it was that the teachers at the University of Manitoba were fighting for. The primary issue was academic integrity. What did this government do when they received the letter? What did the Premier do when he received a letter from a professor of astronomy? The Premier decided that he was going to retaliate. The Premier sent a letter of condemnation to the head of the university where that particular professor of astronomy worked, attempting to undermine and to discredit a professor in another jurisdiction who dared to speak out and comment on the antidemocratic and regressive moves that this Filmon government was taking.

The only problem with the letter that the Premier sent, and I have a copy here before me today, in retaliation for the comments made by the professor of astronomy, was that the Premier did not know the difference between astronomy and astrology, because the Premier wrote back and complained about the professor of astrology taking actions in support of his colleagues here in the province of Manitoba.

One would think that the Premier would be careful on how he is wording his letters if he is going to take retaliatory action, but it is clear that he was so incensed because there were people in our society who dared to stand up and be heard and to speak out when government decides they are going to step on the people in our society, that this government's only action is to be retaliatory in nature.

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

It is interesting to note, and I think we need to look back at them, the words of the Premier in an interview that he did just recently. When asked about the labour legislation that was before us in the province of Manitoba, all of the pieces of legislation that were going to affect the working people, and I have listed several of them here in the opening part of my comments, I want to quote back from the Premier's comments. The Premier has indicated, and I quote: Labour legislation goes beyond the desire to curb a vocal opponent because unions are a powerful force able to prevent society from changing. I do not think you want some force in society, whatever that force might be, to be able to hold a kind of

club over the people of the province. I do not think it is healthy, he went on to say. If we were going to ensure that nobody has the ability to stop change, then I think that is fair enough. I mean, we would not give that power to the Chamber of Commerce, and we would not give that power to the banking system or to the union leadership, were the Premier's words.

It is interesting to note that the Premier is now curbing the powers of union organizations in our province and will, in large measure, undermine the ability of unions to represent the interests of their membership and to represent the interests of society, I believe, at large. Because there are a large number of people in Manitoba that belong to labour unions, I believe that they represent a good cross section of all of our communities and all of the interests of our communities and that those interests are brought to the union meeting halls and that those issues are dealt with at the table through negotiations and that they will reflect what is in the best interests, I hope, for the people of Manitoba in general.

* (1530)

Now, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) says that he would not give that power to the Chamber of Commerce. Well, just a few moments ago, my Leader, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), mentioned on debate about Bill 57, the public disclosure, that we support the principle of public disclosure. But what about the principle of disclosure for those who get government contracts, for Barb Biggar? Why do we not have disclosure of the contract that Barb Biggar gets? What about the contracts that Barry Shenkarow got, as the once highest paid civil servant in the province of Manitoba? What about the contract and the effects of one Bob Kozminski sitting in on the Special Operating Agency or the body that was going to move towards the Special Operating Agency which the minister responsible for that tried to hide in this House but was caught? What about the benefit that Mr. Kozminski has been able to reap as a result of his relationship with this government? Why is that not disclosed publicly?

Is it not fair that if you are going to impose rules on one part of society that you equally impose those rules on another part of society so that everybody plays on the same level playing field? Why do you not have disclosure provisions with respect to what the stock options are for someone bidding on government contracts

or what the salaries are for those top four executive officers or what type of entertainment expenses they have as their detailed financial disclosure? Why do you not have a level playing field on that side? Why are you only seeking to affect one side of the labour management equation and not the other side? Is that what you call democratic open and fair government because if it is, I think you are wrong, and that is not what the people of Manitoba expect from their government.

The role of unions, I believe, should be to act as agents of change. Change does not occur instantaneously in our province and I believe nowhere else in our country. Change is something that occurs as a result of conditions that are changing around us and that we need to react, as members opposite quite often say. Unions are responsible enough to recognize that. Their role is to act as agents of change but to do it in the best interests of their membership, and I believe for the greater and larger society. They are not opposed to change. They just want to make sure that the membership that they represent, all of the working people who they represent, are not going to be harmed in some way, some detrimental way, that will create further hardship for the families of those members who they represent. That is the role of unions in our province, to act as advocates on behalf of the membership to advance the issues of the workplace for improvements, hopefully, done on a consensus basis. They have to have the ability to negotiate on behalf of the membership on issues that are determined by the membership.

I listened to the comments by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) time and time again over the course of time that he has been the Minister of Labour, and heaven knows, we have had a number of them since I have been in this House. The Minister of Labour says that unions are elite, that they do not represent the wishes of their membership, and yet he has never once stood in this House or indicated in committee how and who is saying that unions are not responsive to their membership. Never once has this Minister of Labour said that, that they identified who the people are who are saying that.

Unions, the minister is saying—and I believe this government is punishing unions in this province as well as associations. I know the member opposite says that is a good thing. As we saw after the 1990 election when the government punished the MMA for daring to speak

up on issues affecting health care and representing the interests of their own members, as they are supposed to do but hopefully with the good of the larger public in mind, the government punished them. The government here is saying, through Bill 26, that the union membership is going to have to have the say on whether or not the union gets involved in political activities. The role of the union is to be involved in any activity and interest, legally, in our province that will further the interests of their membership, to do things in a positive and constructive way, quite often in the past being undertaken through the Labour Management Review Committee. They are to lobby members of political parties, myself included, that will further the interests of their membership to improve the working conditions, the conditions of the workplace, to improve the dignity and the respect in the workplace, and through that we talk about benefits to protect the employees and their families and to protect members of society, because society will benefit as well.

Unions gain a measure of respect for those employees and a measure of fairness. I believe they operate in an open and a democratic fashion. Through my working life I have had the opportunity to see both sides, having been an employee working for a private sector company, in a nonunion private sector company for a short time, and having witnessed first-hand how that employer treats their employees, having been an employee of that particular nonunion company that determined that there was a change that was required and that they would lay off their employees with no notice and that they would not give the required two weeks notice or pay in lieu of two weeks notice to their employees they laid off. I witnessed that first-hand in the nonunion company that I had worked for at the start of my working career.

I know the value of labour legislation in this province and how it protects working people. I have had the good fortune to be part of a labour organization in my previous employer and to be part of that organization first-hand and to see the democratic nature with which that organization works and the way communication works in a two-way fashion where we participated in regular open meetings to the membership and that we were part of as members of that union, had the ability to influence and to determine the issues that the democratically elected union members took forward to the negotiating table with the employer.

I have had the ability to sit on the employer's side of the fence and to represent the employer in a unionized workplace and to work with unionized people in the workplace from the management side. I believe, if you work in a fair and reasonable fashion, you will have peace and labour harmony in the province as we had in the workplace that I was privileged to work at.

What we are seeing by this legislation, it will undermine that peace and harmony and will take away the ability of the working people to democratically elect their membership, their union leaders, to represent their interests unimpeded by governments intent on destroying whatever it is they wish to accomplish on behalf of their membership.

* (1540)

The elected representatives, yes, they do make the decisions in the day-to-day activities of the union. There is no doubt because, as we find in this House and as the members of the government often point to, you and we are elected to represent our communities and to make decisions we think are in the best interests of our community. We cannot as legislators go back to our community every single day on every single issue that is facing us in this House.

I like to survey my community as often as is possible and to return all the phone calls and all of the letters that I get from people of my community. But what this government is doing is saying that the elite of the union, the union leadership, are the ones that make the decisions and that they do not go back to their membership for those decisions. Well, I tell you right here today, you are dead wrong.

Having been a part of labour organizations the better part of my working life, I know that those decisions are made on the floor of labour conventions, and they are made on the floor of labour union meetings and that those decisions go from the membership to the democratically elected leadership of the union, and it is that message that goes forward. It is left up to the union leadership and the negotiating team to determine how best to achieve the goals and the aspirations that union membership have. That is something that this government is attempting to undermine through Bill 26. I believe that unions are accountable to their membership.

I want to talk a few minutes now on the Labour Management Review Committee. I want you and members of this House to picture in their mind, picture, if you will, a patient being wheeled into a hospital emergency room requiring life support, quite obviously coming in via ambulance. The patient in distress looks up from his stretcher into the eyes and the face of the attending doctor and, to his or her horror, the patient is looking directly into the face of Dr. Jack Kevorkian.

In this description that I paint for you here, the patient is the Labour Management Review Committee and the doctor is the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), interchangeable with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and, I dare say, many members on the government side of the House. Now, if you take a look at the mission statement that we have for the Labour Management Review Committee, and I want to in a moment table this, the mandate and mission of the Labour Management Review Committee is to promote harmonious labour relations climate and to foster effective labour-management cooperation in support of the economic and social well-being of Manitobans. It goes on to list other objectives that this particular committee performs on behalf of all of the people of Manitoba, not union people isolated, not the business community isolated and not government isolated, but we have through the Labour Management Review Committee a process that has been built up for a number of years. In fact, the Labour Management Review Committee was created in 1964 as a vehicle to encourage discussion and consensus-building between labour and management on issues of mutual interest or issues referred to it by government for recommendations.

Through the actions of this Premier and this government, they have destroyed the very tool that brought diametrically opposed parties to the table. It is interesting to note that some members of the chamber of commerce of our province are now referring to the Labour Management Review Committee as being a dead vehicle for that harmonious relationship.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), after referring labour relations matters to the committee on Bill 26 and other bills, has almost entirely ignored the recommendations of the committee on bills that we have before us that will affect working people of our province. One only needs to take a look at the LMRC recommendations that were sent from that committee to the Minister of Labour,

because the Minister of Labour, after he had already drafted the provisions of Bill 26 and other antilabour bills, decided through his government he was going to refer these matters to the Labour Management Review Committee for their advice and recommendations.

Well, it is interesting to note, on April 24 of this year the Minister of Labour got a letter back from the LMRC, and let us take a look at what it talked about in the recommendations to the minister, because this body is supposed to build a harmonious labour relations climate in our province. There were two issues that the LMRC did not consider proposals contained in the minister's letter, did not deal with. One was Section 12(2) of The Labour Relations Act, and the other one was Section 14(3) of The Labour Relations Act. Both of those provisions dealt with the reinstatement of employees for infractions that may occur as a result of a strike or lockout, for infractions that would occur on that picket line. The LMRC obviously did not feel there were any changes required to The Labour Relations Act, and when you take a look at The Labour Relations Act that I have here in front of me today, it is quite clear in that act that there is sufficient power in the act to allow for employees to be dismissed for actions that would break the law and that would allow the employers to take that action, but at the same time it provided an avenue of appeal that this legislation through Bill 26 will not allow for.

The current legislation says that when an employee is dismissed for conduct on a lockout or strike line, the employer must justify that decision if so required to the Manitoba Labour Board, the body that is set up in a quasi-judicial sense to hold those hearings and to pass judgement.

This government, in its unilateral and dictatorial fashion, decided that they were going to change Sections 12(2) and 14(3) of The Labour Relations Act, because they did not like the wording that was in there.

Now members opposite, and several of you are lawyers over there, you have to know that everyone charged with an infraction, whether it be the Criminal Code of Canada or any other code or law in this province, you are innocent until you are proven guilty in a court of law. You have your day in court. What you are saying by the section that you brought in under Bill 26 is that you are guilty before you are innocent and that there is no

requirement on the part of the employer to reinstate that employee or to in any way justify the decision that has been made to dismiss the employee from the employ of that company.

Now do you call that fair and reasonable, because I do not. You know that in court of law that would not stand up, it would not wash, yet you are, as members of government, prepared to put that into Bill 26 to allow an employer to dismiss an employee with or without cause. It can be something as simple as throwing a crumpled up ball of paper at another employee caught on a video camera that employers often have, videotaping the activities of a picket line as justification for the dismissal of that employee and referring it, I suppose, as intent to injure.

Now is that fair and reasonable? If you are going to have a provision like that, which I do not think there is a need for, because the current act allows for the employee to be dismissed with cause, and that it would not be an unfair labour practice to dismiss an employee after the Labour Board determines that it was fair and reasonable. There is an avenue of appeal. By what you are saying in Bill 26, you will allow the employer to dismiss an employee without having to justify that dismissal and to defend that action in either a court of law or before the Manitoba Labour Board.

* (1550)

Let us go on to take a look at some of the recommendations of the Labour Management Review Committee.

An Honourable Member: Why can you not just sue the department?

Mr. Reid: The member for Riel (Mr. Newman), who is a lawyer himself, knows that you can sue in court, but you tell me which working person in this province has the money to go out and hire a lawyer such as himself, not that they would want to hire him, but some other lawyer in this province to defend the interests, to go after the job and to throw more money at a problem that could be dealt with before the Labour Board.

Why should the financial responsibility fall upon the employee themselves to have to do that when that is something that was already protected in The Labour Relations Act? [interjection] The union—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable member to put his comments through the Chair, and I think it will avoid this back and forth that is about to start, which we do not want to have start.

The honourable member for Transcona, to continue.

Mr. Reid: You are right, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Through you, to the member opposite, the member opposite knows full well that under the requirements of the labour codes of Canada and, I believe, of this province, unions have a legislated mandate to defend the interests of their members to the best of their ability.

I know this to be the case because, having been involved with a case with my previous employer, I saw first-hand where our union decided that it was not logical to defend the interests of one of their members that had wilfully, I believe, destroyed company property and that the union membership informed their member that they were not going to take all of the actions, regardless of the cost, to defend the interests of that union member.

That union was subsequently disciplined because charges were brought against the union. So they have a right to defend members' interests, yes, and that is why I believe the right should remain, as the court so adequately pointed out in that case, to defend the rights of the members to the best of their ability.

Wiser people than myself saw that as a necessity, to have that provision in there, and, yes, unions, democratically elected by their members, have that right and responsibility to represent the interests of their members to the best of their ability because they are acting as the defence counsel on behalf of that member without it having to proceed to the courts.

But what the government is saying here today, by Bill 26, we are going to strip away the rights of your union to defend your interests through the Labour Board, which is a quasi-judicial body, as members opposite know. Now the member opposite is saying, well, let the union take it to the courts to defend the interests, obviously, at greater cost to the union and to the member, him- or herself.

Let us take a look at the Labour Management Review Committee recommendations that this government and this Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) have chosen to

ignore. The Minister of Labour is saying now through Bill 26 that he is going to have a compulsory secret ballot vote on every certification. He does not care if the union organizers talking with the employees of the company have 100 percent of the members sign cards indicating their interest in a union or they have 40 percent of their working people in that company signing union cards indicating their intent. The minister says he does not care.

Under the current provisions of The Labour Relations Act, which the former Minister of Labour changed to increase it from 55 percent for automatic certification—they increased it to 65 percent automatic certification. Now, at the time, we thought a majority was not a majority and that 55 percent seemed reasonable. Well, if 55 percent was reasonable, for sure 65 percent was reasonable for automatic certification, but that is not good enough for this government again. Now they say that, even if you have 100 percent sign-up, we do not trust you as working people to make a determination affecting your own future and that we as government—you are saying to the working people who have signed those cards—are going to have a secret ballot vote because we do not trust you to have some control of your own future. That is what you are saying to the working people of this province who want to have the ability to be represented by a union.

Let us take a look at the recommendation that came forward from the Labour Management Review Committee because that was one of the questions that the Minister of Labour currently sent to the LMRC for a recommendation, and I want to quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the LMRC came back with, with respect to that provision. Let us take a look at the recommendations that came back.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

The Labour Management Review Committee recommendations on the proposed changes to The Labour Relations Act, the proposal regarding compulsory vote on application for certification where at least 40 percent support is demonstrated, and this is what the committee indicated: The committee accepts the proposal subject to the following amendment: The vote will be held within five days except for the most exceptional of circumstances, (2) the adoption of the above recommendation is

contingent on the provisions of additional resources of the Labour Board and to the Labour Board, (3) that the Manitoba Labour Board establish a practice—note—to provide examples of what constitutes an exceptional circumstance, and (4) the lack of resources of the Manitoba Labour Board shall not be considered an exceptional circumstance.

Now, let us take a look at those provisions. The LMRC is saying here today, as they have said through this report—[interjection]

Well, the member opposite says he does not trust the decision that was made at the subcommittee even, that is what you are saying. [interjection]

It was still comprised of business, labour and government people. [interjection]

So you are saying that even a subcommittee that is representative of labour, representative of business and has a government representative there should not be listened to. That is what you are saying here today. [interjection]

Well, if the member opposite wants to speak on Bill 26, he is free to stand up any time he wants to put that on the record. I would not deny him his democratic right to speak in this House, as he has attempted to undermine the democracy of the labour organizations of this province through his government's actions.

I am the designated speaker. There will be other members of my caucus, I am sure, who will want to take their democratic right and opportunity to speak freely on Bill 26.

* (1600)

This committee, the LMRC committee says that they think that the vote should be held within five days except for the most exceptional circumstances, but it is contingent that the Labour Board, which I have raised in this House with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and have documents to show that the Labour Board has told the Minister of Labour—and we caught the Minister of Labour misleading this House already once this session with respect to the Labour Board funding—the Labour Board has told the Minister of Labour that they are

underfunded under their current workload and the new workload that the minister is going to impose on Bill 49, Bill 73, Bill 26, and no doubt other bills affecting working people, will fall to the responsibility of the Labour Board and that they are ill prepared financially to deal with those additional responsibilities and duties.

Since the Minister of Labour refuses to make adjustments to the Labour Board's funding, it is clear that the intent of this government is to underfund the Labour Board in perpetuity so that they are unable to meet the requirements that are going to be placed upon them and their resources with respect to the legislative requirements and that that will allow for employer intimidation to take place in certification drives. There is no doubt in my mind that will be a result of this government's underfunding of the Labour Board and that they themselves indicate that they will not be able to fulfill the requirements of Bill 26 secret ballot votes within the time frame that the Minister of Labour has indicated.

One of the other things that I should point out here too, the minister has not defined what the exceptional circumstances are, and it is interesting to note, when the minister made his comments on Bill 26, as is somewhat standard practice in this House, I attempted to stand up and ask the Minister of Labour if he would mind answering a few questions on the principle of his bill. Well, the Minister of Labour did not have the intestinal fortitude to stand up in this House and to answer those questions because he was not confident that he was making the right move with this bill. Otherwise he would have entertained those questions, and he would have answered them forthright. [interjection] You are going to hide behind the Labour Board in the future, and you are going to starve that Labour Board for funding and make it difficult for them to carry out the mandate of the antilabour legislation that you have brought forward.

The next provision of the LMRC deals with detailed financial reports. Now, if one refers to the recommendation of the LMRC, let us read it into the record, Madam Speaker: The majority of the members of the committee do not endorse this proposal; however, all members support the principle of union accountability. So it is clear that the minister's intent that he sent to the committee was not endorsed by the LMRC, that they did not accept the premise on what he was putting forward the question.

Let us take a look at the next portion dealing with grievance or expedited grievance or mediation and arbitration. The minister, again, put this question to the members of the LMRC, and what did the members of the LMRC come back with? Let us read this for the members opposite. The committee recognizes the need to refine the expedited process. To achieve this the committee recommends that the expedited process not be available for policy grievances and that there be a strict adherence to establish time limits.

So not only was the committee putting forward recommendations on how to improve it, they said that the premise and the questions that the minister was asking was not valid except for issues dealing with other than policy.

Another recommendation of the LMRC deals with the proposal regarding union dues for political purposes, and the recommendation of the LMRC was that the majority of the members of the committee do not endorse this proposal. I can only think back to what happened just prior to, in fact a day or two prior to the 1995 provincial general election, where members of this House, I am sure, saw the ability of the business community to freely advertise their own points of view as should occur in a free and democratic society. They had no impingement on their ability to act on behalf of themselves and those that own their particular company interest. They had no requirement to go to the shareholders of their companies and to seek the approval of their shareholders for advertising in support of the government of the day.

What this government is attempting to do through Bill 26 is undermine the ability of the labour unions of our province to take the necessary, and, I believe, the rightful place in representing their members' interests, and that this government by forcing the unions to go back to their membership for the day-to-day decision making will be an impediment to what the union needs to be doing on behalf of its membership.

I think that this government is going down the wrong road with this, and that it will undermine the ability that has already been upheld in the federal courts of this country, that says that every union organization in our country has the right to advocate on behalf of their members' interests to utilize the dues that were checked off from the membership for the purposes that are in the

best interests of those members, and that includes the ability for political lobbying and advertising. You are going to distort the playing field, and you are going to tilt it in favour of your own friends in the business community. There is no doubt in my mind—[interjection] and while the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) may not be too concerned, there are others of us in this province that are because we think our role as legislators in this province is to ensure that there is an harmonious, balanced playing field between the business and labour community of our province—

An Honourable Member: I represent a lot of employees in Steinbach.

Mr. Reid: How many of them are unionized?

An Honourable Member: I do not know.

Mr. Reid: You do not know. I guess you have not taken the time to find out.

Well, the unions of this province have a function and a responsibility to represent the interests of their membership in a fair and reasonable way, and by tying one hand behind their back and forcing them to compete on an unlevel playing field, what you are doing is, you are making this into a winner-take-all government so that the government of the day, as you are, that is obviously pro-business community will make determinations and decisions contrary to the consultation process through the LMRC as were shown in the recommendations that I have just read into the record here.

You are saying that it is a winner-take-all government, that you are going to bring in legislation that will alter and tilt the playing field in favour of the business community and that you are going to move to the Alberta and, I dare say, the American model of labour relations. There is no doubt in my mind that the next steps that you have in mind as a government, God forbid, given the opportunity, is going to be to bring in the right to work legislation. That is going to be your next step, I believe, and that is what the public needs to know about this government, that you are going to undermine the ability of people to make democratic decisions on who is going to represent them or even if they wish to have that type of representation. That is what you are going to undermine. You do not believe that working people are intelligent

enough to make the decisions that affect their own lives and are responsible enough to accept the results of their decisions.

There were other recommendations that were made by the LMRC, but I can tell the members opposite that those recommendations were not accepted either.

It is interesting to note that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) is willing to get involved, as has his Premier (Mr. Filmon), in the interference of the internal affairs of a union and does not think that there is anything wrong with it. When the lottery workers were on strike in this province, for better working conditions for themselves and their families, the Minister of Labour acted as both judge and prosecutor during that dispute, which to me is a clear conflict of interest, and that it was a matter that should have been referred to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), and that the Minister of Labour should have done his job in a fair and impartial manner.

* (1610)

He chose not to. He chose to involve himself in the internal affairs of the union contrary to Section 6(1) of The Labour Relations Act of the Province of Manitoba. He does not even enforce and uphold the act for which he is duly authorized to support and defend. When it comes to Bill 49 and the politically appointed commissioner taking away the rights of a union or deciding on who is going to be the union representative, the Minister of Labour obviously does not stand up in cabinet room or in caucus room and say, that is wrong, that you as a government should know better. Otherwise, you would have changed that provision.

It is interesting to note that when it comes to union certification—and I want to give members in this House an idea of some of the things that working people decide on when it comes to the decision of wanting or not wanting to be part of a union. There was a case just recently here in the city of Winnipeg, for example, where the members of a particular hotel in our city were incensed that their employer was keeping almost 50 percent of all of the tips that came in. We, as members of this House, all know that working people in the service sector industry have had historically low wages and that employers, time in and time out, use the argument, well, that is offset by the tips they receive.

Here we have an employer in the largest hotel in the city of Winnipeg keeping 50 percent of the tips of the employees. It is no wonder that the people who are working in this company wanted a union and voted for a union and now have that representation, so that they will no longer, hopefully, be ripped off by an employer acting in an unscrupulous and unfair way.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) says through Bill 26 that he wants to have full financial disclosure of the salaries, the benefits, the gifts and the grants to officers and employees of the union. He wants to know about the political contributions. He wants to know about the advertising and the publicity expenses, and he wants that information to be kept in the Manitoba Labour Board offices, no doubt in the library of that facility.

Now, members of the Labour Board say that they are prepared to fight to keep some confidentiality on that. But what is to stop the government of the day, in their antidemocratic and anti-working-people fashion, from making regulations that will allow that information to be open and disclosable to members of the public so wishing to obtain that information? I have asked this Minister of Labour. In fact, I wrote to him before we resumed the fall sitting of this session, asking him to provide for me copies of the draft regulations on Bill 26 and other bills that this minister has brought to this House.

The minister wrote back to me and said, no, I am not going to give them to you. I do not think you have a right to know, is what he is saying, what the interpretation of the clauses of the act will be once they are in force, no doubt a short time from now. If you have open, honest and democratic government, as you often like to say in this House, why do you not comply with the request that comes to you, in a legitimate fashion, asking for at least copies of the draft regulations, or do you have a further secret agenda that will only become known once this bill has passed into law and that it becomes effective and impacts directly on the members of the public?

You would not release information on Barry Shenkarow's salary, but you want the unions to release information on their political activities. You would not release information on Bob Kozminski's involvement with the establishment of the special operating agency for the fleet vehicles—was that not a conflict of interest?—but you want unions to disclose political contributions. You

did not disclose the information that was requested about the cost of the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) trip to Atlanta when it was requested in this House, being paid for out of the taxpayer's pocket, you would not release it. You would not release financial information on Faneuil and its cost to the taxpayers of this province. You would not release the detailed financial information on Faneuil's activities and the cost to the Manitoba taxpayers and to the shareholders of the Manitoba Telephone System, who are all of the people of Manitoba, but you will want to know the publicity and advertising expenses of a union. You do not tell us which of your Tory friends who receive untendered contracts—

An Honourable Member: We have so many.

Mr. Reid: There is no doubt in my mind you have so many, and I am sure we have discovered only a few of them.

An Honourable Member: So many friends, he is talking about.

Mr. Reid: We have only scratched the surface, no doubt, of the number of Tory friends who have received contracts through this government, but you want the unions to disclose the salaries and the benefits, the gifts and the grants that go to their membership and their executive. If you believe in an open and a democratic process, why will you not disclose Barry Shenkarow's pay as a result of his involvement, why will you not tell us how much Bob Kozminski has profited by his relationship with this government, or how much has Faneuil cost us as a people? Well, I wish to bring to the attention of the members opposite, who think that this is a joke, that this is very serious.

An Honourable Member: You are the joke.

Mr. Reid: I may be the joke to the members opposite, but I am representing the interests of my constituents and I am representing to a large degree at least 100,000 working people in the province of Manitoba, and if you think that that is a joke, then that is a problem you will have to deal with.

Why is it fair for government to require, through Bill 26, the full financial disclosure, but you do not require Barry Shenkarow to disclose, or you will not disclose the

money paid to Barry Shenkarow? Why will you not have detailed accounting of the Premier's trips that he has made—[interjection] Well, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) maybe should not laugh; he has got his own problem that he is in hot water for. He will have to deal with that, on his own measure, over the course of the next week or two.

I want to bring to the attention of the members of this House, and I have had the opportunity to talk to almost every labour organization of this province, because I wanted to know myself, that they have indicated that they have to their membership disclosure of the salaries and the benefits of their executive officers.

Therefore, I have to ask myself the question: Why are you putting this into legislation? [interjection] Well, then, perhaps you should have attended a union meeting instead of sitting at home on the couch with a clicker, because that is sometimes what happens to members opposite. It is my understanding, and I raise this with members of the House, because financial disclosure is an important issue—because if the union membership is not receiving information relating to how their dues are spent and that those dues are being spent in the performance of activities that will further the interest of the membership, then I think that the union membership has a right to know that. At the same time, it is my understanding that the unions themselves indicate that the private sector unions currently have detailed financial accounting to their membership already in place.

An Honourable Member: Can we access that?

Mr. Reid: So the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) says, can we access that? Well there we go—so that he can pass that on to his employer friends, no doubt, and that they can then undermine the activities of the union. So there is no doubt in my mind that your intent here is to undermine the activities of the union. That is the reason why you want that information.

* (1620)

The discussions that have taken place say that this government is intent on attacking public sector unions, and it is clear by the statements that are made by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), as he has said time and again, that the unions of this province have a larger

agenda when they call strikes and send their members out onto the picket line. Well, I wish to inform members of this House that the decision to hold a strike vote is made by the membership of the union itself, as is required under The Labour Relations Act of this province. That is a requirement of this province under the act, and for you, as your government, to say that membership does not have—it is in the act. Read the act itself.

The executive acts on the wishes of the membership. [interjection] Well, if holding a vote of the membership on whether you are going to go on strike and lose income for your family or stay at work under the conditions that are intolerable is not a decision that is made by the membership through a vote, I do not know what is.

You are saying that The Labour Relations Act is not being applied to this province. That is what you are saying. The membership has the strike vote, and they determine whether or not to go on strike. It is the leadership of the union that determines, based on the opinions that come from the general membership, what the issues are that are still outstanding at the negotiating table and whether the membership should take that strike vote and that it should be put to the floor to determine whether there is will to support that or not. That is what happens in our province.

By this process you are saying that you are going to change that, and that you do not believe that the union membership has the right to make that determination for themselves. The Minister of Labour, through Bill 26, is going to take and change provisions so that he will determine himself what is in the public interest with respect to strikes and lockouts, and that the employer can take a final offer to the minister and ask the minister to impose a vote on the employer's final offer.

Now, it seems very unusual that this government has brought in Bill 26 with this provision in it in that it was this government in 1991, after promising in the 1990 election that you were going to get rid of final offer selection, here you come forward with a provision that says that the Minister of Labour is going to have the members of the union have a secret ballot vote on the employer's final offer.

So I am not sure you really know what you are doing over there. One day you said you are opposed to final

offer selection; now you bring in final offer selection for the employers. What is it you are trying to accomplish? Do you know? Well, there is no doubt that it is union busting.

Take two strikes, for example, the casino workers' strike in this province and the Boeing strike. The lottery workers are part of the public sector. Boeing is part of the private sector. So does this Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) mean that when the government is charged with the responsibility of negotiating a fair agreement with their employees, it is not in their interest, not in the public interest to bring forward a mediator or arbitrator? Is the government saying when it is in the case of the Boeing strike, for example, that when it is in their so-called public interest, they will bring in a mediator? So, in other words, when they want to punish their own public sector workers, they will make a determination on who is and who is not eligible to have the offer go to the employees. The minister has not defined, in the public interest.

The minister has not defined what political activities are. The minister and the government know full well that when this legislation passes, as we have seen in the Alberta experience, that there will be a decrease in the number of automatic certifications and the number of certifications in this province. This minister says that he is only bringing forward this legislation because it is in keeping with what is being done in Ontario. Well, we see what is happening in Ontario, but I can tell you, we have checked what Ontario is doing.

This minister says that if a private sector union negotiates with its employer a freely negotiated collective agreement, that this government knows better and that the union must have full financial disclosure provided to the Labour Board or this government will impose its iron hand and will take away a freely negotiated Rand Formula that is built into those collective agreements.

How can this government in good conscience even think that you can impose your will on a freely negotiated collective agreement in the private sector? Do you not understand that you have before you here potential Charter challenges as a result of this type of action, and are you prepared to bear the cost of that type of a charge? I think that is something you need to consider, because you are going to be a party to it.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) says that his disclosure provisions in Bill 26 are something that he has borrowed from Ontario. Well, I wish to tell members opposite, Ontario does not have as a portion of its legislation the removal of the Rand Formula for failure to comply, another misleading statement by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) attempting to justify his reasons for Bill 26, the very same minister who says in this province that strikes are not a bad thing. They help to sharpen the issues, sharpen the focus. Maybe he needs to go out and talk to some of these people that are on the picket line because of intolerable conditions in the workplace and talk to some of those working people and ask them if a strike is a good thing.

Maybe you need to get out and talk to some real people to find out if strikes are a good thing. I am sure that you would hear that if there was any way around the strike, the employees of those companies would have found it through their democratically elected representatives.

The Minister of Labour clearly does not understand his role in this province. It is to build a harmonious labour relations climate for our province. That is his role and his mandate, and against the forces and the wishes that may be in his caucus, his job is to ensure that that climate is built, if necessary against the wishes of his caucus. That is his role. In a democratically elected body of people, if he loses that vote, at least have the courage of your convictions to stand up and say, I tried.

* (1630)

We have not heard that from this Minister of Labour, so it is obvious that he supports the provisions of Bill 26 that he has brought forward that will strip away powers from working people of this province and will not create a harmonious labour relations climate in this province. Considering the fact that we have members of our community, both business and labour, they are now questioning the Labour Management Review Committee that is obviously on life support and may, at any time, die as a result of this government's actions.

I believe that this government has sent a very clear message to the working people of this province and particularly the public sector of our province that may be coming up for negotiations in our province. They used that and sent that message very clearly through the lottery

workers, that they were going to teach a lesson to the public sector people of our province.

While this government decides that they are going to do interjurisdictional comparisons with other provinces on the wages so that when our public sector unions come to this government for negotiation of contracts, they do not want interjurisdictional comparison—you want to have your cake and you want to eat it to. You do not have the same set of conditions applied in both cases. You want to have interjurisdictional comparison on The Construction Industry Wages Act, but you do not want to have it on the private sector negotiations that you are doing with the unions of this province, the health care unions of this province and teachers, in particular.

The Minister of Labour says that the union elite of this province make all of the decisions, but he has never defined who the elite are. That is what he went around the province telling everybody, that it is a balanced piece of legislation. Well, as I have already told the members of this Chamber, the next step obviously that this government is going to be taking is the right to work legislation that is already being contemplated by their brethren in Alberta.

I believe that this government is on the wrong course, and I think that this government can take the necessary steps to change that. The first one they could do is to withdraw this legislation and to make serious amendments to the other antidemocratic and antilabour legislation that you have currently before us in this Chamber. If you are unwilling to do that, might I make a recommendation to you? We have available to us the ability to send four opinions and recommendations—and I am not too sure that you are willing to accept that, considering you have not accepted the ones from the LMRC. But you have the ability as a government to send to the International Labour Organization, the ILO, your legislation and ask that body of people for an opinion on the legislation that you have tabled before us here. The ILO was set up in 1919 to bring governments and employers and trade unions together for united action in the cause of social justice and better living conditions everywhere. Now, I do not know why you would want to be opposed to that. You can, as a government, take the steps necessary to send that—can send Bill 26 to the ILO and have an opinion on it.

It is interesting to note too that the former Minister of Labour, when he was Minister of Labour, when asked in 1994 about changes to The Labour Relations Act that the government was contemplating, said, there is no need for changes to The Labour Relations Act. [interjection] Well, that could be. Now we have, after the provincial election is over, the next Minister of Labour coming along and saying, we need to have massive restructuring of The Labour Relations Act, as is demonstrated through Bill 26, after the Minister of Labour currently went around the province telling the people of this province that he is only going to bring forward housekeeping amendments to The Labour Relations Act of Manitoba. Well, if this is housekeeping—

An Honourable Member: Tinkering.

Mr. Reid: If this is tinkering, this is not how the working people of Manitoba view this legislation. I am sure you will hear plenty, and have heard plenty, from the working people of this province about this labour legislation. As one of my responsibilities as the elected representative of my community and as the critic for Labour, I have a responsibility to draw to the attention of members opposite, to the government, that they are in for some serious problems relating to this bill. This bill should go to the ILO since Manitoba as a signatory of that organization has to be in agreement with the provisions of the ILO on the recommendations that they make. Manitoba, as one of our 10 provinces, and with the two territories and the government of Canada, is a signatory to that body. Therefore, I believe we have a responsibility, and I have a responsibility, to draw to your attention that you should refer this matter to the ILO and let them pass judgment on whether or not you are making a better living condition and improving the social conditions of our province and are not impeding upon the rights and the responsibilities of the working people of this province to have free and democratically elected representatives represent their interests.

For that reason, Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that Bill 26, The Labour Relations Amendment Act, now not be read, but be read a second time this day six months hence.

Motion presented.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this motion and to

second this motion, although I do want to say from the outset that I am getting a little bit tired of having to speak on Conservative amendments to The Labour Relations Act. I mean, how many more times in this Legislature do we have to deal with the Conservative government trying to satisfy its corporate friends, who obviously just were not satisfied the time before when they hacked The Labour Relations Act here in Manitoba?

I mean, how many more times do we have to have ministers of Labour who go around the province and say, as the previous Minister of Labour and the current Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) have said, and that is that this is—we have ministers of Labour who have made a tactic out of going around the province saying, we have a balanced piece of labour relations.

The Minister of Labour, the current one, the member for Rossmere, said in Thompson in public at the Rotary Club that The Labour Relations Act was a balanced piece of legislation. This is before the changes he was making. Now, do you know what he said to the president of United Steelworkers of America 6166? It is amazing. In this House, he said how the president of 6166 had commented that, 6166 had said basically that the Minister of Labour had taken the time to drop by his office, and the Minister of Labour was very proud of that fact. What he has not mentioned on the record in this House is what the president of the steelworkers in Thompson would say now if he had a chance to talk to the Minister of Labour.

The bottom line is, and I cannot use the exact language that the president would use, the steelworkers in Thompson, because it is absolutely unparliamentary. It is accurate, but it is unparliamentary. Let us put it this way, very politely he said that he was absolutely misled by the Minister of Labour.

* (1640)

I mean, one minute he is turning around and saying, well, this is a balanced piece of legislation and the next minute we are seeing some of the most draconian changes to labour relations legislation in this province that we have seen in many years, and I have seen some vicious Tory bills on labour legislation, but this goes far beyond anything that they could have dreamed up, or many other

jurisdictions because, as our Labour critic pointed out, Madam Speaker, what is amazing is the fact that this government is so contemptuous of the basic principles of fairness in labour relations that they are willing to even ignore the international standards set out by the ILO.

It is not the first time; unfortunately, it probably will not be the last time but, you know, this government does not even care about the public image and reputation of this province. Perhaps it is because, and I think the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) pointed to the real agenda of this government, they obviously, to my mind, are looking forward to a time in the future where they will join some of those states in the United States, the Deep South, low-wage economies which have active union busting, those low-wage southern American states where right to work legislation has been passed.

It amazes me, Madam Speaker, that we have gotten on this path, because we are a province that, I believe, has had a balanced history of labour relations. [interjection] Well, the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) who in addition to being the agricultural expert on that side is obviously the labour relations expert as well. I say to the member for River Heights, we used to have a fairly balanced system in terms of the collective bargaining process and just look at this for a moment.

We have unfortunately in Canada one of the highest rates of days lost to strike and lockout in the world. We have been right up there internationally with Italy. We have been up and down, back and forth, but Manitoba has often been the exception to that. The bottom line is we have had some low rates. This year, we are looking at a situation—[interjection] The member for River Heights may wish to comment on this if he is allowed to do so by his caucus, because I would like to see him on the record and explain how we have one of the highest rates that we have had in the history of Manitoba, days lost to strike and lockout. [interjection] Ah, the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) says, quote, because of your union bosses.

I say to the member for River Heights, we are living in the 1990s. I think you should have a somewhat better image and view of working people in this province, because, you know, I was in Thompson at the beginning of the—and I can tell the member the background of what

happened with Inco in Thompson, the lockout that took place, but you know what? Nothing could have dictated one way or the other how the membership of that particular local of steelworkers was going to vote.

They made the decision democratically to reject the contract offer. They were locked out. They made the decision to return to work. [interjection] Well, the member for River Heights says they were wise. Now he is trying to draw exceptions, obviously. There are the wise members of unions, and then I guess there are the ones that are being told what to do by the union bosses. This is his version of the world, but to the member for River Heights, he has a lot of union members in his constituency. Which ones does he believe do not control their own destiny? Which ones are these ones who are dictated to by the union bosses?

It amazes me that an elected member in this House would talk about being dominated by those powerful union bosses. I would like him to identify these union members who do not have the ability to make decisions themselves, because you know what? I hate to say this on the record, Madam Speaker, there are a lot of people who voted for this government. They would not be where they are today if they had not voted for them, and to the member for River Heights, this may come as a surprise because I really think this government ran a fraudulent election campaign, but I believe that you have to respect that decision.

I am not happy that the government won the number of seats it did or the percentage of the popular vote. We can argue about whether they ran a fraudulent campaign or not, but you know what, Madam Speaker? I remember the days of parliamentarians in this House such as Sterling Lyon, who was the first one and one of the most—I had a great deal of respect for Sterling Lyon in 1981 when he was defeated. It was one of the most gracious speeches I have ever seen by a party leader losing—in this case, it was a very difficult defeat for him—very gracious and eloquent, and he pointed very clearly to his view that the system is based on the fact that the people are always right whether you like it or not. The people make that decision, and you know what? You may question the decisions in terms of the debate that took place and the tactics that were used, but you do not criticize the decision because in doing so, you would be criticizing the people of Manitoba who exercised their judgment.

But, Madam Speaker, what is the difference between Joe Q. or Jane Q. Citizen voting in an provincial election and voting, in the case of the steelworkers in Thompson, to reject a contract offer, or eventually they accepted a contract offer. What is the difference? [interjection] Well, the member says pressure. You know, in a general election, we have pressure. We have people knocking on your door, we have people phoning you, we have advertisements. That is part of the political process, but I think people deep down, fundamentally, make judgments. You know what? In terms of governments, they elect them, they throw them out. Same thing with unions. If unions do not represent their members, there are many other people to provide other options. You can decertify the union. You can select another union. [interjection] Well, the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) talks about self-interest groups. I do not know if he is talking about the Conservative Party, because that is probably the best example of a self-interest, special-interest group I have ever seen.

One only has to look at our telephone system being recommended to be sold off by three investment bankers located on Bay Street who now are going to make profits on that sale. If that is not self-interest, I do not know what is. But what is self-interest about unions? Unions have been around, Madam Speaker, for literally hundreds of years in one shape or form. They have been one of the major ways in which working people have been able to expand their rights and to improve their standard of living. I know we had this debate, the member for River Heights and I had this debate on a resolution on benefits for part-time workers. I thought, ironically, he was actually supporting the need for people to get out and unionize and get collective bargain agreements to implement this collective agreement.

Madam Speaker, I think it is time that the Conservatives opposite recognize that unions are here to stay, and not only are they here to stay, they can be a very positive force in our society, they can be far more than they even are currently. I only say that because we have a situation in a population of one million people where this government has deliberately targeted various sectors, particularly working people and organized labour. It has particularly taken them on in a way that is unprecedented in Manitoba history outside of perhaps in the 1919 General Strike, and, you know, we are a small province. I know in my own community there are many people who

are active in the trade union movement. There are many people who work for Inco on both sides of the fence. To the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), does it not make a lot more sense to harness the energy of all Manitobans? Then why have you chosen, and this government, why has this government chosen to target organized labour? Well, I think it is very obvious.

Two reasons. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) with his talk about powerful forces stopping change. Let us start with that thesis of his. I call it the Davos syndrome. He was in Davos, Switzerland, twice. The last time he was there on his globetrotting was at a world economic summit dealing with globalization. I found it rather interesting at the time that he came back and he told us this great story about how the prime minister of Sweden had said how difficult it was to cut and how necessary it was to cut, and he said, you know, here is a Social Democrat saying that. I sat there and I said to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), that is a Conservative prime minister. Have you not checked your Swedish politics? This is before they were thrown out by the Swedish people two years ago. But for the Premier, it did not matter who it was, if it was Social Democrat or Conservative he did not know, but he got his message. This so-called moderate, Madam Speaker, because I think we have been saying for years that the Premier is no moderate, that he has an ideological agenda.

But now we have direct from Davos, Switzerland, and whatever other global stops the Premier may have made, we now have at a time in which people in countries ranging from Great Britain to United States to New Zealand—the test site for neo-Conservative policies. You know what they just did? They voted in significant numbers for parties that rejected the agenda that this government often seeks to follow put forward by their equivalent of the Conservative Party. But at a time when people across the world are starting to question neo-Conservative economics even in the United States, you know the inspiration of this party across the way? The Republicans. I mean Bob Dole, Newt Gingrich, where are they today with their neo-Conservative agenda? But a little bit belatedly here in Manitoba, we have the Premier (Mr. Filmon) direct from Davos, Switzerland; and southeast Asia and all points in between.

* (1650)

Our Premier has arrived back after 1995 where he campaigned to save the Phoenix Coyotes, pardon me, the Winnipeg Jets; he came back in, and now you would believe he was a born-again neo-Conservative. Now I think he already was one. But now we have to privatize. Let us get rid of MTS, according to the Premier, and let us do it by getting three investment bankers—labour legislation. Let us get rid of those powerful forces that are stopping us from doing whatever we want in the economy. You start running through at teachers, you start looking at our health care system with the regionalization, and do you know what is interesting is that the final element of powerful forces that this government is concerned about is the democratic process itself. I have never seen the democratic process—[interjection]

Yes, to the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), this is a government that is so arrogant that without having a single vote in this Legislature on issues that we are dealing with such as selling off MTS, it is advertising the sale. It is saying, it is a done deal. Not a single vote on an issue as important as that.

We are seeing a government that cares little about the legislative process. And I ask the question, Madam Speaker, through you to members opposite, if they expect that people are somewhat concerned about this overall agenda, does it surprise them when they show such little respect even for the processes of this House? Because that is the underlying—I would say very clearly that is the case to members opposite because we are seeing—we will not get into the political ethics of fraudulent campaign promises, but let us look at a Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) who goes around the province and says this is a balanced piece of legislation and brings in sweeping changes only months later.

Madam Speaker, the term fraudulent election campaign promises is parliamentary. In fact, I raised it in this House, and you ruled it was parliamentary. I choose my words very carefully. It is not only parliamentary, it is true.

But as I look at this government, do they not see something wrong with that kind of a political process, going around the province saying we have no problems with The Labour Relations Act? I can raise some

questions about where the direction was coming from for these changes.

An Honourable Member: Where?

Mr. Ashton: The member for River Heights says, where? He knows where, internally from his caucus. There is at least one member, the would-be Minister of Labour that we know has been lobbying certain people, particularly in the Chamber of Commerce, the push for a more aggressive labour agenda. I know that because I have talked to people in the chamber who are quite aware of who it is. It is somebody previously very well connected with the chamber. The president, the would-be Minister of Labour and perhaps would-be minister responsible for Justice and would-be a number of things. I respect that individual, because at least I know where he stands. I have sat in committees across from him when he has been presenting as a member of the public.

Do you know what I find interesting, though, is I feel sorry for the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) here to a certain extent. I mean, only so far, because he did make the statement, and it has not proven to be an accurate statement, but I feel sorry for him to have gone around the province saying, we are not going to bring in major changes and then to have to bring in this legislation, to bring in this legislation with a most vicious—[interjection]

Well, the member says, he is proud of it. If the Minister of Labour is proud of this legislation, I am more worried than I was originally because he went around and he sat down with labour leaders in their offices, you know these big union bosses, he said, I am here, I am from the Conservative government, and I am here to help. He sat down and he says, do not worry, you guys, no major changes; there are a little, few minor changes. He went to the Rotary, unsuspecting Rotarians in Thompson, and he said, do not worry about it, no major changes; it is a balanced piece of legislation. Well, then, the would-be Minister of Labour and some of the other ideologues in the caucus, not that there is any shortage of Tory ideologues in the caucus—they put him in his place, probably sat down and reminded the Minister of Labour that we have not done anything in terms of labour legislation this term, that we have got a majority and, you know, those labour unions, they do not support us. The No. 1 reason why they are being punished.

Let us go one step further, though, because we know the political vendetta of this government. I mean, it is no coincidence. I even said this rhetorically in the House, I asked the question rhetorically, and I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns). In the first throne speech when I listed off the teachers, the nurses, government employees, trade unions, and I said, what do they all have in common? He said, well, they all supported the NDP. Well, I will tell you that was a surprise to certainly the teachers who ran ads saying, think education, but I give credit to the Minister of Agriculture, who has been here long enough that he is not going to bluff, he is going to say the truth or reality. I think everybody in this province knows that. Every teacher knows that, health care workers know that, government employees know that. In fact, the scary part is that they did not support the NDP, especially, the teachers. Do you know what they did? They ran advertising during the election. Think about it, Madam Speaker, they spoke out, and I just met—I was in Virden just recently, and there was a teacher there who has never—

An Honourable Member: Where?

Mr. Ashton: Virden. The member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) says, where? It is kind of as you are flying over from Winnipeg to Brazil it is on the right-hand side of the aircraft, for the member, but the member for Virden should go and talk to this teacher. He said, in Virden, we know what happened: we ran an advertising campaign—it was not even partisan—but they are now punishing us for having spoken out against them during the critical time of the election. That is what the teacher in Virden said, what teachers in every community in Manitoba are saying.

Which brings me to this particularly odious piece of legislation because there are two dimensions to this bill. One is the democratic process or lack thereof. This government does not believe that people should make their own choices. This bill is aimed—[interjection] Well, the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) will perhaps care to explain now why signing a union card is no longer considered an expression of wanting to join a union—

An Honourable Member: 100 percent.

Mr. Ashton: -100 percent. They already moved it from 55 to 65. Now they want to say that 100 percent of potential membership in a bargaining unit has to sign a card. It does not matter. They have to have a vote; 100 percent is not good enough.

Madam Speaker, people know when they sign a union card what they are doing. There are all sorts of protections put in place in terms of unfair labour practice, and they are there for a reason. Do not let anyone kid you what the intention of having a compulsory vote is. It is to give unscrupulous employers time to go in and pressure people into not joining a union. Do not kid me on that side, the Conservative members; there are consultants who specialize in this kind of consultancy. It is the new in thing. It is how to break unions. What you do is you go in and you tell them all sorts of scare tactics and there are some employers that are absolute masters of the art at that, Wal-Mart being a classic one. We saw it in a recent organizer. McDonald's. I mean, heaven forbid that employees at Wal-Mart and McDonald's and some of these other corporations should have the right to collective bargaining and a right to a union.

So that is one of the first items that goes. They do not trust people to sign a union card. They do not even trust 100 percent of workers. They think they know best, and they want the ability for the employer to go in there and stop those people from joining a union. That is one of the first aspects.

Let us deal with the political activity. I find it interesting that this party across the way, the Conservative Party, would take any offence to anybody getting involved in politics through any method, particularly involving contribution of funds because, you know what? This is a party that gets 50 percent-plus of its campaigning contributions from the corporate sector, 50 percent.

I find it rather interesting too when you see the names on those donation lists and names that keep popping up when it comes to untendered contracts for the government, when it comes to certain favours that seem to be granted in terms of liquor licences, various other beneficiaries, you know, people who donated a significant sum.

* (1700)

I did not mention this today in my question but these investment brokers that are benefiting from the sale of MTS, who got paid to recommend that it be sold off and they then benefit from it, you run through their list, it is a who's who of who benefits from the Conservative government and, in fact, it would be interesting to run through their campaign contribution list and look at the civil service. I know quite a few people who have been planted in the civil service, particularly in some departments.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the Deputy Premier says no. I know that if you run through his list of any department he has been in, there is a distinct correlation here. Statisticians would say this is beyond any coincidence of being on a Conservative campaign contribution list and being appointed to civil service jobs. He knows that and, in fact, I have a significant number of the names. I know who they are too.

It is interesting. They talk about special interest. They talk about, in this case, having taken great offence to people being able to participate in the campaign process, when they all take \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 in campaign contributions from people that afterwards receive direct contracts from the government.

An Honourable Member: Coincidence?

Mr. Ashton: Coincidence? Is that a coincidence? Well, the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) just asked, is that what the NDP does? I will perhaps explain to him that 85 percent of the contributions received by the NDP are from individuals—85 percent. I do not want to mean this as too strong criticism. The biggest contribution from the corporate sector in Manitoba, the highest percentage, is the Liberal Party. And the Conservatives are running a close second, believe you me.

The member feigns ignorance of this, but just run through the—what I always get a kick out of is the Premier's campaign team. I mean, talk about the blue chip, who's who of who is benefiting from this government. You run through those lists of people that are associated with this government, they benefit and they benefit big time.

Well, Madam Speaker, it is interesting. That is okay; in the world of 1996 political ethics, that is fine. They can receive whatever corporate contributions they want, and that does not create any great difficulty. Lo and behold, the poor shareholders probably never, in fact, do not have a say over where that money goes.

The bottom line is, it does not matter if they get those contributions from, you know, the Bob Kozminskis and the Barb Biggars. You run through the list. It does not matter if they get Bay Street pumping money in. I mean, one could question whether it is coincidental when you track the campaign contributions and such things as selling off MTS or bringing in labour legislation that benefits certain unscrupulous companies in the corporate sector.

They then have the nerve to turn around, after accepting those campaign contributions, and do what? Try and limit the ability of trade unions to get involved on behalf of their members and their interests.

You know, it is interesting, because I know there are a number of unions that are affiliated to the New Democratic Party, and I know in the case of Thompson the United Steel Workers of American 6166 is affiliated with the New Democrats. Do you know how they decided that? They decided that through a vote, the membership. Not only that, they allowed anybody who had difficulty with that to express that view and opt out in that particular case. But do you know what? They decided, and there are many unions that decided that democratically.

I do not know of a trade union in this province that has not gone through that. In fact, talk about the UFCW. If you read their magazine, they disclose, I think every issue, the fact that they are involved in the political process, and you do not have to be a part of it. I wonder how many of those publicly held corporations had a vote on deciding to contribute \$10,000 and \$20,000 to the Conservative Party.

I have a suggestion, Madam Speaker. You know, I always believe that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. How about if we apply the labour relations technique here of determining whether you can get involved in the political process to every corporation?

Let us require a vote of all the shareholders of every private corporation before they can donate money.

To the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), would that not be a great idea in terms of democracy? [interjection] A balanced approach, ah, I could have used that word. They used it quite a bit here, a balanced approach. You would be protecting the widows and orphans holding shares in any of the major companies, any of those major companies.

Well, he says about the MTS, you know, let us not forget that once they sell off MTS, MTS, through its board of directors, may decide to contribute. I can tell you one thing. It will not be to the New Democratic Party. Maybe they will contribute back to their friends on the Conservative side, because there are going to be certain people that are going to make a lot of money. A lot of people will lose money, but there will be a lot of people that will make it.

What is interesting, Madam Speaker, is you run through the list of each and every item before us in this particular piece of legislation and, you know, none of them passes any test of balance or fairness, because they will not apply to corporations what they apply to the trade union movement. They will not accept that 100 percent of people signing up for a union or 65 percent or anything in that range, between 65 and 100 is a truer expression of working people. They will not do that. They will not accept the suggestions we have made in terms of political advertising. If you run through the list, this fails the test on virtually every test you could put forward in terms of balance.

So I want to ask the question then, accepting that this is what it is, which is a truly ideological piece of legislation, driven by some particular interest in the Conservative Party, I do not think it is even necessarily supported by a lot of people, I would say, even in the business community, because I have talked to people in the business community who feel it goes too far, but regardless of that, we are one million people in this province.

We talk about global changes, how competitive we are, will have to be. The way we are going to compete is not to go to the lowest common denominator. We are going to compete by having a motivated, healthy, trained and

educated workforce, people who have rights, that are a part of our society, have rights in their workplaces, have rights in their schools, have rights in their hospitals.

We will not build on the sort of oligarchy that we are seeing across the way, this corporate-style decision-making process we are moving to where a small group, the Premier and his cabinet ministers and maybe a few other well-connected people, make all the decisions for the rest of us.

That is what they are doing in labour relations, it is what they are doing in health care, it is what they are doing in education. The only way we are going to survive in this competitive world is to build on our strengths.

The reason that we have been indicated as having the best quality of life by the UN, it is interesting, because it is such things as, not our massive wealth; we are not the wealthiest country. You know what it is? It is things like our commitment to health care and education and because, on balance, we do have greater equality between the genders and we do have rights in the workplace and we do work towards safe and healthy workplaces.

We are No. 1 in the world because of that commitment to our human resources, and I say to you, you cannot in the 1990s factor out a part of our society as important as the labour movement, you cannot continuously challenge them as you have, you cannot continuously cut back on labour legislation without affecting the most important thing we have to work towards, and that is the continued prosperity of our province. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to put some words on the record about Bill 26, The Labour Relations Amendment Act. It is difficult to follow two such good speeches in the House. I am sure I will not have much new to put on the record. This piece of legislation is a centrepiece for the government. They have made it that. They make no bones about this being a very positive piece of legislation from their own point of view. I think it is a very indicative piece of legislation as to the government's view of working people in general and their view of unions in particular.

As the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has said, they do not trust the working people in the province of

Manitoba. They do not trust them when they sign a card saying they want to certify as a union. They do not even trust 65 percent. Now I do not know of any other electoral process in the world that requires a 65 percent vote in order to win, in order for something to happen. Nowhere in the world is that the case. As a matter of fact, it is becoming more and more throughout the world that the method of voting is proportional representation or some variant thereof, which means that you can win a government or an election or a proposition with far less than even a simple majority, but we do not need to go any further than the province of Manitoba in order to see that happen.

* (1710)

How many members in the Legislature here were elected with less than 50 percent plus one? It is a fair percentage of the elected, including several cabinet ministers, including, I might add, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) himself. Now the Minister of Labour is forcing unions, even if they sign up 100 percent of the eligible workers, to go to an election. They do not trust the members; they do not trust the workers; they certainly do not trust unions. So they are saying, we do not care how much, how high a percentage of you vote by signing a certification card. We do not care what it is. We are going to enforce a law that says that you must have a certification vote, and, as the member for Thompson says, that is to give the employer the opportunity to go in and do some destructive work. Now the Minister of Labour says, it does not matter how high a percentage you have for people who want to certify a union; you cannot do it just on a certification vote.

The Minister of Labour himself, gee, do you suppose he is balancing that with his own election results?

An Honourable Member: What did he get?

Ms. Barrett: Well, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) asked me what the Minister of Labour got in his first election, and I just happen to have the information at hand. In Rossmere constituency, the candidate for the Conservative Party received not 55 percent, not 65 percent, not 50 percent, not even 45 percent, not even 40 percent. Madam Speaker, the Minister of Labour received 35.3 percent of the votes cast in Rossmere in the last general election.

I am sorry, Madam Speaker, I misspoke myself. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) received 35.3 percent of the eligible vote. I am sorry. The opposition parties received 41.8 percent of the eligible vote. Almost 23 percent did not vote at all, but the parallel remains, because the Minister of Labour in Bill 26 is counting from all eligible voters which are all the employees who can ask for certification, so it is the same parallel.

The Minister of Labour was elected on one standard, but he is putting in place in Bill 26 a completely different standard. It is not fair, it is not balanced, it does not add up, Madam Speaker, on any of the fairness. When the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), whom I really usually try not to recognize, when he says that it is trying to democratize the process, if I had the authority, I would call the member to order, because he knows that is blatantly not the case. It is the furthest thing from a democratization, and in all seriousness, when the government talks in terms of Bill 26, in terms of Bill 32, in terms of Bill 49, in terms of Bill 33, in terms of Bill 72, in terms of Bill 69, that they are furthering the cause of democratization, that they are furthering the rights of the people of the province of Manitoba, it makes a mockery of the democratic process.

It makes a mockery of the concept of democratization, and there should be no question about the absolute importance that we must maintain the integrity of the concepts of democracy. Our system is under severe attack both externally and internally, and it does not help when members of the government put forth legislation that has exactly the opposite effect, that they know is antidemocratic. For them to use the terms that this is furthering the cause of democratization is incomprehensible and unconscionable.

I think, Madam Speaker, that part of the reason for Bill 26—well, in fact, I know; I do not think it; I know it. Part of the rationale behind Bill 26, if you can call it a rationale, is that the government is afraid of unions. The government is afraid of the concept of workers banding together to ask for, to demand, to work together with the employers to ensure that we have a healthy labour climate in this province. They are afraid of it. They are afraid of it because the government's ideology precludes them from wanting to work with the workers in the province of Manitoba.

Everything that they have stood for, everything that they have undertaken, certainly in the last eight years, says that the workers do not have rights, the workers should not have the benefit of union activity. The group in Manitoba society that this government is prepared to work with are the employers, and frankly, Madam Speaker, they are not even all the employers.

One of the things about any province or any jurisdiction that companies look at when they are anticipating a move or contemplating a move is the labour situation in that jurisdiction, and Manitoba, up until 1988, had for a very long period of time a very good labour-management, labour relations climate. Now, there were ups and downs, Madam Speaker. It did not always work. There were strikes, there was dissension, but, by and large, there were not a whole lot of days lost to labour unrest.

Well, any company that is contemplating moving to the province of Manitoba—and many more of them are leaving the province than even would consider coming—but if there were such a company that was looking at locating here—yes, we have a lovely central physical location; we have a 24-hour airport; we have a well-educated workforce; we are in the central time zone. There are lots of natural advantages to locating in Winnipeg. But the legislation that is being presented by this government, highlighted by the elements in Bill 26, is going to negate all of those natural advantages that the province has built up, natural advantages and advantages that the people of the province of Manitoba, the employers, the employees, the unions and the government have worked decade upon decade to engender. All of those advantages are being thrown out by this government. They are being thrown out by the labour bills. They are being thrown out by the education bills which are setting teachers against principals, against administrators, against school trustees, and heaven help the poor student. What does the student now have the right? The right to be tested.

* (1720)

If it has been demonstrated over decades that a solid labour relations environment based on co-operation as much as possible and not competition and not adversarial relationships, why, when that has been proven to be a positive, does this government turn this over? Why does it on purpose put in place legislation that is designed to

have a negative impact? As stated again, Madam Speaker, the government is afraid of unions. They are afraid of them on an ideological basis. They do not like them. They think that they are not working. You know, why they are not working for the government? Because they actually have had an impact in making workers lives better. This government seems to forget that, if workers have good-paying jobs that are secure with pension benefits, they are going to feel more like staying in the province; they are going to feel more like they can afford to spend things; they can afford to buy things; they can participate in the community. But, no, what this government is doing is—over the last year has lost, I think I saw a figure of, over 5,500 jobs in the province of Manitoba or in Winnipeg even, jobs that were high-paying manufacturing, high-paying public service jobs.

An Honourable Member: Plus 1,500 health care workers.

Ms. Barrett: Plus 1,500 health care workers that have gone by the board in the term of this government. Plus 600 teachers. This is literally 10,000 jobs, high-paying, well-employed jobs held by trained workers that are no longer here. What do we have? We have call centre jobs. We have jobs that pay the minimum wage or slightly above the minimum wage to do telemarketing. Now, I am not for a moment suggesting that those are not valuable jobs, and I know the people who have them are glad they do have them, but we cannot have just the call centre jobs. We cannot have just minimum wage jobs. We need high-paid, solid jobs with a long life, with pensions, so people have a sense of security.

Unions provide that, and, Madam Speaker, I would like to share some of the actual statistics that have been produced about unions in Canada and the benefit that they have produced for working men and women in Canada, benefits that this government is destroying bit by bit with legislation like Bill 26.

I would like to focus most on women, because women are coming later to the job market than men, many of them, and they are coming later to the union movement than men, many of them, but over the last few decades major changes have occurred in the role of women in the workforce and the role that unions have played in advancing the cause of women.

Union membership among women from 1966 to 1993, a 27-year period, increased from 16 percent of the workforce to nearly 30 percent, and that is almost a doubling of women in the workforce who are members of unions. That means that women who are unionized in the workforce have a higher rate of pay. They have longer jobs. They have a higher rate of job security. They have access to pension benefits. They can afford to provide for their children and their families. This is especially important when we have increasingly single-parent families headed largely by women. If we did not have unions, that 71 percent of single-parent families that are headed by women who are currently living in poverty would be practically 100 percent. So unions provide very important social work to our society.

The service sector, hospitals, schools, municipalities—dare I say it?—the civil service and public sector workers, has been the sector that has increased the most in the workforce and also in unionization. Unionization has increased from 26 to 32 percent from 1976 to 1992, a 6 percent increase, not quite as much as the percentage of the workforce that is in this sector, but it certainly has increased, and what that has meant, Madam Speaker, is that those people in the public sector, those people who provide the services that we require in our education system, in our health care system, in our public service system, those people are protected more and more by their unions.

They are not out there wanting to strike every year or every two years. Up until this last round with this government, there had been a great deal of labour rest in the province of Manitoba due to large part because the unions in the province of Manitoba are mature organizations. They want what is best for their membership, and what is best for their membership is also, by and large, Madam Speaker, what is best for the province of Manitoba, because it provides for stable, high-paying jobs for the people of Manitoba. We all need to have a workforce that has stable, high-paying jobs with good pension plans for us to have a province where we can have a quality of life where we can have our kids being able to stay here instead of leave and going to British Columbia. That is the reason why our unemployment rate is so low, comparatively speaking, is that we have lost more jobs, we have lost more people. People are leaving this province. They are voting with their feet, to coin a phrase, and they are going to that

bastion of social democracy, British Columbia, by and large.

I would like to talk about the wage disparity or the wage gap between unionized versus nonunionized people, and I think this is where the government, Madam Speaker, is really showing their true colours, because they do not like the concept of a wage gap between unionized and nonunionized employees. Do you know why? I think it is partly because they do not seem to understand the connection, the cause and effect between good, solid, high-paying wages and a stable economic climate—from a government that prides itself on being so business oriented.

No, Madam Speaker, the reason they do not like the wage disparity between unionized and nonunionized workers is because they are on the side of the employers who want to drive wages down as far as they possibly can so that their profits can go as high as they possibly can. That was the real basis for the home care strike. The government wanted to give their private, entrepreneurial friends control over the home care system in the province of Manitoba. The only way those people could make a profit was to drive down the wages of the home care workers. Let us just drive down the wages of the lowest paid people in the province already. It is showing itself in Bill 26.

Among full-time employees there was a \$4.39 an hour discrepancy between unionized employees and non-unionized employees who were women. Almost \$4.50 an hour difference. Know what that means for unionized women? It means, as I have stated before, that they can

provide a life for themselves and their family. It reduces the dependency on the social welfare system; it provides more money in the pockets of families; it provides more money in the pockets of business.

A good, high-paying job is a positive thing; it works for all of us. Bill 26, by making certification much more difficult, by putting roadblocks in the way of unions, is going to reduce that ability of the workers in the province of Manitoba to have high-paying, well-paid, secure jobs with a future and with pensions.

One final comment. Unionized workers are twice as likely as nonunionized workers to have a retirement income plan. Madam Speaker, 77 percent of union workers are covered by a pension plan, 33 percent of nonunionized workers. What is going to happen to that 67 percent of nonunionized workers who do not have a pension plan? When they retire, they are going to be poor. Most of them do not have access to money that will allow them to have RRSPs, but, with pension plans in place, there is a security for their after-work years too. Let us not even talk about the social benefits, but the economic benefits of this are incalculable, which is why I cannot figure out why legislation like Bill 26 is before us. It makes no economic sense.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 21, 1996

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